

YOUR BUSINESS

YOUR CLIENTS

YOUR TEAM

YOUR PROJECTS

Roadside
billboards

The iPad advantage

Certification – is it
worth it?

Wine rooms

hanley wood

remodeling

YOUR TOOLBOX FOR SUCCESS

REMODELING JULY 2011 CUSTOMER SERVICE HOW TO APPOINTMENT TO A CLIENT MATERIALS & TEXTILE AT PLAY IN A CONDO REMODEL

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Box It Up

Online design leads to a box full of products and materials for a bath remodel

IN HIS WORK WITH a large national home builder and as an MIT faculty member, John Crowley was focusing on making traditional home building processes more efficient. The idea for letting homeowners design a bath remodel online and then get all the

materials mailed to them in a package, to be installed by a local contractor of their choice, came from this background.

When Crowley renovated a few of his own houses, he was struck by the complexity of the bathroom remodeling process. Homeowners

must purchase products from several suppliers and vendors, products that eventually must all work together. "It's like buying a car at the auto parts store," he says.

HOMEOWNER

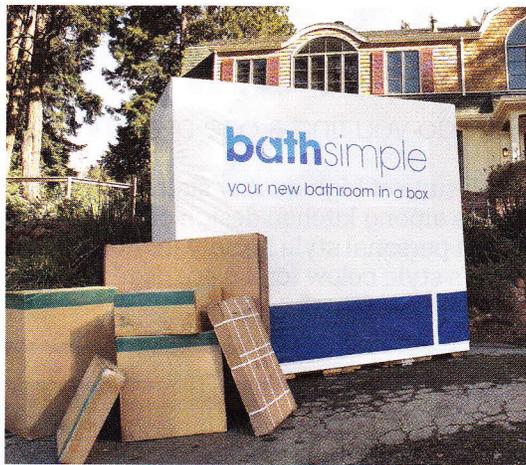
Crowley's goal for Bath Simple, in Berkeley, Calif., is to streamline the process to make it both more enjoyable for homeowners and more profitable for contractors. The company's virtual design tool "curates" all the available options into manageable groupings in three styles and three price points (standard, premium, luxury).

Sizing & Shipping

The heavy cardboard boxes come in two sizes: 48 inches by 85 inches by 60 inches tall and 39 inches by 48 inches by 58 inches tall. For \$3,000 to \$7,000 baths, there is a \$250 delivery fee; baths over \$7,000 ship for free.

You've Got Mail The company shipped 30 Bath Simple boxes to clients in the first quarter of 2011.

Packages range in price from \$3,500 to \$35,000, and Crowley says that the Bath Simple homeowner client "is someone who is looking for a good-quality, well-designed bathroom but who doesn't want to spend six months figuring it out."



CONTRACTOR

Bath Simple's contractor client is looking for a way to make small projects profitable. The contractor works with the homeowner using Bath Simple, and "the faster they can get the homeowner to a decision point," Crowley says, "the faster the project will succeed. [Then] everything shows up, from the drywall in, ready for install. It makes the scheduling process very predictable for [the contractor]. That's a huge win."

VISUALIZATION TOOL

The company's custom software leads clients through the process of choosing the grouping of materials that

works best for them. It asks questions about style, budget, and the floor plan. A menu then offers a group of products that fits their particular style.

The company's designers worked with manufacturers, including Benjamin Moore, Dal-Tile, and Armstrong, to create 108 pre-designed "scenes." Crowley refers to these scenes as "a bathroom with training wheels." Homeowners can, if they choose, take the training wheels off and select from the company's entire range of products. "You design to your heart's content — manipulate as much or as little of the components as you wish," Crowley says. —*Nina Patel*



See more about Bath Simple's plans at <http://go.hw.net/r-k+b>



Shelves fitted into a deep window opening allow natural light to enter while providing a display area.



Let's Shelf It

WHEN IT COMES TO SIMPLE details with bold impact, these "window shelves" fill the bill.

In taking the rarely used ledge of an existing deep-set kitchen window and building shelves to display collectibles and store glasses, the designer fulfilled her client's wish to add color and interest to the space while creating privacy from nearby neigh-

bors and still admitting plenty of natural light.

Remodeler Bill Dolan of Pine Street Carpenters, in Westchester, Pa., who worked on the project and built the shelves, says that the existing deep sill existed due to the "almost institutional-grade structure" of the house — an 18-inch-thick exterior wall of 12-inch cinder block with 3 inches of rigid

foam, and exterior stucco and interior plaster.

Dolan's team crafted the shelves from ¾-inch birch plywood with a strip of ¾-inch-by-1½-inch poplar on the front edge, all painted white.

The removable shelves are held in place by Mockett stainless steel supports, located on the sides and on the center mullion. —*Nina Patel*