

best green businesses

Our seven contest winners show you can be good to the planet and successful in business.

by
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Homes Green Homes

WHAT STARTED out as a failed real estate investment four years ago turned into a passion and an award-winning company, MyGreenBuildings, for Steve Ellis and his partner, Grant Castilow. Ellis, a former waste management consultant for Fortune 500s, purchased a tiny bungalow in Sarasota with the intention of remodeling and reselling; but the real estate market crashed, leaving him with an expensive albatross.

To find an edge in a flooded market, Ellis asked Castilow, his contractor, to redo the house as a beautiful example of the best in green building. The house, which was the first LEED certified remodel in Florida and earned the second-highest Florida Green Building Coalition rating in the state, quickly sold.

Since then the energetic pair have won multiple design and green awards for their projects, including a recent national award from *Remodeler Magazine* in the green remodeling category.

The company's revenues have grown 150 percent since 2008, and staff now numbers eight, says Ellis—quite a feat considering the fallout in the local building industry. Ellis says the concept of MyGreenBuildings, their branding campaign and the processes that he and Castilow put in place to run the company have paid off.

And he stresses that their green homes are beautiful as well as efficient. "Our clients are not wearing Birkenstocks," says Ellis, "and they don't want haystack walls. We build high-performance luxury homes, and we're saving jobs, reducing carbon, improving the health of our bays and decreasing the need for foreign oil. I'm living my dream job."

**Grant Castilow
and Steve Ellis**
CO-OWNERS
MyGreenBuildings

