

Jim Huff - vp operations (founder),
Kathy Huff - president (founder),
Chad Huff - vp design & production

FAMILY-OWNED
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H&H ENTERPRISES, INC.

The advantages of diversification

BY ANITA R. PAUL

WHAT'S A DEDICATED WIFE TO DO WHEN her husband comes home and says he quit his job and then suggests they start their own company? Kathy Huff took the news in stride, offering him the name of her existing administrative company along with the \$6.39 that was in the checking account. Since that fateful day in 1980, H&H Enterprises, Inc. has grown to become a respected ornamental and architectural metals builder in the greater-Denver area.

The small family-run outfit employs nine tradesmen and brings in about \$1 million in annual revenue working on projects that range from pharmaceutical plants and renewable energy labs to hotels, stadiums, and airports. Kathy Huff sits at the helm as president of the company, and she relies on husband, Jim, and son, Chad, who share the role of vice president, to keep business coming

in the door and ensure that what goes out the door is nothing but the best quality.

"We run the business like a three-legged stool," Jim Huff explains. Sales, production, and finance are the three legs. "If one leg is missing or ignored, the stool falls over." Jim, a retired volunteer firefighter and former construction worker, handles the sales and bidding processes, and building lasting relationships with clients—making it possible for the company to rely on word of mouth, referrals, and repeat business for a steady stream of work. Around the shop he is known as MacGyver because he is the go-to guy for practically everything at the company's 60,000-square-foot facility. Chad takes care of production—which could include anything from ordering materials to overseeing in-house design work to managing search-engine optimization

for the company's Web site. Leg number three is Kathy's territory. "When we first started the business our banker said get all your eggs in one basket and watch that basket," Jim explains. That is where Kathy shines. Her administrative expertise and old-fashioned sensibility has helped keep H&H successful, even during difficult economic times.

The company started out as a fabricator and installer of architectural metals and has added manufactured and pre-fabricated projects to its service line—building products in the shop and setting them in the field. "The pre-designed system makes it faster to erect projects in the field," Chad Huff explains. "That's where most of the risk is in the trade. The more we can control in our environment, the smoother things go." Providing this complete package is one key to the success of H&H Enterprises.

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
THORNTON, CO

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
METAL FABRICATION
AND INSTALLATION

ANNUAL SALES:
\$1 MILLION

EMPLOYEES:
9



“We strive to be the most responsive bidder in terms of quality and constructability.” *Jim Huff, Vice President*

“General contractors are looking to buy things as a package. We’ve addressed that need,” Chad says.

One example of the H&H complete package is the work it recently completed on a \$350,000 decorative metal project for the high-end Aloft Hotels, a division of Starwood Hotels. H&H designed, manufactured, and installed the decorative “swoof,” as the hotel’s brand design is referred. The multi-colored, modular feature was built in sections in the H&H shop, then trucked out to the site and set into place atop the building.

Aside from keeping tight control over projects in the shop, diversification is another way H&H keeps customers satisfied and keeps business coming through the door. Beyond creating ornamental and decorative metal designs, H&H handles new construction of small metal buildings, remodels, mechanical screens, and aluminum sunshades. “Having a diverse product line is an advantage. It makes us desirable as a fabricator because we can do many facets of a project,” says Chad. “Because of that, we’re in demand.”

Being in demand in today’s tight economy has its advantages. “In today’s market, especially with the economy, we strive to be the most responsive bidder in terms of quality and constructability,”

Jim says. “Our most successful projects are the ones where we are involved in the design phase and are able to provide our expertise in making the project ‘buildable.’” ABQ

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