

Family connects over closets

Closets for Life owner recruits relatives to help with home-organizing business

by Jessica Harper
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To Rick Lyrek, owner of Closets for Life, his business is more than a home-organizing company.

It's a way to connect with family.

Much of Lyrek's family is involved in the business in some way or another.

Lyrek designs and markets all of Closets for Life's cabinets and wine cellars, which are manufactured by Interscapes Inc., a custom-cabinet business owned by his brother, Ron.

Then, Lyrek installs them in home offices, garages, closets, laundry rooms and other residential spaces with his sons, Daniel, 22, and Ryan, 20, his father, Pat, and father-in-law, Tom Hofflander.

Lyrek's wife, Shari, also assists with the marketing.

"It's a great way to spend time with them," Lyrek said. "I see them more now than before."

Lyrek said he enjoys teaching his sons the ropes of the business, and listening to stories about "the good old days" from his father and father-in-law.

Hofflander said he decided to help Lyrek with the company as a way to stay busy after retiring from his career as a physical education teacher.

Hofflander said he likes that he can work on his own time and at his own pace.



Photo by Jessica Harper

Rick Lyrek (right) established Closets for Life, a home organization company he runs out of his Apple Valley home, four years ago. Several of Lyrek's relatives, including his 20-year-old son, Ryan (middle), and father-in-law, Tom Hofflander (left), assist in the business.

"Rick is easy to get along with and doesn't demand more than I can handle," he said.

Lyrek's son, Ryan, said he enjoys the chance to learn from his father and grandfathers.

"It's fun seeing what my dad does and seeing all the pieces come together," he

said. Working as a family also comes with its challenges, especially when it comes to separating work from home life, said Lyrek, who runs the business from his Apple Valley home.

"I'm always at the office," he said. "But I enjoy what I do and the hours are flexible,

so if I want to see my daughter Molly play sports, I can."

Many times, he said, he will set aside time for family outings as well.

Lyrek started Closets for Life four years ago after leaving his 18-year career in the insurance industry.

"I needed something different," he said. "I wanted to

work with my hands."

Unlike many start-up companies, Closets for Life required little capital.

Lyrek invested \$20,000 from his own savings, but did not need to take out any loans.

"I started with no debt, and I still have no debt," he said.

Despite the recession, the company has grown about 10 to 15 percent each year and remains profitable, he said.

Lyrek said he expects the company will grow another 20 percent next year with the recent addition of wine cellars.

In addition to low start-up costs, Lyrek said he is able to save on many overhead costs by purchasing cabinets from his brother's business and hiring other relatives to assist with the labor.

Lyrek said he is also able to keep costs low by running the business out of his home and online.

Customers can shop in Closets for Life's virtual showroom and then meet with Lyrek in person to draw up plans.

Lyrek said that the personal service is what sets his business apart from other home-organization companies.

"You work with one person from start to finish," he said.

Today, Closets for Life's largest group of clients is condo owners, but its target market also includes single-family homes and small offices.

More information on Closets for Life can be found at www.closetsforlife.com.

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Photo submitted

Closets for Life offers an array of custom-made wine cellars for homes. Customers can shop for items on the business' virtual showroom available online.



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Closets for Life offers an array of custom-made cabinets for home offices, garages, pantries, media rooms and other residential spaces. The home-organization company also offers Murphy beds.