



More than just Home Improvement...

A few years ago, Matt Hoisington was the guest speaker at an Ellinwood civic club meeting and Dennis Carson was in the audience. It was a chance meeting that would change both their lives. Hoisington represented his employer, the Kansas Department of Commerce, at the meeting where he outlined the operations of nine workforce centers in western Kansas. His job was to match job seekers with employers. Carson owned C & V Home Improvement at the time and wanted to make a change.

"Dennis beat me back to my office," Hoisington recalled. "He wanted to retire but needed somebody to work with him for a year then buy him out. We couldn't find a candidate."

Then the voice in Hoisington's head became louder and louder.

"I come from a family of entrepreneurs," Hoisington said. "My Dad said 'Hoisingtons don't have jobs; we have our own businesses.' I grew up hearing that." As he was listening to the voice, Hoisington became better acquainted with Carson and hired C & V Home Improvement to do window and siding work.

"When the work was done, I was writing a big fat check to him," Hoisington laughed. "I asked if he was still ready to retire. Within a few weeks I decided to buy it." The transaction was official on Feb. 1, 2010. Hoisington kept the C & V name and the business is now located at 1107 10th.

"It had that name for 34 years. Most of our business is repeat or referral and name recognition is crucial. Dennis and I say it is a God thing. The good Lord brought us together," Hoisington said, noting C & V has a Christian culture.



Matt Hoisington (middle) with original C&V owners Larry Vogt (left) and Dennis Carson (right).

Hoisington acknowledged that after the first week he "felt overwhelmed. I talked to Dennis and he said he was bored. He came back on a part-time sales basis and is still here. He will officially retire at the end of the year."

When Hoisington bought the company, it had 10 employees and now has 17, including three at the 3-year-old Hays office. "You can't grow a company like that in one year," he said. "It has to be purposeful and manageable growth."

Originally, C & V was strictly an insulation business. Carson bought out his partner, Larry Vogt, and added siding, replacement windows and doors, seamless steel guttering and garage doors.

Hoisington added stucco, cultured stone and egress windows; he sells custom and packaged sheds, and offers awnings and patio covers. C & V collaborates with ProVia, an Amish/Mennonite company in Ohio. "We are co-branding on windows, doors, storm windows and doors, vinyl siding and cultured stone," Hoisington explained. "They are helping us re-design our showroom too. "And I love it that they are not ashamed to tell everyone they are a Christian-based company."

ProVia also offers a computer program that allows customers to visualize options. A photo is overlaid with new siding, for example, and ProVia Studio illustrates what the house will look like. Hoisington also is excited about ProVia internal blinds that are inside the windowpanes where they cannot be damaged.

One unique aspect of C & V is that installers are employees, not subcontractors. "I pay them well and they have insurance and retirement. They also have workman's compensation, which is so important." For instance, a guttering installer fell at a residence and was flown to a Wichita hospital. Fortunately, everything turned out okay, but if workman's comp hadn't been involved, the homeowner would have been responsible for the flight to Wichita. "I am protecting the customers, as well as my company," Hoisington said. "With subcontractors, you take a risk. We don't chase storms looking for work. We want our guys home and eating dinner with their families."

As a business and family man, Hoisington said the C & V culture demonstrates he values everyone's role in the venture. This includes the customer. "We educate people about their options," Hoisington said. "If you trick

somebody into buying something they don't want, they are not coming back. Subcontractors from out of town have no overhead so they can maybe quote a lower price. But will they be here tomorrow?" Because of this philosophy, C & V reports a 97 percent satisfaction rate. "Our survey asks about everything: how were the buying and installing experiences? Are you happy with how everything turned out? "Unlike big-city contractors, we live here," Hoisington added. "Our kids go to school with your kids. We attend church with you and support local charities. We will never arm-twist you into a sale. It is your money, your home, your decision. Period."



(Left to Right) 4th Row: Chad Rea, Cole Clawson, Kane Clawson, Josh Mayers
3rd Row: Matt Hoisington, Jack Willenberg, Charlie Scott, Jarad Allen, Matt Oetken
2nd Row: Garrett Ensley, Deanna Vannoster, Sarah Flipse, Dennis Carson
1st Row: Traci Couch, Claudia Wesner

