



# INSIDE: HOMEOWNERS SURVEY

Exclusive Consumer Survey  
Puts Spotlight on Contractors

The Premier Magazine for Commercial and Residential Roofing & Insulation

JUNE 2013  
RoofingContractor.com

# ROOFING CONTRACTOR

A **bnp** PUBLICATION  
media

**Keys to Performing  
Annual Maintenance  
Inspections**

**PG 34**

**Maintaining  
Wage and Hour  
Compliance**

**PG 24**

**Why  
Contractors  
Don't Know  
Their Numbers**

**PG 16**

# WINNING FORMULA

*At C.I. Services, the Focus Is on  
Satisfying the Customer*



Visit us at Western  
States • Booth# 133





# Winning Formula

**B**ill Baley believes a company's success depends on its people. But he also realizes you have to have the systems in place to enable people to succeed.

Baley is president and owner of C.I. Services Inc., a commercial roofing, waterproofing and solar contractor based in Mission Viejo, Calif. The company has grown quite a bit since it was founded in 1992, but the focus on processes and procedures aimed at satisfying customers has remained the same. "Everything goes back to the same question:

What does the customer want?" Baley said. "That's how you build your processes — you build your processes around what your customer base is requiring."

You've also got to think big. "We always thought that you should set processes up as if you were a big company, even when you're small," he said. "If you do that — if you look at it that way — you force yourself to think like a big company. You make the right decisions that way."

Baley is also the current president of the Western States Roofing Contractors

Association (WSRCA), as well as a member of the National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA), the Roofing Contractors Association of California (RCAC) and RCI. But if things had gone according to plan, Baley would be flying over roofs and not working on top of them.

He attended the University of Illinois with the intention of becoming an airline pilot. He had a dual major — aviation and marketing — and earned his commercial pilot's license and mechanic's license. However, as he prepared to enter the job

➤ CIS employees include (from left) Bill Baley, Alberto Lugardo, Shirley Lidtke, Francisco Eufrazio, Elizabeth Montes, Andre Jones, Aldo Melendrez, Jorge Gutierrez, Randolph Wheeler, Bret Bozarth, Art Jones, Abraham Cortes, John Wolf, Javier Barajas, Kim Baley and Jesus Diodoro. Photo by David Sims.



by Chris King

## AT C.I. SERVICES, THE FOCUS IS ON SATISFYING THE CUSTOMER

market in 1981, the nation was in the midst of an oil crunch and airlines were laying off pilots in bunches. “There was not a job to be had,” said Baley. “So I stayed in school and finished my marketing degree.”

Baley ended up in the roofing industry by chance. “I was pushed into it,” Baley recalled. “I came out of school with a marketing degree, and Owens Corning hired me. I trained with them for the first three months, and after sales training then they handed out the assignments. They said, ‘You’re going to sell roofing.’ And I said, ‘OK.’”

After stints with Owens Corning and Firestone, he accepted a job selling for a large commercial contractor. “When you are coming out of college, no one ever tells you, ‘Hey, be careful about the first job you take because chances are you’re going to work in that industry the rest of your life,’” he said.

In 1992, Baley decided to open up his own business. “I always had an entrepreneurial bug,” he explained. “I liked the challenge. Of course, you don’t find out how difficult it really is to run a

business until you get into it. Then you find out how tough it really is, and you gain a lot of respect for the people you worked for. But that’s how it starts.”

The early days were tough, but with the help of his wife and some dedicated employees, soon the business was off the ground. “You start out on your own, and it’s fun, but it’s a struggle,” he recalled. “For me, the biggest milestone was selling that first \$100,000 job. No question about it. I remember the celebration. I remember how huge it was. Even today, when we might

## › Winning Formula

sell a half-million dollar job or a \$700,000 job, every time we sell a \$100,000 job, I still get a huge grin from that, because I remember what the first one was like.”

Baley also remembers the project well. It was a Bell Telephone building, and although the name of the company has changed, the customer is still a client today.

### ABOUT THE SONG ...

As a kid, Bill Baley took some ribbing about having a name made famous by a song, but over time “Won’t You Come Home, Bill Bailey” grew on him. “Once I was a professional, I loved it,” he said. “It was an easy way to remind people of my name, and people would remember it.”

Baley still gets comments about the song, but only from members of the older generation. “People still ask me about it all the time – if they are over 40,” he said. “Young guys don’t have a clue when someone says that to me.”

