



Sustainable Solutions Are Paving the Way

Bert Elliott, Owens Corning

Today's homeowners not only are looking for roofing renovation solutions that help improve their home's curb appeal and comfort, they also are seeking home improvement projects that increase energy efficiency and sustainability.

According to *U.S. Housing Stock: Ready for Renewal: Improving America's Housing 2013* by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, about a quarter of households undertaking home improvements in 2011 indicated that a goal of at least one project was to increase energy efficiency. In 2012, the share of remodeling revenues from projects promoting environmental sustainability (24%) approached the share from projects designed to increase energy efficiency (32%).

Based on this growing demand, several innovations in the building industry are focused on providing homeowners with roofing solutions. Although ecoconscious roofing materials and programs are constantly evolving, there are three specific steps that roofing contractors can take right now to put your business at the forefront of the green roofing movement.

1. Specify Energy-Saving Shingles

Shingles are the first line of defense of any home because they occupy a large surface area and receive the most exposure to the elements. It makes sense that, when looking for areas of the home that can drive energy efficiency and sustainability, the roof is dominant. Today, many shingles work to conserve energy by diverting the sun's solar rays with highly reflective granule technology. By lowering the roof's temperature, shingles also help lower carbon dioxide emissions and reduce the urban and suburban "heat island" effect, which, in turn, reduces smog.

In the past, solar-reflecting shingles were only available in a limited, light color palette—an issue in the Midwest where darker colors are the most popular. Although homeowners liked the idea of having a cooler attic on a hot day, many didn't want to install white or pale-colored roofs on their homes. Now homeowners have the ability to choose from a number of rich and textured color palettes to ensure their roofs are both beautiful and energy efficient.

2. Know Your State's Tax Breaks

As you know, many states are now offering tax breaks to homeowners who use energy-saving products, both inside and outside the home. Be sure to educate your customers on the benefits of using ENERGY STAR®-rated building materials, including certain types of shingles and insulation products. For homeowners who are already concerned with going green, energy-efficient products that can save energy while lowering both heating and cooling bills, as well as tax payments, are important to consider when specifying renovations.

3. Get Involved in Building Material Recycling

To help cut carbon emissions and save natural resources, many roofing materials manufacturers are finding creative ways to convert old materials into new resources without sacrificing product quality. Owens Corning Roofing and Asphalt, for example, helped spearhead a new

process that increases shingle recycling and material reuse across the country by taking a 360-degree approach to sustainability that encompasses all points in a shingle's life cycle. This program converts old shingles into asphalt roads and provides contractor discounts on drop-off recycling fees. Homeowners are seeking out builders and contractors who are doing more to help the environment, such as participating in material recycling programs, so differentiate your business from the competition.



Owens Corning's Duration® Premium Cool Shingles are available in a unique colorful palette.

The Future of Ecoconscious Renovation

As builders and homeowners become more educated about energy efficiency, home renovations will adopt a systemic approach to sustainability and energy savings. Expect to see innovative green renovation solutions that integrate multiple areas of the home—including the roof, walls, and windows—to ensure the whole home functions together to conserve energy.

It's important to keep in mind that a cool roof doesn't act alone. For homeowners, it's economically savvy to upgrade insulation and air sealing before installing shingles to ensure all components work in tandem for energy efficiency.

In material recycling, we'll soon see programs that extend a shingle's life cycle into new beneficial uses. Instead of converting old shingles into new asphalt roads, industry innovators are working to turn old shingles into new roofing and building materials, promising a big push forward in sustainable materials manufacturing, especially for asphalt-based materials and recycled content.

Recent research proves that the sustainable renovation movement is gaining momentum, especially among homeowners. Adopt these trends early to fully take advantage of opportunities created by consumer demand.

Bert Elliott is director of products and programs, roofing and asphalt, at Owens Corning.