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SETTING A SOUTHERN COURSE

DAN WORSTELL AND
PYRAMID ROOFING ARE
REELING IN SUCCESS

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SETTING A SOUTHERN COURSE

by Bob Houchin

DAN WORSTELL HAS BUILT HIS COMPANY, PYRAMID ROOFING, INTO A MONUMENTAL SUCCESS THANKS TO THE SUPPORTIVE TEAM THAT SURROUNDS HIM. NOW, HE'S OPENING ANOTHER LOCATION IN LOUISIANA, WHERE HE ONCE GREW UP, TO HELP WITH THE DESTRUCTION HURRICANE GUSTAV LEFT BEHIND.

DAN WORSTELL FINDS PEACE sitting and staring at the sunlight shimmering off the Chesapeake Bay. It shouldn't be a surprise that he chose to house his Hampton Office along its waters. This has become his ideal spot to recharge his batteries and relax. If only for a few hours, he can escape the responsibilities of running his business, Pyramid Roofing.

Make no mistake. Dan loves his company, and it's managed to grow wildly successful in a short period of time. In less than 10 years, he's opened two locations and become one of the largest roofing contractors in his part of Virginia. Still, he finds it nice to slip away.

If seclusion is his goal, why would Dan retreat to one of his offices? That question is easily answered once you've set your eyes on his Hampton Office. No computers or paperwork can be found there, and the only phone on the premises is the cell phone Dan may have in his pocket. You see, Dan's "Hampton Office" isn't an office at all; it's his treasured fishing boat, which is docked in the town of Hampton.

"The company has offices in Williamsburg and Newport News. I thought it would be funny if I named the boat the 'Hampton Office.' I bought it as a reward to myself after Hurricane Isabelle came ripping through here in 2003," Dan explained. "That was a long and stressful situation. The boat provided some much needed relief."

Dan has been in the roofing industry for more than 20 years. He's encountered the aftermath of many destructive storms over that time, and it's led to many unique experiences. While roofing firmly has seeped into Dan's DNA, he can't help but chuckle when reflecting upon how he entered this industry. And Dan smiles a bit wider when he thinks about the many people who have helped him turn Pyramid Roofing into a success. His hard work alone did not allow him to enjoy the luxury of purchasing his floating "Hampton Office."

Dan's journey into roofing began as a young man. He grew up in what he calls a "corporate household." His father, Jerry, had a white collar job that required the family to occasionally relocate. The moves brought the family closer together. It also ignited Dan's interest in the business world and entrepreneurship.

The Worstell family moved to Louisiana when Dan entered the ninth grade. After high school, he enrolled at Louisiana State University where he developed a passion for LSU football and slowly began to discover what path his career would take. "I always knew



*Just another day at the office for Dan Worstell
of Pyramid Roofing.*

Hampton Office

that I wanted to get into some type of sales and eventually own my own business. While in school, I had changed my major several times and wasn't sure what I was interested in, but I knew I needed to graduate," Dan said. "A fraternity brother suggested that I think about construction management, which is what he was studying. I looked into it and found that I had taken a lot of the classes needed to complete that degree. I changed my major to construction management and graduated shortly thereafter."

Once he had the degree, Dan wasn't certain where or how to apply it. With some urging from a friend, he moved to Dallas where he found a job selling roofs mostly to residential home builders. For three years, he did exceptionally well—too well. The owners asked Dan to sign a two-year no-compete contract. That served as the nudge Dan needed to leave.

After some discussions with his newly wedded wife, Tammy, Dan decided to start Pyramid Roofing. He brought on a partner, Don Randles, who he worked with at his previous company. With some financial backing from Dan's father Jerry, the three men opened Pyramid. "I would sell the jobs, and Don would roof them," Dan said. "It worked well."

Over the next five years, Pyramid Roofing established itself in the Dallas market. Then, an opportunity arose in 1990 that neither Dan nor Don expected. A huge hailstorm hit Denver and suppliers asked the two if they were planning on working it. "Finally, we thought we should check it out. The damage was substantial," Dan said. "There was no way the local contractors would be able to handle it all."

Dan recruited his brother Dave, who had recently graduated from college, to work at Pyramid. He joined Scotty Ferguson and Earl Dreisbach, two of their most trusted employees in Dallas, to run their new Denver location. It didn't take long for the Pyramid name to become entrenched in the Denver community, too.

