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Building Savvy

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DENNIS CELSOR BLAZES HIS OWN TRAIL

A Homebuilding
Industry Publication



PHOTO BY JASON ROBERTS

[savvy builder]

BUILT GREEN CUSTOM HOMES

Dennis Celsor Targets the Do-It-Yourself Inclined



Like most good builders, Dennis Celsor has a passion for home building and seeing his customers move into the house of their dreams. But Celsor's approach to building is completely different than most others. In fact, his Built Green Custom Homes company is only a good fit for a small percentage of homebuyers.

"Home building doesn't have to be a mystery," says Celsor. "Through education, building relationships and different ways to save money, homeowners can control the building process for their dream home."

Built Green Custom Homes lets the home buyer call the shots while essentially becoming their own home builder. They are encouraged to use good subcontractors to build the home and have the option of doing some of the work themselves. The allure is control of the building process, opportunities to save money, and getting the exact type of construction they desire.

For nearly 20 years, Celsor has been showing people how to build their own homes, save money and get more for their investment dollar. Through the Built Green system, he teaches people from all walks of life how to take on custom home building projects ... even if they don't have any prior construction experience.

With the help of the Built Green team, clients manage their projects and participate in the decisions about design, materials, and subcontractors. Built Green provides the expertise, contacts, and know-how with the goal that the job gets done right, on time, and within budget.

After retiring as a Captain with the Houston Fire Department in 2000, and managing a rental property business, he began coaching clients on how to build their own homes using subcontractors. He's been with Built Green since 2004 (starting in Houston), but became an owner of BGCH in Central and South Texas in 2010. Celsor is a certified through the NAHB as a Graduate Master Builder, Aging-in-Place Specialist and Certified Green Professional.

"I got started in this business over 40 years ago," says Dennis. "My dad bought a partially finished new home that needed lots of repairs. We just went to the hardware store or lumber company and asked how to do it and then did it. After that we decided to flip houses, but had not learned the first three rules of real estate ... location, location, location. So those flip houses turned into profitable rent houses. We operated a rental property business for the next 22 years with as many as 27 homes/town homes."

Home building is much more than a sticks-and-bricks business. The BGCH team enables the buyer to build good relationships with suppliers and subs as the owner builder manages the building process.



Dennis and his
wife, Rebecca

"As a design/build consulting firm, we are looking for a niche client who wants control of their life. Our clients tend to have somewhat of a spirit of adventure. Many are focused on saving money. Many are looking to get the home built the way they want it. Many are focused on affordable energy efficiency. They want to get the most bang for their buck."

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"The consultation starts long before the client writes a check. We like to meet the client first at the build site to answer questions, as most have never built before. We assist in laying out the possible house site, discuss slope and water flow, preserving trees, where to place the garage and driveway, septic systems, and avoiding mistakes.

The buyer is offered an education in home building by BGCH. They offer free home-building classes to clients and future clients with hours of detailed on-line training.



"We urge our clients to choose affordable energy efficiency; it's really a must. And they tell us that our reputation makes a difference. The free classes and education are a real plus. Over two dozen available inspections by an engineering company gives added comfort that the home is being built correctly. It all comes back to saving money, more equity, lower payments, energy efficiency, getting the home built the way you want, choosing the subs you want to work with, having the satisfaction of building your own home."

A critical part of Dennis' business revolves around having a solid, dependable list of contractors and suppliers. Built Green has a core group who really enjoy working with the owner/builders. In his system the home takes on a more personal feel, as the clients are much more involved in the process.



"He takes a very personal, down-to-earth approach with his clients. He's also very passionate about what he does ... and his clients respond well to this." – **Damon Benedict, River City Flooring**

Here's what some of them had to say:

"I've been working with Dennis for about seven years. He's a great partner and a great man of integrity who cares so much about all of his clients." – **Kim Acker, Sage Capital Bank**

"When he tells you the job is ready for your crew, it always is. Everything is lined up, and we don't waste any time." – **Ishmael Gonzales, Erntex Plumbing**

"I've worked very closely with Dennis on his educational classes and at the same time have learned a great deal about the building business through him. What we do is not for everyone ... but for those who are motivated and willing to learn, it's great. His business model is one of the best-kept secrets out there." – **Charlie Crocker, JPI Electric**

"He's a builder's builder. Through his education classes, and the entire building process, Dennis becomes like family to his subs and the homebuyer. He really cares about his job, and it shows." – **Kathie Millen, Longhorn Solar ▼**

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