



JEFFREY BOSDET/DOUGLAS MAGAZINE

EASY JOB QUOTE



TYPE OF BUSINESS Online marketplace for homeowners to find contractors for home renovation projects
YEAR FOUNDED 2013 | **OWNERS/PRINCIPALS** Lisa Tinney and Russell Fairburn | **EMPLOYEES** 1

AS HOMEOWNERS, Lisa Tinney and Russell Fairburn have seen the good, the bad and the ugly of hiring the right contractors for home renovation projects. In her former career as a small-business banking consultant, Tinney also learned how difficult it can be for busy contractors to market their companies without spending a fortune in advertising.

Those experiences led the couple to create a business designed to fill the needs of a dual market: homeowners needing contractors, and contractors needing to market their services.

Drawing on Fairburn's background in information technology, the couple created Easy Job Quote, which brings homeowners and contractors together in a fair bidding process conducted in an online marketplace.

How does it work? "We send our in-house contractor to the client's home to discuss the project, providing photos, measurements and plans, if necessary — everything needed for contractors to bid on the project," says Tinney. They then post the job and open up the bidding process to contractors who have been pre-screened with background checks.

After each job is complete, homeowners can rate the contractors and post reviews in the online forum to assist other homeowners to make good selections.

The blind bidding system allows younger and newer contractors to compete equally with the "big fish" and encourages companies to create bids they're happy with rather than racing for the lowest bid. It's a win-win.

"Easy Job Quote gives homeowners a powerful voice in the marketplace — and it gives good contractors a way to find work and a chance to shine."

Q&A

WITH LISA TINNEY AND RUSSELL FAIRBURN

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER STARTUPS?

RUSSELL Don't be afraid to try things. If they don't work out, move on quickly. Let the market tell you what's working.

LISA Be flexible and patient. It takes time to discover the best course of action and to build your market.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

LISA Along with the startup challenges faced by any new business, our biggest hurdle was to make a brand-new concept clear, especially given that we have a split market of both homeowners



Russell Fairburn and Lisa Tinney

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and contractors. We spent our first year getting the word out about our new business, and the second year getting our concept understood. Now our focus is on getting our service top of mind in the marketplace.