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OUT AND ABOUT

Faced with an unknown future, Kevin Kuta, co-owner and president of Quality Glass & Mirror, made a decision that would set the course for the rest of his life.

"I started [the business] with two things in mind," he recalls. "I wanted to be in control of my career. And number two: I wanted to send my daughter to college. I was in fear that I wouldn't be able to afford to do that." Kevin is proud to say that his daughter is currently a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Kevin started out in the industry as a glass installer for another glass company at the age of 25, and says he learned the business from the ground up. He was eventually promoted to store manager. With goals to be his own boss and to provide opportunities for his family, Kevin later branched out. Along with two partners, he started Quality Glass 25 years ago.

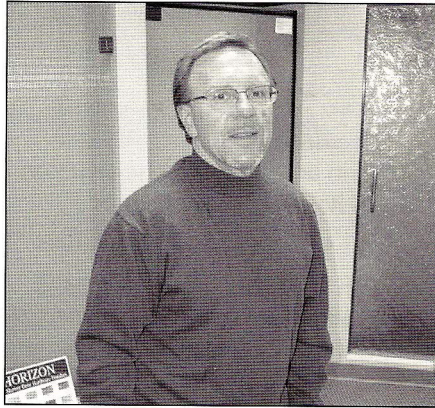
Though he and his original partners have since parted ways, Kevin now oversees the company's residential division. His business partner, Larry Hoover, oversees the commercial portion of the business. "I'm involved with the administrative responsibilities and oversee the residential division," Kevin explains. "I still continue to measure all of our jobs that we in-

stall...so I kind of split my time between administration and being in the field."

Kevin describes the residential side as having a wide variety of customers, from homeowners and interior designers to home builders and contractors. This division features shower doors, glass shelving, mirrors, and cabinet door glass; glass furniture tops; decorative glass; painted glass; and different types of artistic glass.

QUALITY GLASS & MIRROR

By Traci Osuna



*Kevin Kuta, co-owner and president
of Quality Glass & Mirror*

In both the commercial and residential divisions, Quality Glass is a manufacturer and distributor. "We transport our products to five other states, so we actually sell to other glass companies, as well as having our installation division," Kevin says. The entire operation is run locally out of Omaha. Kevin explains that the company purchases raw glass or large sheets of glass to create many of its own products, which are distributed across the Midwest.

"Glass is a product that is forever changing, and our customers probably are not aware of all that can be done with glass now," he points out. A few of the options available include glass panels in floors, glass handrails, and large glass walls in which the glass is utilized to open up space in a home. "We just see a lot more of stretching the limits as far as glass goes residentially...the customer's imagination is

really the limit as far as what can be done with glass," he says.

While the capabilities of glass are growing and progressing every day, Kevin says that he wants his customers to know that if they come into Quality Glass with an idea, the staff is happy to work with them to make their design a reality.

Kevin advises customers to watch television home improvement shows with an open mind. "People see just a little bit of something and they don't understand really what they saw, but they think it can be done in a certain way," he comments. Kevin adds that a lot of home improvement and décor ideas that appear on TV are staged and are not always a realistic option for everyday life.

"A lot of it is designed to look good first and then to function second. We kind of flip that around. When we walk away from a job, the customer needs to know that we're not going to be back there in a month repairing it because we didn't do it right." Getting the job done right the first time is at the very core of what Quality Glass stands for and delivers to its customers, Kevin says.

Carol Neff of Omaha is at least one customer who is thrilled with the results of her Quality Glass project. The Quality Glass team worked to redesign the glass shelves in her home. "Their many trips to our home ensured that our complicated vision was able to be completed with perfection. Needless to say, after working directly with Kevin, I know firsthand that he is a true professional and provides excellent customer service," she says.

Ken Oster, president of Oster Homes, says that he has appreciated the work that Kevin and his team have provided for

his business. "Throughout the six years that Quality Glass has worked on our homes, the level of service and expertise has been outstanding," Ken says.

With things slowing down in the home building industry, Kevin says that his business has felt some of the effects but is still standing strong. "The economy has impacted both sides of the company. We see the results not only in Omaha, but throughout the Midwest. It's pretty consistent, but we've been able to maintain and hold our own."

He credits his knowledgeable staff and their dedication to customer service for the success of the business. "One of the business philosophies we have is that we truly understand that customers have a choice, and we never take for granted that they will choose us," he says. "We attempt on every order, no matter how large or how small, to let them know that we appreciate that they chose us."

Kevin adds that the employees of Quality Glass treat every customer with respect and professionalism, and are committed to getting the job done on time and on budget. Earning the trust of customers is vital to the company's longevity. "I think that trust allows us to stay ahead of our competition because we really do live and breathe the mentality that when customers do choose us, it's more of an honor than an everyday occurrence."

Quality Glass & Mirror is located at 14242 C Circle, which is just southeast of 144th and Industrial Road. For more information, call the office at 402-339-3737. You can also visit the company's Web site at www.qualityglassomaha.com. The showroom is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. **WE**