

Remodeling

POLISHED, SMALL COMPANIES

Dan Kerns

KERNS CONSTRUCTION, LITTLETON, COLO.

When Dan Kerns (center) told his father he wanted to start his own business by age 26, he was serious. Not only did he beat his prediction by a year, but he's now been in business for 16 years. Staying small, organized and in control are the keys to which he attributes his success.

"Organization is one of the main reasons I can keep my company small and still make a very good profit," says Kerns. He relies on computers for his bookkeeping, contracts and payroll but handles estimating by hand. With the amount of custom work Kerns does, this makes sense for him, and he makes sure that his system is fast and accurate. His contracts spell out not only what is included in the job but what isn't.

"I like to keep my company small. I can be in complete control and eliminate a lot of errors and wasted costs."

Keeping his company small also means Kerns has complete control over quality. One of his goals for each job is never to have a punch list. "It's easier for us to finish the job correctly the first time," he explains. Kerns visits each job site daily to review progress, and he's the one who inspects the end result.

Kerns's customers seem to be impressed with his thoroughness and attention to detail. All of his business comes through referrals; 20 percent are repeat customers. And he's already booked up for the next six months.

"Some people complain that I'm so organized," says Kerns. But his organization means that he can run his small and smart business, make a tidy profit and still go to every one of his son's baseball games.

Full-service remodeling
16 years in business
1996 volume: \$465,000
Staff: 1/2 office, 2 1/2 field



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