

The Daily Reporter

Friday, August 9, 2002

Leading The Way: Bob Webb

Builder says best way to get a new job is to do a good job

By Mike Hogan

Daily Reporter Staff Writer

“Customers are more demanding these days,” said Bob Webb, president and founder of Bob Webb Inc., a homebuilding company he started more than 40 years ago.

Webb, whose homes are featured in more than 20 housing developments throughout Central Ohio, said he has learned the importance of customer satisfaction during the last four decades.

He said that since the company relies heavily on referrals, it’s very important for him to provide the best service, quality and craftsmanship.

“You only get the next job by doing a good job before,” he said.

And the philosophy seems to be working, considering Webb’s business has continually grown since he started the business.

“Right now, we are doing about 80 houses a year at all price ranges. In light of the economy, we are already ahead of last year.”

He added, “This is the first time that there has been a recession, and the home building business hasn’t led the economy down. The home building business was able to sustain good business, despite the economy.”

“We are building several lines of houses right now, ranging from \$250,000 into the millions. We do some production houses at the low end and custom homes at the high end.”

Webb, whose offices are based in Lewis Center, said the growth of northern and eastern Franklin County and southern Delaware County has led to a continued demand for his services.

But despite demand, he said, there still continues to be obstacles in the home building industry.

“In this business, you have got to keep growing to stay in the business, but the problem today is that many smaller businesses are having trouble because of availability of ground.”

But despite obstacles, Webb said, he is determined to keep the business going strong. Webb said with all of the competition there is today, growing from a mom-and-pop business to a fairly large business was a smart move.

The home builder has about 40 employees, and has seen his main role change as employees have been added.

“I spend less time working on the houses,” he said, adding that he now spends a majority of his time focusing on the administrative part of the business. He said he spends much of his time seeking land for new homes.

But Webb isn’t alone in his desire to build a strong business. His daughter Becky has found an interest in home building as well.

“My daughter got into the building business. She has been with me since college. She is capable of running the business.”

Webb's son, however, never had a strong interest in home building, but the company's founder has no regrets that both children did not share his interests.

"I tried to instill in both of my children that even though your father does it, that doesn't mean that you should be in the business," he said. Even so, he was one of many in the construction industry to follow in his father's footsteps.

"My father was a small contractor and I worked for him as a kid and through college," Webb said.

After getting his business degree from The Ohio State University, the Columbus native decided to get into real estate. Shortly after, to help supplement his income, Webb decided to start building homes. It wasn't long before he made building homes a full-time job.

Webb said his only regret is that he wishes he had started out by working with a big home builder, so he could learn the ins and outs of what it takes to run a large business.

"I think you learn the mechanics of how to run a big business when you start out like that," he said.

As far as advice for those wanting to get into the business, he said that to succeed, one must be willing to work hard.

"It's like any other business, if you work hard, you will be successful in the business. There are a lot of opportunities in the business."

However, he added, "There is an awful lot of competition out there. Even in a strong market, when there is a lot of business out there, it is still very competitive."

Webb was the recipient of a 2002 Consumers' Choice Award in the category of home builders, has been recognized as Builder of the Year by the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio, and has been a Parade of Homes award winner.