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**Building Success: The Inspiring Journey of Paula and Colin Woods**

Starting a business is never easy, but for Paula and Colin Woods, it was a leap of faith that led to decades of success. From their early days as teachers to becoming the driving force behind Diamond Builders, their journey is filled with passion, perseverance, and invaluable lessons for any entrepreneur.

**From Teaching to Building**

Paula and Colin met through their love of sports and education, both working as teachers before taking a dramatic turn into the construction industry. Colin, with his background in mathematics and a knack for spatial design, and Paula, with her eye for detail and organization, made the perfect team. While they loved teaching, they recognized that financial limitations in the field meant they needed to pursue something greater.

One day, Colin came home and announced his bold decision to quit teaching and build a house. While Paula supported his vision, she knew financial stability was crucial, so she kept her teaching job to ensure they had insurance and steady income. It was a risky decision, one met with skepticism from their families, but one that would eventually shape their future.

**Taking the Entrepreneurial Leap**

Without prior experience in running a business, the Woods had to learn everything on the fly. Colin’s father had worked small construction side jobs, but they had no formal mentorship in starting a company. Financing their first project was a challenge—maxing out credit cards, selling assets, and taking on loans with the help of Paula’s grandfather, who co-signed their first construction note.

Their first home project was riddled with mistakes, and experienced subcontractors weren’t shy about pointing them out. However, rather than letting these setbacks discourage them, Collin and Paula leaned into learning. They asked questions, sought expert advice, and refined their skills through hands-on experience.

**Surviving the 2008 Financial Crisis**

Every successful business faces challenges, but few are as daunting as the 2008 financial crisis. Unfortunately, the Woods’ primary banking institution was shut down by federal regulators, seizing their accounts and leaving them unable to pay subcontractors.

Their integrity was tested as they chose to repay every debt rather than declare bankruptcy, even when advisors suggested it. It took years to rebuild trust with subcontractors and financial institutions, but their resilience paid off. By maintaining transparency, honoring their commitments, and staying positive, they navigated one of the toughest economic downturns in modern history and emerged stronger.

**A Business Built on Relationships**

One of the secrets to their success has been the emphasis on relationships. Whether with subcontractors, financial partners, or employees, the Woods have built a business culture based on trust and respect. Their small, tight-knit team is treated like family, with a flexible work environment and a commitment to paying people what they’re worth. This approach has helped them retain valuable team members and attract top talent.

Additionally, the Woods have maintained strong partnerships with local banks rather than large national institutions, ensuring direct, face-to-face relationships with decision-makers. This strategy has helped them secure financial stability and continued growth.

**Expanding and Evolving**

Diamond Builders has grown far beyond custom homes. Recognizing shifts in the market, they have expanded into villa-style homes, townhome rentals, and semi-custom builds. Their ability to adapt and innovate has allowed them to thrive in a competitive industry. By streamlining processes, utilizing technology to manage selections and communication, and ensuring transparency in pricing, they have built a brand that homebuyers trust.

**Lessons for Future Entrepreneurs**

After 25 years in business, Colin and Paula Woods have valuable insights for aspiring entrepreneurs:

1. **Dream Big and Work Hard** – Success requires a vision, but it also demands relentless effort.
2. **Surround Yourself with the Right People** – Mentors, business partners, and employees all play a role in growth.
3. **Stay Lean and Manage Risk** – Keeping overhead low and making calculated financial decisions can help weather economic downturns.
4. **Be Willing to Learn** – Mistakes are inevitable, but a willingness to ask questions and adapt leads to long-term success.
5. **Maintain Integrity** – Your reputation and relationships are the foundation of any business.

**Looking to the Future**

While retirement is on the horizon, Colin and Paula’s passion for business and mentoring the next generation remains strong. They continue to support young professionals entering the trades, reinforcing the value of skilled labor and entrepreneurship.

Their journey—from struggling teachers to successful business owners—serves as a testament to the power of resilience, faith, and unwavering determination. As they celebrate 25 years of Diamond Builders, their story is an inspiration for anyone looking to take the leap into business ownership.