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Envision Design/Build's Success  
Depends on Collaboration

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# Envision Design/Build's Success Depends on Collaboration

**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

Jack Knowlton's experience as an architectural designer and builder combined with Garrett Shaw's training in construction management enhances the Envision Design/Build firm. Both men agreed, "We're very much a team. We work well together."

The company offers design and construction of new custom homes and remodeling in addition to construction management. It's been operating since 1998, although Knowlton has been creating custom architectural designs since 1981.

"What I think one of my strong suits as a designer is to be able to go with a homeowner and show them what their home will look like. Garrett comes in behind me and lets us know if the architectural vision is feasible," Knowlton stated. "However, we're able to value-engineer projects to a client's budget."

"Jack's industry knowledge and my aspiration for the project's success are a good fit," Shaw concurred. "It's your

knowledge, too, Garrett," Knowlton interjected. "You have become as important as I am to Envision Design/Build."

A graduate of the University of Houston's construction management program, Shaw does the estimating and scheduling for the six or more projects underway at any given time. He coordinates the subcontractors, tradesmen and laborers in conjunction with the company's field superintendent. "We have, over the years, acquired phenomenally talented tradesmen," Knowlton added.

"Garrett is personally committed to each project, ensuring the building process proceeds smoothly through efficient planning and scheduling," Knowlton stated. "He's earned himself a partner position at the firm."

"A big part of my job is to take care of clients. Jack always told me, if he doesn't hear from clients, I'm meeting client expectations," Shaw admitted.

Shaw joined Envision in 2014. "Garrett's the best employee I've ever had. He's a very smart young man. He started as



an intern, and I've been able to mentor him and teach him how I want a home to be built," Knowlton said.

"My objective is to stay heavily involved with the projects as Garrett increasingly takes on more responsibility in the day-to-day roles of the building business. He's on the upswing of his life. I've been doing this for over 40 years. I don't plan to ever retire, but I'd like to fuse my schedule to design work and site visits. I can design from my vacation home in Galveston," Knowlton admitted.

"I love Galveston's architecture. But I also love Memorial. I grew up in this area, went to Memorial High. We try and stay in the Memorial area. Those homes have so much potential to refresh and add footage while keeping the neighborhood's integrity," Knowlton continued.

Although he had 12 years of experience as an architectural designer, the first house Knowlton built was his own, also in the Memorial area, 29 years ago. During that experience of creating his own home, many people asked for his help with architectural design. He subsequently contracted with

several other homeowners to build them their dream homes and founded Envision Design/Build.

About 60 percent of Envision's work is remodeling, while 40 percent is new construction, including custom homes, garage lofts, vacation homes, town homes and teardowns. Most of the company's remodeling projects are in the 3,000-4,000 sq. ft. range starting at about \$250,000. Typical remodeling projects include outdoor kitchens/living spaces, full home remodels and aging-in-place modifications. Its new construction projects are 3,500 sq. ft. or larger and in the \$1 million or more range.

"There's nothing that's the same in all of our projects over the years. Everything we do is different and very custom," Knowlton offered.

While Envision has always built homes under contract, the team began its first speculative home in November 2019 and expects to finish it soon. "The buyers will be getting a chance to buy a very nice, custom home of the same quality



as our contract homes,” Shaw stated.

Working with clients is one of the most appealing aspects of being a designer/builder to Knowlton. “Meeting with clients, dealing with clients, I love that. I am a very good problem solver. I look at problems as opportunities. Although it’s sometimes a challenge working in one of the most difficult industries in which to achieve high satisfaction, our clients become friends by the end of our projects.”

Those high levels of satisfaction are essential to Envision, which depends on word-of-mouth referrals for its business. “When we have a referral from the [prospective client’s] friend, we are confident Envision will be building their project.

“We’re known to be honest, trustworthy and up-front with our clients. If we can get in the door to talk to clients, we usually get the job,” Knowlton stated. “Building is all about trust. We’re very transparent.”

“We try to be as open with clients as possible,” Shaw added.

Several clients have contracted with Envision to do multiple projects. “One of the best feelings is when a previous client calls later down the road and wants to take

on another project. We call that Phase Two.”

Knowlton is proud of his certifications from the National Association of Home Builders, which include Graduate Master Builder and Certified Aging in Place Specialist. “I hope these designations show our prospective clients I care enough to learn more about the business I’m in.”

He also is a Certified Professional Building Designer and a Certified Green Professional. He has served as a committee member of the Remodelers Council of the Greater Houston Builders Association. He is a member of the Texas Association of Builders, National Association of Home Builders and American Institute of Building Design.

Additionally, Garrett was awarded a Certified Graduate Remodeler designation in 2017.

***For more information, contact  
Envision Design/Builder  
by phone at 713-789-8262 or  
visit their website at [www.envisiondesignbuild.com](http://www.envisiondesignbuild.com).***

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