For more than ten years, Pyramid Roofing successfully operated under Dan and Don's leadership in both Dallas and Denver. Yet again, another opportunity appeared. Jerry, Dan's dad and silent business partner, decided to finally retire from his corporate job that sent him traveling for years across the United States. Dan's parents were going to settle in Williamsburg, Virginia.

"We'd always wanted to be near family, and it felt like this was our opportunity. We had visited Williamsburg a few times and really loved the area. I thought if we could run one roofing company out of town, we could do it again," Dan said confidently. That's what he did. Dan and his brother Dave relocated to Virginia to be closer to their parents. They opened two more Pyramid locations. The first was in Williamsburg, and after a short while in Richmond, the second location settled in Newport News.

Since locating to Virginia, much has continued to transpire. Dan and Don opted to sell their Denver location to a former employee, Jenni Petersen. (Jenni recently attended an RSI Profit Day and soon will be attending her first Expo.) A few years later, Dan and Don cordially split their long-term partnership. Don took the original Pyramid location in Dallas; Dan took the two Virginia locations. The two

still regularly talk and help one another when possible. And Dan has focused exclusively on growing the two Virginia locations into the multimillion dollar enterprises that they already have become.

Aggressively Brand Yourself in Your Community

Establishing Pyramid Roofing in the Virginia area wasn't necessarily easy. Dan was the new kid in town, and these communities were extremely tight. "Someone suggested that I should join the Kiwanis club; its one of the biggest chapters in the country," Dan said. "It opened doors. I got to know a lot of people, and this close community got to know me."

2003 marked a big jump in business for the company, too. "Unfortunately, Hurricane Isabelle hit. Life after hurricanes is a nightmare for a roofer. You work around the clock," Dan admitted. "It was a double-edged sword; people also saw the kind of work we could produce."

To cement Pyramid Roofing's name in the minds of consumers, Dan has done more than join a club and run a few storms. He has marketed wisely and branded the company's name. "We market in an assortment of ways. I'm the type of person who swears by branding. I want someone to say Pyramid Roofing when asked to think of a roofer. So, we do a lot of top of mind awareness ads," Dan shared.

Pyramid regularly runs in the three newspapers in the region, and he's done different direct mail campaigns. Where he's seen a lot of success is with his television advertising. Dan places ads on a local cable news channel that runs all day. "The station runs the news, plays four or five commercials, and then goes back to the news. We do a lot of 15-second commercials called bookends. We have the first commercial played after the news and the last to play before it comes back. And these two 15-second spots cost the same as a 30," he said.

During the broadcast the channel also has a ticker on the bottom of the screen that promotes Pyramid Roofing and the other companies that advertise on the station. "Sometimes we'll run promotions on the ticker. Normally, it will just have our phone number and logo," Dan continued.

Bolster Your Sales Spotter Data Base

Dan Worstell is trying to get the most out of RSI's Sales Spotter marketing program. He's managed to build up a database of more than 8,000 roofs that need replacement, and he did so by having a small contest in each of his company Pyramid Roofing's two locations.

"During my weekly meeting at each office, I offered everyone—office and field people—who came back with at least 100 addresses with bad roofs by our next meeting \$100. The next meeting I offered the person who could accumulate the most addresses an additional \$100. By the end of the contest, I had 8,000 addresses, which we regularly mail to," Dan said. "More than creating that initial database, the contest got everyone in the company to start looking around while driving. Even now, I get people bringing in addresses all the time." SGI

"It's extremely cheap to run, and it's exclusive. No other roofer can go on there."

Despite his success with different mediums, Dan still likes to advertise in the Yellow Pages. "I believe in branding, and I believe in people remembering your name, but I like to still have a presence in the Yellow Pages. It helps in case someone can't recall your number," he said. "I'm also excited about the opportunity the Internet provides. More and more people are going there to find contractors. So, we've invested in our site, and a lot of our marketing drives people to it. We're tracking our leads every day, and we're closely watching to see where the majority of our business is coming from. We'll market in whichever medium proves that it can best grow Pyramid."

Make an Outstanding First Impression

Dan may be a brilliant marketer, and he may have the ideal advertising mix to promote the Pyramid Roofing name. However, he knows having a successful business requires much more than catchy TV spots. The business must have substance.

Pyramid Roofing strives to make an outstanding first impression with all of its

Spice Up Your TV Spots with Testimonials

Pyramid Roofing runs a series of TV ads on a local cable news channel. Owner Dan Worstell said he sees results in the investment. One of the reasons why his advertising may be so effective is he includes video testimonials in his spots.

