



The Quantum Quote

Issue 3, June 2011

Memorial Day weekend is past, so it's summer, right? Sure it is. Despite some of the beautiful weather we've been having, I have trouble believing we're into the home stretch for BBQs, picnics and hiking. I'm counting my blessings that we're located in Washington, though. With tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes seemingly commonplace these days, it's hard to complain about a little rain! Please take the time to send a response for our *Charity Choice* column below; there are a lot of organizations that could use it!

It's been a busy season for Quantum too. We're getting ready to host our first Business After Hours with the Anacortes Chamber ([see the revised date below](#)), remodeling our conference room, competed in a Shell PSR Safety Day Chili Cook-off, and became a Northwest Energy Star Builder. Mix it in with our regular business and community organizations, and you can see how it all adds up!

As always, if you have any questions, comments or recommendations, please let me know!

Josh

PS. After the Business After Hours, I'm hoping to get that "Night with a Contractor" set up.

How Do You Say Green?

Love the idea of green, but starting to get a little sick of the word? Email us with your ideas for word alternatives! A few that we've heard include sustainable, earth-friendly, and efficient. What do you think? Is there another way to say it that encompasses the power of this often overused (but vitally important) buzzword?

Charity Choice & Last Month's Winner

Quantum has a long history of supporting local charities, from youth sports to medical and charitable organizations. Now, we'd like you to help us choose who receives a \$100 donation for each newsletter. It's easy: just reply to this email with the name of your favorite charity! *Load the odds in your favor by forwarding this newsletter to your friends or coworkers and have them submit a response too!* Remember, it has to be a recognized non-profit. Make sure that the newsletter is at the bottom of their email, that's the ticket to making their entry count! The deadline for entries is June 30th, so get

going!

Our winner from our last issue was Mountain Ministries from Kelso, WA. Mountain Ministries helps to rehabilitate people who struggle with addiction. You can read more about them on their [website](#).

***Updated* Business After Hours**

Our Business After Hours has been rescheduled to July 21st from 5:30 to 7:00pm. We'll be opening our doors to Anacortes Chamber of Commerce members (and prospective members!) for a Business After Hours! Stop on by for food, fun and fantastic networking! We're on Padilla Heights at 12761 Quantum Lane in Anacortes and no RSVP is necessary to us, though the [Anacortes Chamber of Commerce](#) needs one.

It's going to be a fantastic night, including:

- A chance for your to run heavy machinery, with opportunities for prizes!
- Special door prizes!
- A view of our newly remodeled, Built Green Certified Conference room!
- Onsite BBQ by our cosponsor, Avenue Catering! The menu will include fantastic steak sandwiches!
- An unveiling of our Green Building Division



Images of the interior and exterior of our building

Sustainable and Efficient

The Building Envelope

This issue of *Sustainable and Efficient* will focus on your "Building Envelope." Your building envelope is the shell that keeps the inside from the outside. In my opinion, it's probably the most important feature of a sustainable and efficient building for one very important reason: it protects your house or business from the elements.

First, let's look at water protection. Ever been in a moldy place? Not really somewhere you want to be on a regular basis. Mold on fine cheese I can handle, not so much inside my walls. Mold can also cause failure in structural integrity. When your siding, roof, roof lines, flashing, windows and doors are designed right, you're keeping most of the moisture out of places where you have to worry about mold. When these elements are *really* done right, there's a way out for any moisture that gets in. Older buildings are typically far from airtight, which allowed them to breathe and dry better. Newer buildings are constructed to airtightness levels which make moisture control more important than ever before, which brings us to our next point.

Second, the insulation values of your building are important. Heating or cooling a building is the largest user of energy (and energy is money!). Spending a few extra bucks on good insulation has a short ROI. Hand in hand with this is the airtightness of your building. Think about how quickly a room cools off in the winter when you leave a window open. No matter how high your insulation values may be, air which bypasses it is unaffected. There are a few key factors to this. One is ensuring that insulation is installed properly, with no gaps. Second is properly sealing any exterior penetrations, such as where utilities come in or go out. Finally is ensuring that true craftsmanship goes into the project, which is a good catch-all for problems.

Building a structure "airtight" does have some drawbacks. First, air in rooms without proper ventilation starts to feel stale and can build up in allergens. Second, physics dictate that air will get in somehow when you're pumping it out from another (bathroom fan, kitchen range hood, clothes dryer, etc.). You don't really want to *restrict* airflow, you want to *control* it, but that's an article all by itself.

Finally, you want a building with good structural integrity, material durability and material efficiency. Buildings that last a long time without being over-engineered or overbuilt are a true form of "green" building that all of us can buy into!

What is a General Contractor?

If you're thinking about building, you've probably heard the term general contractor. Most people aren't quite able to put their finger on what that is. The explanation is simple. A general contractor will take your architectural plans and requirements, generate a price, construct the project and ensure its timely completion. They will also hire any needed subcontractors, such as plumbers and electricians, and may even generate your floor plans in "design-build" projects. Many projects in Washington require you to hire a licensed contractor unless you are performing the work yourself.

One concern some people find with general contractors is the added cost. Yes, a contractor will cost more money than doing the project yourself, and a licensed contractor (i.e., a legal one) will be more than your neighborhood handyman. You see, beyond simply labor, you're buying experience, the right tools and risk management. After all, your building is an investment. You don't want it falling down or leaking water (think mold).

There are several decisive advantages to consider before dismissing the notion of a general contractor. First, most financiers will require one. A reputable contractor will often save you money through preferred material pricing from suppliers, best practices for efficiency and simply doing the job right the first time. They'll be up to speed on the latest practices and materials. Finally, you're drastically managing your risk by hiring a contractor. In lump-sum contracting, they will provide you with a fixed price. An experienced builder will also mitigate risk of structural failure, mold, poor craftsmanship and faulty materials, all of which cost significantly more to repair than simply doing the job right the first time.

Something else to consider is time; how long are you willing to wait to move into your building, and how much time do you have to build it yourself? Good contractors can skillfully schedule jobs to cut down on construction time or "fast track" a project.

To choose a contractor, you can contact your local building agency (www.SICBA.org in Skagit and Island Counties), your chamber of commerce or ask for referrals from friends. You should also feel comfortable asking potential general contractors for references, including examples of their work. Finally, always ensure that you follow the law and hire a licensed contractor. In Washington, their license can be verified by visiting www.LNI.WA.gov and following the link for "LookUp: Contractors or Tradespeople."

[Quantum Construction, Inc.](http://www.QuantumConstruction.com) is a family-owned general contractor based in Anacortes, WA. Quantum has been building high quality commercial, custom residential and industrial projects since 1984. For information on how we can give you the best building experience, please contact us by [email](mailto:info@quantumconstruction.com) or by phone at (360) 293-0656.





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