

Customer Profile: Big J Design & Construction

- by Ben Watters

Today, many companies desire to be vertically integrated. That means a company can start with its raw materials, manufacture its product and distribute its product into the market all on it's own. Since the entire chain of events is handled internally, it helps to avoid hold-ups from outside factors. Vertical integration also lends itself to total project management, giving the company full inside- knowledge of its product at all times. For a builder, vertical integration would include home design, drawing the house plans, building as many aspects of the house as possible with little sub-contracted work, and marketing the house to potential buyers.

For Craig Jones of Big J Design & Construction, vertical integration is the only way to build. Craig starts by using his drafting experience from Vincennes University to produce detailed drawings and blueprints of the home. Craig works very closely with the future home owners to include every detail expressed during consultation. By designing and drawing the house plans for the custom and spec homes he builds, Craig knows every detail down to the joist hangers.

To Big J, being vertically

integrated means limiting the number of sub-contractors and suppliers used. Craig keeps the framing under control by doing it all himself. Craig, his father-in-law Robert Hardy, and expert framer Wendell Yoder have mastered everything from installing hardwood flooring to painting. Big J also keeps track of the financials internally. Craig's wife Jeanna, who is a CPA, makes sure every bill is paid on time and that each building project stays within its budget.

The Big J team specializes in affordable custom homes while maintaining Craig's high standards in every aspect of construction. Maybe that's why the quality of a Big J built home is easily seen from top to bottom. "Short cuts may work for others but Big J's goal is quality construction," says Craig.

That's why Craig chooses Bender Lumber to supply virtually all his building supplies. "I like the variety of materials Bender Lumber offers," says Craig. "They have everything from framing lumber to hardwood flooring." Another reason Craig likes to do business with Bender Lumber is the quality of service he receives. Big J's Contractor Sales Representative calls on



Craig Jones of Big J Design & Construction reviewing blue prints.

Craig at least once each week. "He is knowledgeable about the products he sells and understands his job is not eight to five. I can call him most any time to get the answers I need. Bender Lumber people go the extra mile. When it comes to service I'm especially impressed with Jim Mattingly, our Truck driver at the Paoli store. Jim will even help put the door in the opening if that's what I need," says Craig.

You might think it's all business for Craig and his family. Not exactly. "Family is more important than anything, no matter what the job is," Craig says. His family consists of his wife Jeanna and their two adopted sons Tyler and Joey. The boys enjoy dad's

time whether it is coaching football or working with dad on the jobsite. The whole family is active at Westview Christian Church where Craig serves as both trustee and treasurer.

The small size of Big J is just fine with Craig. Staying small enough to provide great service to his customers is very important to Craig. The team of Big J conservatively builds 4 or 5 homes per year. Building them in this manner will keep Big J healthy even in a down economy.

Bender Lumber Company would like to thank Craig Jones and his entire team for allowing us to be a part of the Big J family. As companies like Big J Design & Construction succeed, so will Bender Lumber.