His name also paid off when Baley, a lifelong Beatles fan, met Paul McCartney at a book signing in Los Angeles. “It was a huge event. I actually slept on the sidewalk overnight to get a chance to meet him,” he said. “I go in, and it’s like going into a church. It’s so quiet, and everyone is so formal – they’re meeting Sir Paul. The girl in front of me walks up to meet him and starts crying. And he looks at me and says, ‘Yes, it’s quite emotional, isn’t it?’ People are losing it. I walk up and say, ‘Hey Paul, how are you doing? I’m Bill Baley.’ He jumps up out of his chair and says, ‘Bill Baley! That’s a great song!’ And he actually sang the song to me – snapping his fingers, clapping his hands. I was in heaven, man. Paul McCartney just sang my song to me! That’s definitely the highlight from my name.”



› A CIS crew performs a BUR installation on a commercial building in Torrance, Calif. Photo courtesy of CIS.

### Keys to Success

According to Baley, the key to getting and keeping customers starts with good people. “Number one, without a doubt, I have to say it’s the people,” he stated. “I’ve got really good people around me. You can’t do it without that. You hire good people, and you have to have family support, which I do. The keys to success are my wife’s support, the people that work for me, and the processes we put into place as a company.”

Baley is a big believer in setting up processes and following them to a T. “You’ve got to set up a process for every facet of your business — from order to execution,” he said. “Our phone gets answered on the first ring — every time. You start there, so customers feel good because they are getting taken care of right away. That information is logged into the database right away, so you don’t lose the call. Right away a work order gets generated, even if it’s an inspection. And for the inspection, there’s an inspection form, and there’s a process for the inspection. So the guys in the field know what’s supposed to be done, how to fill out the form and what information they need to bring back, photos, etc. There’s a place for all of those things, and it all goes in the database.”

That same theory is applied to safety, where in-depth safety training is complemented by systems and checklists. “We care a lot of about safety,” he said. “All of our guys have checklists before they start

every job. Again, it’s part of our processes. Before they get in the truck there is a full truck checklist, and there is a checklist with every job, and one of the line items covers any safety issues. Before they walk out of here, they are safety minded. On the jobsite, we have safety protocols we have to follow, and a safety monitor that checks out the site.”

Even minor errors can irritate a customer or delay payment, so there are quality control checks built in during the installation and the resulting invoice. “All of that is a process,” he said. “You have to make sure from the beginning you line all of that stuff up. You have to think like a big company. Big companies want to make sure their billings are correct and they get paid on time. If you don’t think that way, you’re always going to be the small company that never gets paid — that’s got piles of invoices they are trying to collect on. That’s where you fail.”

### Focusing on the Customer

Baley doesn’t take credit for coming up with these ideas; he’s just happy to benefit from them. “These are things I’ve learned from other talented people I’ve worked for and with,” he noted. “I’ve always said, ‘Take the best from everybody you work for and put it into your own company.’ Our vice president, Shirley Lidtke, does an incredible job of making all this happen.”

Everything is designed to make sure

## › Winning Formula



› The company performs all types of commercial work, including this high-rise concrete restoration project in Beverly Hills, Calif. Photo courtesy of CIS.

owners loved it.”

It works over caps sheets, gravel roofs, and built-up roofs, but it’s not recommended for single ply. “We developed that just because our customers were asking for it. They said, ‘You have to help us, we don’t have any money, but we’ve got to get this building in the dry.’ So we developed that, based on their pleas. But it works, and we love it. It’s one of our best-selling products.”

### Association Junkie

Baley served on the WSRCA board for 12 years before becoming its president. What drives him to participate now is what drove him to join the association: continuing education. “I wanted to know more. I needed to know more,” he said. “It really came down to that. I thought, well, these are the guys at the top, this is the regional association, and I need to be a part of that.”

A self-professed “association junkie,” Baley tapped into educational seminars to broaden his expertise on roofing technology and running a business. “Even before I was a board member, I was obviously attending these conventions and these seminars, and I would get something good out of every one I went to,” he said. “In fact, to this day, I always come away with something. They are always worth going to. And I think that’s

customers get what they want. “Our goal is to always solve customers’ problems within their budgets,” said Baley. “We work really hard to do that.”

