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Semper Fi Contractors Convey Values with Name

Semper Fi Contractors | Houston, Texas



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By Kathy Bowen Stolz

If you expect a company named Semper Fi Contractors to be owned by a former Marine, you'd be correct. But you might be slightly surprised to learn the company's values are "Excellence, Honor, Humility" rather than "Honor, Courage, Commitment."

Scott Cubbler started Semper Fi Contractors in 2014, relying on its name to convey a common set of values associated with the Marines. The company name means he is responsible to everyone who's ever been a Marine. "I don't want to besmirch the name of the Corps."

Although Semper Fi's owner started his professional career with the Big Five accounting firm Arthur Andersen, LLP, Scott Cubbler defines his life by the 10 years he spent in the U.S. Marine Corps as an infantry officer during the Bosnian Conflict and as a general's aide de camp before becoming

the Marines' director of public affairs for the New York City area for five years. (You might have seen him on the morning television shows talking about preparations for the Navy's Fleet Week if you were in New York City at the time.)

A medical discharge six weeks after the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to Cubbler's becoming New York State's director of counter-terrorism training in New York City and then to his filling a similar role protecting the nation's critical infrastructure and cyber security for the federal government in Homeland Security for the eastern half of the United States for seven years.

When Scott retired after 20 years in government service, his wife Denise urged him to return to Houston where he had family and friends.



But it was during the renovation of his own 1971 Houston home that he found his next career. Serving as his own general contractor, he realized that renovation and remodeling of a home can really improve the quality of people’s lives while utilizing his planning and production skills.

Licensed as a mold remediation contractor, Cubbler is also a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS). In his own home’s renovation he considered his own aging parents and made the home ADA-accessible.

Just as he had in his own home, Cubbler focuses on making all spaces in a home he’s remodeling functional for every phase of life. He has repeated in clients’ homes the “collapsible wall” of moveable floor-to-ceiling bookshelves that he put in his own home. “I truly am helping people. A lot of people have a challenge they’re trying to deal with.”

He’s finding that people forced to work from home in these COVID-19 pandemic days now want the open design of their homes closed off into separate spaces. The “collapsible wall” is a good fit for that need, according to this native of Philadelphia who grew up in Oklahoma City.

“No one really knows how the pandemic will affect homeowners in two or three years. Right now people want a modified work space that isn’t just a bedroom without doing a lot of structural work.” He’s been able to help some homeowners improve their homes’ functionality by





suggesting a 5-foot by 5-foot rather than a 3-foot by 6-foot table in their breakfast nook. For others it is converting a sitting room into an office.

Semper Fi Contractors focus on projects between \$50,000 and \$250,000 in the greater Houston area. “We’re not a handyman service or looking to do two-day jobs. Other contractors are a better fit for those projects,” Cubbler said. Semper Fi typically does 12-15 remodeling projects each year, although this spring is different. “The Freeze is not dissimilar to Hurricane Harvey. We’re doing a ton of work at a lower price point trying to get people back into their houses,” he said.

He’s comfortable allowing clients to stay in their homes during remodeling. “It depends on the nature of the house and the environment. It’s their personal choice.” Because of his mold remediation certification, he has two air scrubbers that can suck the air and dust out of the house during remodeling, he noted.

With three full-time project managers on staff, Scott’s role in the company is to handle client engagement, sales, estimating, scheduling, logistics and the daily bookkeeping -- not a big stretch for someone who majored in accounting, finance and computer science at Trinity University. He visits every job site daily to put an additional set of eyes on the projects and provide direction on how to approach solutions to any problems that may arise.

“I’m proud of my guys. I’m proud of what they do.



They've embraced the company values." He said those values are the following:

1. Excellence: The work will be done right the first time.
2. Honor: The company will do the right thing for the right reason, even if it costs the company money.
3. Humility: It is a privilege to be in people's homes. The house is not a job site. It is somebody's home and should be treated with respect.

"Baby Boomers want to stay in their houses. It's a quality of life issue. Isn't remodeling for aging in place worth it to avoid going into a nursing home where you have only one or two rooms at \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year?"

Cubler, a member of the Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) Remodelers' Council, said he is not in competition with his peers. Instead, he relies on their good will to expand his building knowledge. "We work together to help each other out. GHBA allows us to get together and talk. We need each other."

Within five years Cubler expects to expand his business to flipping houses, but not just to make a quick profit. He's planning to change the very nature of how flipping is done by completely gutting a house and rebuilding it so that the homebuyer receives a two-year warranty, knowing



that everything is new and top quality. They can expect a Semper Fi house to be "always faithful" to high quality standards.

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