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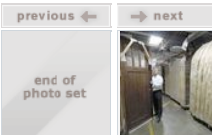
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Greg Wozniak, owner of Doors For Builders, offers luxury wooden entryway doors at his Bensenville showroom.

Scott Sanders | Staff Photographer



Business turns around custom doors - quickly

By Kim Mikus | Daily Herald Columnist

Contact writer

PRINT MAIL STORY

Published: 7/23/2008 12:04 AM

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When approaching a home, the front door often gives the first impression.

Entrepreneur Greg Wozniak, who founded a real estate development company five years ago, realized this and saw a void in the market.

Wozniak spotted what he saw as a shortage of companies that manufacture high quality, luxury wooden entryway doors.

"I saw a need out there," the Glenview resident said.

Wozniak found that homeowners grew frustrated when many suppliers require a three- to four-month wait for a custom door. One-of-a-kind doors are often pricey as well.

"Some can cost as much as a car," Wozniak, 37, said. "We decided to automate the custom industry."

About two years ago, he launched Doors For Builders in Bensenville. He mainly catered to builders and architects. Individual homeowners started hearing of the showroom at 300 Eastern Ave., though, and the business is now adding homeowners to its marketing plan.

The business has seen a 40 percent hike in sales over last year, and Wozniak points to professional service, quality and doors that are available the same day.

"It's a good recipe," he said.

One key ingredient in his formula, he said, is to offer custom doors with a price tag of about half of what consumers might find at large retailers.

To cut costs, instead of making one door at a time, Wozniak makes about a dozen at the same time. "We have close to 1,000 doors in our warehouse. There are about 40 different models," he added.

The business owner said Doors For Builders delivers the next day and sells on the Internet.

"Our Web site (www.doorsforbuilders.com) is a powerful instrument," he said.

The prehung, factory finished doors are available in several woods including mahogany, cherry and knotty

alder. Wozniak works with three companies in Central America, Asia and Eastern Europe to make the doors.

Wozniak, born and raised in Poland, immigrated here when he was 18. He worked in the corporate world in finance, sales and marketing at Kraft Foods when he earned his MBA from Northwestern University. He also worked on the marketing team at Barilla's U.S. headquarters in Bannockburn.

"I understand what it takes to start a business. It's easy to open a business. It's difficult to be profitable," he said.

The showroom is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

President named: The Junior League of Chicago announced that Naperville resident Laura Anderson has been elected president for a two-year term.

Anderson has been a leader and served the JLC for more than a decade. She joined the JLC, a non-profit organization that has served the area for nearly 100 years, in 1997.

The Junior League of Chicago is a metropolitan organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism developing the potential of women and improving the community.

New consultant: Debra Charles joined Silver Connections as a senior care consultant. Charles will work in the DuPage area to assist seniors with their housing needs and to ensure the communities in the network are supported. She comes to Silver Connections after a 14-year career in the real estate industry. At Silver Connections, Charles will help match the right senior living community to her customers' needs instead of representing just one location. Silver Connections helps find housing designed around each individual's needs and budget.

• Kim Mikus covers small business. Comments are welcome at (847) 427-4567 or kmikus@dailyherald.com.

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