



## Innovative Online Marketplace Launches in Toronto

*uknowa.com's radical approach offers savvy homeowners an intelligent way to hire the right contractor for their home renovation and repair jobs*

**Toronto – June 15, 2011** – uknowa, a free, online local matching engine that makes it simple for anyone to find and evaluate a contractor, receive bids online, and hire the right professional with confidence, has launched in Toronto. Unlike the traditional approach that forces homeowners to wade through online search results and classified ads, uknowa lets homeowners advertise their renovation and repair jobs to vetted, interested and available contractors. Contractors submit their bids completely online within 24 hours so homeowners can be confident they are paying the right price for their job. uknowa eliminates the time consuming exercise of searching for a contractor, the inconvenience of back-and-forth phone calls and high-pressure onsite sales tactics.

### **Word of Mouth on Steroids**

“We’re the answer to the question we all ask our friends when we need to hire someone to do a job: ‘Do uknowa’ good contractor?’ says Carlo Perez, uknowa’s founder and CEO. “The difference is that we don’t just know one person, we know the best everyone in town.

“Anyone who has done a home renovation knows finding a contractor is a time-consuming and frustrating process. From searching online, to phone tag to missed appointments, just arranging a first meeting can quickly turn into a project in itself. Even when a homeowner does finally meet with a contractor, the homeowner may not be certain about whether they’re getting the best price. By receiving multiple bids online, homeowners not only get a price, they also get a clear idea of what their job should cost. Uknowa saves homeowners time, money and hassle. It’s the smart new way to hire the right contractor for the job.”

### **The Trillion Dollar Opportunity**

uknowa is an example of the trend in online-2-offline commerce (O2)), where online tools drive offline, local sales. An August 2010 [article](#) by Alex Rampell in the online magazine, TechCrunch, pegged O2O as a trillion dollar opportunity. Like Groupon, Google Local and other predecessors in this space, uknowa is flipping the traditional model for hiring the right professional on its head.

“Up until now, the onus has been on the homeowner to tackle the daunting task of finding the right professional for their job,” says Perez. “uknowa turns that completely around. It’s a disruptive solution to the home construction industry that is so elegant and simple; people can’t believe it hasn’t always been done this way.”

## **The Opposite of Search Engines and Classified Ads**

Unlike online search engines and classified ad sites like Craigslist and Kijiji that require homeowners to dig through numerous listings, uknowa customers put their home renovation and repair jobs up for auction then let contractors come to them.

uknowa also addresses the safety concerns inherent in dealing with someone who has been contracted online. Professionals can choose to have their licensing and insurance verified so homeowners can be assured they're getting someone who is qualified for the job. Customers are also protected by uknowa's unique review system. While other review sites allow anonymous reviews, uknowa only allows reviews from verified customers. uknowa's policy of "no anonymous reviews" means all reviews are tied to a job done through the system or that has been personally verified by uknowa staff.

## **The Skilled Trades Paradox**

The Canadian Construction Association reports that Canada has a [shortfall](#) of between 25,000 and 60,000 skilled trades' people. This problem is [expected to worsen](#) as the population ages and skilled trades professionals retire. At the same time, the home renovation industry is booming. According to the Ontario Home Builders' Association, 211,000 home renovation and repair jobs are expected to take place in the province this year, representing \$10.9 billion in wages and \$23 billion in construction value. This robust demand, coupled with a skilled trade's shortage, means homeowners have no choice other than to find a smarter, better way to find and hire skilled professionals. uknowa is positioning itself to be the go-to marketplace for savvy homeowners.

## **About uknowa**

uknowa is a convenient and innovative online marketplace where homeowners find verified contractors. Without ever having to pick up the phone, homeowners can easily find the right contractor for their renovation and repair jobs. uknowa was created by an experienced team of computer engineers and passionate entrepreneurs including Carlo Perez, Edwin Liang, Mario Filipas, Kim Ly and Denis Odorcic.

## **For more information contact:**

Kim Ly  
VP Marketing  
[kim@uknowa.com](mailto:kim@uknowa.com)

Carlo Perez  
Founder and CEO  
[carlo@uknowa.com](mailto:carlo@uknowa.com)