It’s a mindset that served the company well during the recent economic downturn. When the recession hit and property managers’ budgets were slashed, the company had to innovate. “One of the things we came up with is a roofing system called EconoShield,” Baley said. “We had it trademarked and we’re working with a couple of manufacturers with it. It’s a liquid-applied emulsion and acrylic polyester roof system that allows the property manager to budget the owner’s money better, because he can pay for the system over three years. The

› Bill Baley (left) speaks with Operations Manager John Wolf (middle) and Senior Sales Rep Art Jones about an upcoming project. Photo by David Sims.



## › Winning Formula



› A CIS Technician measures an equipment curb during a roof inspection. Photo courtesy of CIS.

where some people make a mistake — they don't think it's worth the money to spend to go to these things and get involved. But you get so much out of it. It's a great investment."

As president of WSRCA, Baley made membership benefits a top priority. "We can't grow the association unless people see the value in it," he said. "One of the things that I pushed really hard about was making sure people see the machine that's working so hard behind the scenes. So twice a month we're releasing something new to the membership that the committees have been working on. The committees have been working overtime to get things done."

Baley listed just a few examples of information recently made available to members, including:

- A bulletin on the use of low-VOC adhesives and primers.
- Updates on the latest revisions to the International Building Code.
- A brochure for contractors to hand out to customers on the benefits and recommendations of roof maintenance on low-slope roofs.
- Updated TPO roofing details.
- A bulletin on the proper use of vapor retarders.
- Updated shingle roofing details.

Baley has high praise for national associations, but he believes a regional association is essential for contractors — especially in the West. "The NRCA does a fabulous job," he said. "They do what none of us can do, which is push the agenda of

roofers nationwide to Congress. We need that so badly, and they are so good at it. They do a phenomenal job of that, and of overlooking the whole industry. In the West, though, there are issues everyone else doesn't have."

Baley points to different climate concerns and types of construction that a regional association is in an ideal position to focus on. "We have different construction out here than they do elsewhere," he said. "In California, for example, we have all of these half-inch plywood deck buildings. Here we have an area of the country where there is a lot of plywood decking, and you just don't see that in other parts of the country. So we have to build roof systems that work in that type of design."

Climate and geography also differ quite a bit, even within the West. "Jim Carlson, our technical director, does a phenomenal job for the organization, because Jim's got his hands in all of these climates," he said. "At our board meetings he's constantly delivering technical updates about what's going on in the industry, and he has to take into account the huge climactic differences throughout the West. We have to talk about things and how they affect a guy in Seattle, where it's raining all the time, versus the guy in Vegas, where it's nothing but hot all the time. We have to figure out what works best, and that's a challenge. That's the West, and I don't think you see that anywhere else."

After taking over as WSRCA president, Baley was also faced with finding a new

executive director for the association. "We had a pretty big task this year, which was replacing our executive director, Arlene Lawson. Arlene's 25-year run ends in July, so as an executive board we had to put together a search committee."

The search process was difficult, but Baley is thrilled with the result. The new executive director, Tom Pappas, will be officially announced at the association's convention, which begins June 9 in Reno, Nev. "We brought in a top-notch guy," Baley said. "He has a really good marketing background, he has association management experience, and he understands contractors, so he's got all the qualities we need as an association. We're all pretty confident he's the guy that can carry us for the next 10-plus years. He brings a lot of energy and a lot of good experience. That's what we wanted — someone who could manage the association, and who could bring in new ideas to brighten things up some more."

It's that sense of collaboration and continual improvement that has marked Baley's career. He urges other contractors to tap into that energy by joining an industry association and becoming actively involved. "Going it alone is a scary thing, especially if you're a one-man shop," he said. "Why keep making the same mistakes that hundreds before you have made? Get involved with a bunch of people who can help you. Why as a professional you wouldn't want to try to get a leg up is beyond me."

That type of professional help has benefited Baley — and his customers. He pointed out that one longtime customer ends every e-mail with "We love C.I. Services." "I just love that," Baley said. "I want customers to think, 'I can always count on them to do the right thing for me.' That's what we really push here at the company: Make sure you take care of that customer."

He concluded, "I always say to my guys, 'You might be going out to do a \$500 repair, but you better treat it like a \$50,000 re-roof because that's probably what it will lead to if we do this correctly.'" **RC**

*Chris King is editor of Roofing Contractor. He can be reached at 248-244-6497 or kingc@bnpmedia.com.*