"We use actual customers in our commercials. I would bring in three at a time, and we'd run the commercial with them in it for six or eight months. Later, I'd invite another three to come in. I did that a few times. I have a bunch of video testimonials," Dan said. "Homeowners get a kick out of it. They get to be on TV. Plus, some of them are business owners, too. It doesn't hurt to get the extra exposure."

"I should mention, we also have all of the testimonials on our website, pyramidroofing.com," he continued. "That way, potential clients can click on each person to see what they have to say about us. The project has been a success." SGI

clients. They answer their phones live 24-hours a day. And the call staff can quickly and intelligently answer questions, address people's concerns, and schedule appointments.

Homeowners always meet first with a sales professional from Pyramid Roofing. All of Dan's sales professionals have received roofing, as well as communication and sales, training. They arrive in uniforms and wear shoe covers when in people's homes. "We explore every inch of a person's roof including the attic. We take pictures of everything, and we load them on a digital picture frame. It lets

homeowners clearly see what's going on with their roof," Dan said. "We're committed to diagnosing the problem, finding the best solution, and communicating to homeowners how we can help."

If the roof requires replacement, the sales professional will walk homeowners through their options and help them choose the best roof for them. If it's a repair, the salesperson immediately will schedule a repair crew to eliminate the problem. Whether it's a replacement or repair situation, should the roof need immediate protection from the elements, the salesperson will professionally secure

Dan Worstell stands in front of his shop with his trusted, longtime employees. With Dan in front is Betty Boley. In back from left to right are Felipe Leon, Scotty Ferguson, Vinancio Luna, Earl Dreisbach, Jerry Worstell, Mike Goff, and Dave Worstell.



the roof with tarps until Pyramid Roofing's repair or replacement crew arrives.

Provide a Superior Service Experience

First impressions may mean something, but they don't mean everything. Dan knows that once he's obtained a homeowner's business the effort doesn't stop. He works hard to ensure everyone's service experience with Pyramid Roofing is an excellent one from beginning to end.

This superior service experience clearly can be seen during roof replacements. Each crew is run by a supervisor who's solely responsible for that job. The supervisors introduce homeowners to the people working on their home. Pyramid Roofing has a long list of technicians who have worked with them for years if not decades. For example, Vinancio Luna worked with Dan at his first job in Dallas

only to join him when he began Pyramid. He's been with Dan ever since, relocating to Denver and later Virginia. Felipe Leon and Mike Goff have been with Pyramid since its earliest days in Denver. "Both guys work so very hard, and we're so proud to have them on our team," Dan said.

During the installation process itself, the supervisor will regularly inspect the job, guarantee the outside of the home is kept spotless, and manage the materials closely. Pyramid makes a point to conserve as much as possible and not pass along the cost of wasted materials to the homeowners. This is even more important considering material costs continue to skyrocket each year.

The site supervisor is incentivized based on materials that are conserved. He also receives a commission on the satisfac-

tion of the client. The supervisor will talk with homeowners after the job has been completed, and if they're happy and give the supervisor the final investment for the roof, he will receive another spiff.

"Our supervisors do a great job. They give homeowners their business cards and cell phone numbers. They honestly want people to contact them if they're concerned or have questions," Dan emphasized. "They want homeowners to have confidence and feel comfortable with the team that's working on their home. I think we do a great job in doing that."

Have Open Ears and an Open Mind

Over the course of more than 20 years in the roofing industry, Dan's learned so much. He's determined how to properly market himself, and he's discovered how to deliver exceptional customer service. The success of Pyramid Roofing can be credited to his willingness to open his ears and listen to the suggestions of others.

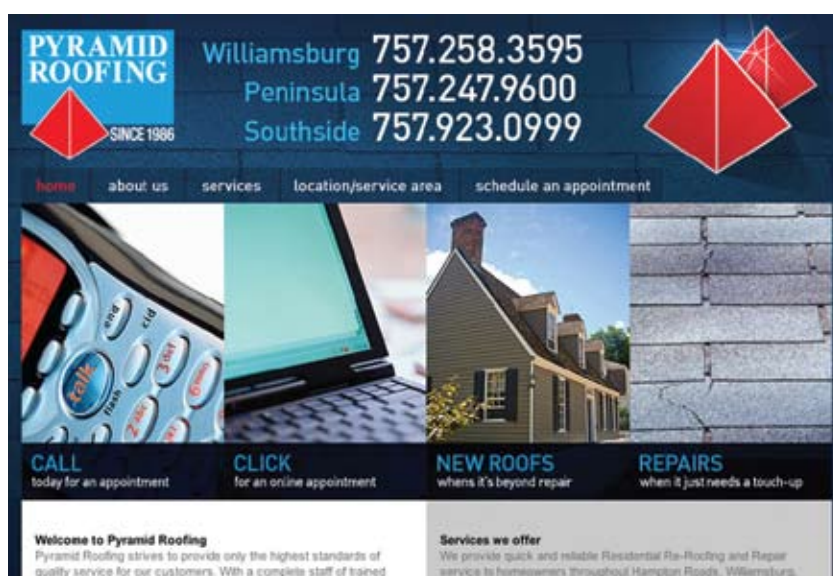
Really, Dan's been a sponge since the days he was a youngster. No doubt his interest in business stems from his dad Jerry's devotion to work. Dan quickly learned the roofing trade with his first job out of college and subsequently working with his first business partner Don.

