

## Crafted Wood: Revival of a Dying Art

### Introduction

Crafted Woods is a family run organization that is located in Colorado Springs, off HW 24 and 26<sup>th</sup> street. Crafted Woods' main product line is wide-planked T&G which is used for flooring material, ceiling paneling, or wall paneling. But that is not the only product line Crafted Woods has to offer. Crafted Woods also builds custom furniture, tables, bar/counter tops, mantles, and just about anything customers demand, except cabinets, the neighbors of Crafted Woods do cabinets. Crafted Woods was started by Rob & Tina Bretanus in 1990 in Tulsa, Oklahoma where they mainly focused on custom, high-end furniture using traditional techniques to assemble their pieces. In 1995 Crafted Woods relocated to Colorado Springs and changed their focus to reclaimed architectural millwork such as hand-scraped hardwood flooring and architectural beams. In 2008 when the economy took a dive, Crafted Woods had to reorganize and downsize to survive the crash. They were forced to lay-off a majority of their workforce and look for cheaper labor. They decided to employ their son and two friends to work part-time when they were out of school Monday through Friday, 3p.m.-6p.m. Over the past few years Crafted Woods did everything they could to survive these terrible economic times. They continued to hire more part-time college students as demand increased. Crafted Woods had to be continuously innovative in their industry in order to stay competitive. Currently, Crafted Woods focuses more on the lumber that is available in Colorado Forests such as Aspen, Douglas fir, Pine, and Spruce to use in their product lines. Crafted Woods' has always focused on quality and producing only the finest work possible, and that is now embedded in the culture of Crafted Woods.

### Crafted Woods' Goal

The goal of Crafted Woods is to bring business back to the local carpenter and get consumers to stop buying "cheap" products that are made in huge factories over-seas such as products available at "Ikea". Currently, the American consumer has a mind-set to replace their furniture and tables every few years when it either breaks or they are simply tired of looking at it. Crafted Woods' goal is to change that mind-set and get Americans to start buying quality products that are made by local craftsmen in each individual community. The products produced by these skilled craftsmen are made with traditional techniques and are made to last a lifetime, not just a few years. These products are made with 100% wood, not laminated plywood that gives the appearance of solid wood. Americans are so dependent on

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other countries to supply us with just about everything we own. What happened to people producing products they can call a work of art, not products that can be mass-produced to bring in the highest profit possible. Every piece Crafted Woods manufactures is a piece of art and one of a kind because everything in nature is one of a kind and Crafted Woods wants that to translate into their work.

### **Sourcing of Lumber**

Because Crafted Woods mostly uses lumber that is native to Colorado for their planked T&G material, that causes them to source from local saw mills such as Casey Lumber located in Woodland Park, CO, Black Forest Mill located in Black Forest, CO, and Mountain Valley Lumber located in Saguache, CO.

Currently, Crafted Woods is working with the community of Black Forest to provide a unique product line to give back to those who were affected by the Black Forest fire. Every Wednesday, Crafted Woods' crew makes a trip out to Black Forest to reclaim burned trees, to use in furniture and T&G manufacturing. They are working with community members' to clean up their properties for free, and subsequently provide discounts on products homeowners purchase from Crafted Woods.

Crafted Woods also offers a very unique custom furniture line that uses bristlecone pine. Bristlecone pine is the longest-living single-cell organism in the world, reaching ages up to 5,000 years! Bristlecone pine grows in regions of the Western-United States, including the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. Crafted Woods' crew makes a few trips a year to reclaim standing-dead bristlecone in the forests of Colorado. When Crafted Woods creates furniture using this unique lumber, they try to maintain the natural-look of the material. Crafted Woods also uses this lumber to make their top-of-the-line dining tables, conference tables, and bar/counter tops.

### **Employment**

Crafted Woods employs and trains the younger generation because they believe that it is very important to pass this ancient skill/trade to the next generation. The current crew of Crafted Woods consists of: Tyler Bretanus 21, Christian Dreves 21, Jason Lemmon 21, Erik Martin 21, Landon Brunk 22, and Ryan Martin 23.

The current owner and mentor of Crafted Woods is Rob Bretanus. Rob Bretanus started his career as a custom high-end furniture carpenter in 1980 at the age of 16. Eleven years later in 1991, Rob Bretanus started his own company at the age of 20. His furniture was showcased in high-end show rooms such as: Boyd Levinson in Dallas, John Edward Hues in Houston, The Shanahan Collection in New York City, and Keller Williams in Denver. In 1995 he reorganized and relocated his organization to Colorado Springs and began architectural millwork such as: architectural beams, custom staircases, and reclaimed flooring. Rob Bretanus' career has shifted to passing this ancient skill/trade to the next generation.

### **Stains & Finishes**

The stains and finishes that Crafted Woods uses on planked T&G material are very unique for their industry. They are unique because the stains and finishes contain zero VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) unlike other popular finishes such as polyurethane and lacquer based finishes. Because they contain zero VOCs that make this product very environmentally friendly compared to popular stains and finishes in the industry.

## Questions

**Row 1:** Identify the aspects of Crafted Woods that falls into the Economic dimension of the Triple Bottom Line.

**Row 2:** Identify the aspects of Crafted Woods that fits into the Social dimension of the Triple Bottom Line.

**Row 3:** Identify the aspects of Crafted Woods that fits into the Environment dimension of the Triple Bottom Line.

**Row 4:** Identify any issues Crafted Woods may face in their goal to be sustainable.