

*Southern Arizona*

# HOME BUILDER

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*Scott Pottinger*

Custom Homes, Inc.

Scott Pottinger does not find clients, they find him. As a premier custom builder in southeastern Arizona, and one of nine Southern Arizona Home Builder Association builders with a Custom Builder Certification, Pottinger's reputation speaks for itself.

Based in Tucson, most of his projects are south and southeast of Tucson. Pottinger's custom homes are nestled in the hills and valleys of Santa Cruz County where he started his custom building business in 1980. Rio Rico was his base then, but word of mouth advertising led to work in Tubac, Sonoita, Green Valley, and Nogales. Moving his business to Tucson in 1984 produced some Tucson projects but most of his work is still in Santa Cruz county.

He plans to double the number of homes he builds a year by expanding his business in the Tucson area. "Having a good reputation and doing a good job means a lot. But, there are a lot more builders in Tucson now. As the town grows word of mouth advertising is not as effective as it once was," he says, adding that he is working on an advertising campaign for 1996 and considers it an extension of good communication, which Pottinger considers one of his strongest business assets.

"I hesitated to increase my business in the past because I felt I had all the work I could handle. Now that I'm more experienced, and feel I can handle more work, I want to advertise and let clients know I'm available," he says, explaining that 16

years of experience as a builder has prepared him for the growth stage of his business. "I can control a lot more work and still be on top of it and do more work at the same time. Advertising will help me achieve my goal of getting more projects," he says. Over the years he has developed business savvy that rivals his building skills.

While he works with numerous subcontractors, Scott Pottinger Custom Homes, Inc. is a one man operation. I believe in running the job myself and not letting other people run the job for me. "I am the superintendent and general contractor of all my projects," he says, acknowledging that he will need to add staff as the number of projects he undertakes increases.



His advice to those starting out in the industry is to communicate honestly with everyone involved in the building project. Clarity is crucial when people are spending top dollar on their dream home. "From the time a builder meets the clients all the way through the project, honesty is important," he says. Pottinger understands that miscommunication at the beginning of a project can increase stress, for any builder, exponentially. Angry clients is one stress Pottinger does his best to avoid.

"I think spending a lot of time in the field as a carpenter has helped me in my business. As a union carpenter I was required to have special training and I learned a lot from that. I also worked as a commercial project superintendent for a big company in Tucson handling million dollar projects with stringent deadlines. That experience taught me what is necessary to finish a project on deadline," Pottinger says. He is proud of the product he builds because he knows his homes are built to the best of his ability. "I try to do everything for my clients as I would want it done if I were building for myself. I expect a lot out of myself and therefore I expect a lot out of the people who work for me," he says.

He admits that subcontractors who are unfamiliar with his working style may be offended at first. "Once the people I work

with get to know me they realize I am just trying to do the best job possible. I think they appreciate that after they work for me for a while. The people I work with day in and day out know what to expect," he says.

Believing the most important part of a good product is the workmanship, Pottinger hires the best tradespeople he can and makes it a point to pay on time. "I have a good reputation for paying people on time and I don't believe in holding back money unless it is absolutely necessary. I will hold back payment if I am using a relatively new contractor and I have a deadline that is very important to meet. I stop this practice after the first few projects the contractor and I work on together," he says.

Working with Pottinger may be difficult for some, but his hands on management style means that subcontractors seldom have to waste time waiting for him to get back to them with answers to questions or solutions to problems. "I usually answer questions right on the spot or within a reasonable amount of time," he says. He also makes a point of returning phone calls promptly. "I return a lot of calls on the road when I'm in my truck. I make a point of returning calls as quickly as I can. I think that is really important in business," he says.

Working for himself can be stressful,

but there are advantages too. Juggling clients, contractors and his 12 year-old son keeps Pottinger busy. Some would find his lifestyle stressful, but he has learned to minimize stress. On the job Pottinger reduces stress a number of ways. Using subcontractors who perform work to his exacting standards is a sure fire way to lessen stress, and communicating well with clients and subs is another way he eliminates stress.

The best stress reliever by far for Pottinger is building the best houses he can, the payback is satisfied clients. "It is very rewarding to stand back and see the excitement of people in their new home when they invite me back after they have moved in," he says. What makes his homes different is the attention to detail. As a self-proclaimed perfectionist, Pottinger says, he pays close attention to detail. "Structurally my houses are sound, and aesthetically they are as close to flawless as possible," he says.