Dan managed to pick up a great deal of insight from fellow successful roofers all across the country. In the early 90's, Dan and Don teamed up with a computer programmer to develop The Roofer's Database that would allow them to better manage their customer data. Later, they started selling it across the country at roofing trade shows.

"We don't sell it anymore, because we elected to focus on roofing rather than software," Dan said. "By traveling around, we were able to visit a lot of top roofing companies across the country. They saw us as computer guys. They opened everything up to us. We picked up a ton of valuable inside information. We learned bits here and there everywhere. I'm sure those lessons stick with us today."

Continue to Seek Ways to Improve

It was Dan's desire to learn and seek out information that ultimately brought him to Roofers' Success International (RSI). He



Drive Callers to Your Website

Dan Worstell understands how valuable each and every lead is. That's why he's beginning to experiment with a new program to lock customers into his business as soon as his call takers book their service call.

"We haven't done it just yet, but after booking the call, I want my call takers to direct the homeowner to our website, pyramidroofing.com. It lets them read more information about the company and see what kind of standards we have," Dan said. "On the site, we have repairsreplace.com linked to it. So, my call taker will encourage the call taker to fill out the quiz to get an idea of what condition their roof is in. It's a great way to get them into the mindset that they might be looking at a replacement."

"Also, the call taker will tell the homeowner about our online coupon that's only good if they sign while our representative is at their home. It helps us be more efficient that way, and the homeowner gets something out of it, too," Dan continued. SGI

received several RSI marketing pieces, and eventually, a Profit Day was held in Richmond. "I thought, 'Why not go?' It was in my backyard, and maybe I could pick up an extra edge or an advantage," Dan thought aloud. "If it's nothing, I'm only out a few hours."

"In the early part, they talked a lot about getting your company in order and making money, and that part didn't do it for me. I've had a CPA from day one, and I've always had a profit and loss statement every month I've been in business," he continued. "Then, they started going into some of the tools. Specifically, I remember them showing us the confirmation email to homeowners. I thought that was so interesting. They had a few things that really made me think."

The more the presentation continued, the more interested Dan became. Ultimately, he joined RSI that day. "I've always had a lot of ideas on different things I could do, especially marketing related, but I'm busy running a business. I don't have time to devote the energy it requires to follow through on those ideas. I saw RSI as the partner I've been looking for," Dan explained. "They can come up with the ideas, carry them out, and I can cherry pick which ones I want to use and implement."

"Another advantage to me was being able to call into the support staff, like Kevin (Gurski, RSI's Client Support Representative). I know I can call him and bounce ideas off of him, and he'll give me an honest opinion. It's nice to be able to work with people who want to help."

Surround Yourself with Those You Can Trust

RSI offers Dan support. Yet, Dan proudly will tell you that he has benefited from the support of others for some time. He admits that he's not the sole reason for Pyramid Roofing's success. Dan has a long list of incredibly talented and dedicated people he can trust and give responsibility. These people get results.

First and foremost, Dan remains thankful for the support and the positive influence his Dad, Jerry, provided him as a child, as a young man striking out into the business world for the first time,

Increase Your Leads with an Ugly Roof Contest

Dan Worstell of Pyramid Roofing recently experimented with an Ugliest Roof Contest. Using newspaper ads and TV commercials, he's asked people to log onto his site, fill out some questions, and enter to win \$2,000 off a new roof and a brand new gas barbecue grill.

"Once someone entered, we treated it like a lead. We captured their contact information, so we contacted them and thanked them," Dan said. "We also shared with them that as an appreciation gift, they're getting a complimentary 17-point roof inspection. One of our salespeople then will analyze their roof and take pictures, in case that person is the winner."

