

Family roofing business fastest-growing in America

By ELIZABETH JACKMAN
STAFF WRITER

Dan Grifford Jr. chuckles when he remembers starting his roofing company in November 2002, driving down the freeway in a four-door Ford Escort, weighted down with a compressor and tools, a ladder tied on the roof and four or five workers inside.

Just five years later, his company, Distinctive Roofing LLC, has been named by Inc. 500 as one of the fastest-growing private companies, not just in Arizona, but the entire country.

"Inc. 500 is similar to Fortune 500; however their ranking is not by largest, this ranking is by fastest-growing," explained Dan Grifford, III, who co-owns the business along with his father, Dan Jr., his mom, Mary, and holds the position of vice president.

On their business cards, father and son, refer to

themselves as (D2) and (D3) behind their names.

Distinctive Roofing came in at No. 146 on the list, experiencing a growth of 1,327.5 percent since 2003.

The Glendale family received their award during the 26th annual Inc. 500 Conference and Awards Ceremony held Sept. 6 to 8 in Chicago.

"I got to walk across the stage and talk to President Bill Clinton," Dan III said. "We also received a free iPhone and an American Express Plum card."

Asked what they attribute their success to, and Dan III is quick to answer, "a lot of hard work, determination and dedication."

And, added Dan Jr. and Mary, "honesty and dependability, honesty and our word is a big reason for the success of our company."

Dan Jr., who worked as a roofer for 23 years before deciding to venture out on his own, said he originally named the company Distinctive Services because

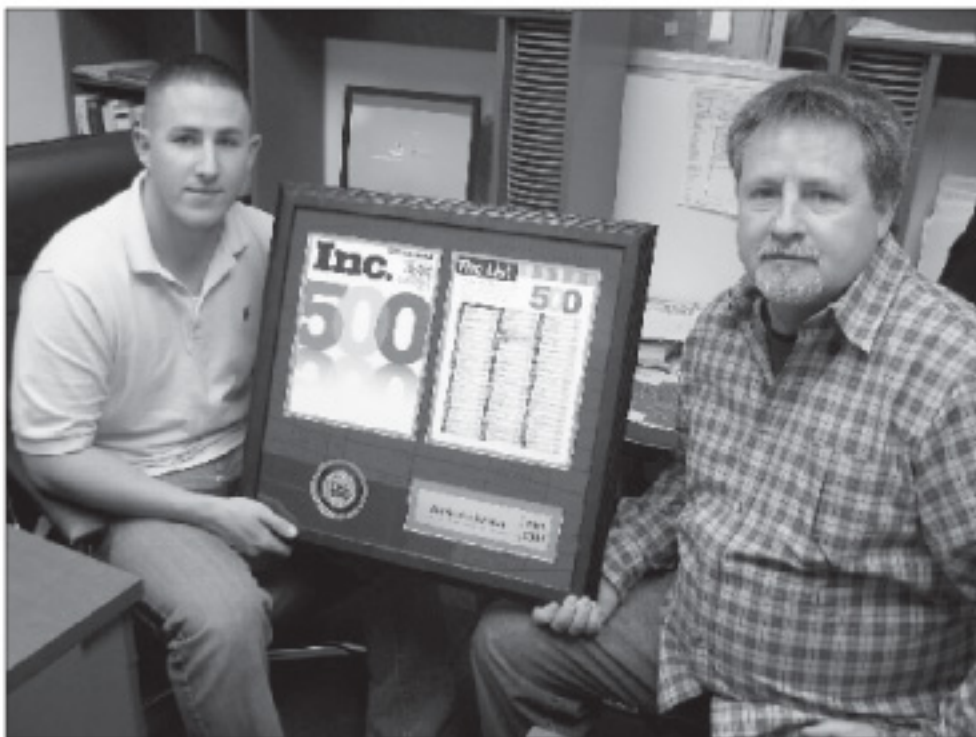


Photo by Elizabeth Jackman

Owners of Distinctive Roofing, LLC, Dan Grifford III, left, and his father, Dan Grifford Jr., hold the award they were presented by Inc. 500 for being the fastest growing privately owned roofing company in America.

he thought that anything he did was distinctive and different than everyone else.

"I thought it was better quality, better service than other contractors were offering and it stuck," Dan Jr. said.

Mary said they had originally planned to offer

other contracting services, but when they decided to specialize in roofing, the name was changed to Distinctive Roofing.

Dan III began helping his dad with the business during his senior year at Ironwood High School, doing clean-up jobs and helping solve problems

when he could.

He said he had a strong incentive to stay in school after his dad took him out and had him tear a roof off.

"I've torn off roofs - a lot of roofs. It is hard work," Dan III said. "I went to school after that."

He attended Glendale

Community College, majoring in business, then ASU West and earned a business degree from the International School of Global Management.

"I wasn't given my percentage of the company, I earned it," Dan III said.

Mary said technology wise, her son brought the company into the 21st century.

"He set up everything, the computers, accounting and made programs to fit our company," Mary said. "We've come a long way and we did it on our own."

Indeed, during a time while many roofing companies are going out of business due to a slowdown in total housing starts, Distinctive Roofing is flourishing.

The company has gone from sales revenues of \$200,000 in their first year to \$3.2 million in 2007, and are projecting a 25-percent growth for next year, Dan III said.

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Distinctive Roofing has made a name for itself as a subcontractor to high-end builders by specializing in expensive materials like Tuscan-style roofing tiles.

Dan 2 said they are a full service roofing company, offering repairs, inspections, re-roofing, and new construction, residential and commercial.

"We are one of the only roofing companies who offer financing and the first payment isn't due for 90 days," Dan III said. "It is an unsecured loan, you don't have to tie up your house and there is no prepayment penalty."

The company receives most of their business via word of mouth, referrals and offering great service at a fair price.

"We don't just send anybody to put your roof on," Dan III said. "And if we are doing the house next door, we walk over, introduce ourselves and ask what it takes to get your business."

In addition, Distinctive Roofing is a member of Rosie on the House, a referral network that researches contractors, providing the



Photo by Elizabeth Jackman

Owners of Distinctive Roofing, LLC, Dan Grifford, III, left, and his father, Dan Grifford Jr., stand in front of their job board.

public with lists of reputable companies.

"We also try to do community service any time we can," Dan Jr. said.

In April, father and son organized a coalition of 24 companies to donate a new roof to the Salvation Army in Glendale valued at \$100,000 in labor and materials. They have also helped out the Soroptimists, Kiwanis Club and Youth at Risk.

Currently, they are looking to purchase a new building for their business, with the stipulation it must be in Glendale. With 47 employees, they are bursting at the seams at the current location at Interstate 17 and Dunlap Avenue.

"We moved to this location 18 months ago from a 10-by-10-foot home office and it was too small before we moved in," Dan

Jr. said.

Plans for the future include tapping into other markets, including property management.

"We're here for the long run," Dan III said.

For more information visit the Web site at www.getdistinctive.com, or call 602-943-2047.

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