"After our cut off date, we chose the five ugliest roofs and posted pictures on our site (pyramidroofing.com). We advertised the contest, and to get people to vote, we gave away two tickets to a NASCAR race that a supplier gave us. The winner was thrilled with his prize. We sent letters to those who didn't win offering them \$500 off a roof replacement, if they acted soon, as a consolation prize," he continued. "We got 39 entries in the contest and already have sold six. I know we're going to sell more than that, too. The contest worked out pretty well, and it created more traffic to our site and increased our publicity." SGI

and today as a successful entrepreneur. Jerry may be retired, but he still acts as Pyramid's Roofing's comptroller and keeps his finger on the business' financial situation. "He's my rock," Dan proudly admitted.

Dan's brother Dave has been by his side for many years, too. His first job out of college was working at Pyramid Roofing's Denver branch, which he later helped run. He's subsequently moved to be with Dan at their Williamsburg office.

Scotty Ferguson, who began in Dallas, ran the Denver location and has moved to Pyramid's current Newport News location. Mike Goff assists Scotty and also made the move from Denver to Newport News. "Those two may not be related to us, but they might as well be family," Dan said. "I've been with those guys a long time."

Of course, nothing would happen without the help of Betty Boley, Pyramid's office manager. "People may say I'm the boss, but Betty is the one in charge," Dan laughs. "She's the one who knows what's going on all the time around here. She's been such an incredible part of the team. She was the first person we hired when we came to Virginia 11 years ago. And she still does an incredible job."

It's these people and the many others behind the scenes that have provided the building blocks that Pyramid Roofing

stands on today. This incredible team of individuals has slaved the long, grueling days, weeks, and months that are required when a hurricane or hailstorm hits. And they've also enjoyed company fishing outings together.

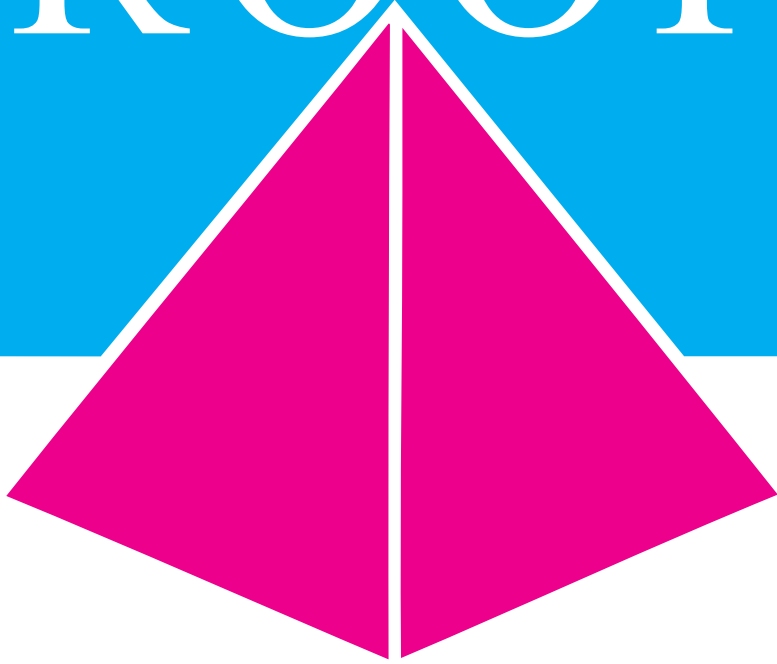
They're also the same group that's strong enough to meet Dan's next challenge. "I spent a large part of my life in Louisiana. I still have a lot of friends down there I care about. Recently, I went back to see the damage Hurricane Gustav left behind. It was something else. Those people are going to need some help, and I think Pyramid Roofing can be the ones to offer it," Dan said proudly.

"We're in the process of setting up our newest office in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dave, Scotty, and I will be going back and forth for a while to run it," he continued. "I've always wanted to get back to Louisiana. Here's my chance to do that and give back."

Busy days appear to be ahead, once again, for Dan Worstell and his team at Pyramid Roofing. That's perfectly okay with Dan, because he still has that love for the business that was sparked as a young boy, carried him through LSU, and landed him in a Dallas roofing company. In reality, the only downside of this new venture is Dan probably won't be visiting his "Hampton Office" quite as much. With any luck, he'll make up for it by attending a few more LSU games. SGI

PYRAMID ROOFING

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