

Builder Profile



RISING STARS

BRYAN HENSON LEADS A NEW YOUNG GUARD IN THE TRADES

BY TERI BREIER PHOTO BY ELIOT CROWLEY

At the ripe old age of 34, Bryan Henson has already reached a level in his construction career that typically takes many decades to achieve. As general manager of Allen Associates since January 2010, he guides the building company's direction, operates its offices in Santa Barbara and Ventura and oversees a staff of more than 60. When founder Dennis Allen retires, Henson will take over as president of the 30-year-old firm, which is in the process of transferring to employee ownership.

Henson is at the vanguard of a new movement in the building industry, marked by an upsurge of young talent taking on leadership positions. Although in 2007, he was the youngest Associate to be raised in the history of Allen Associates, two Associates even younger than 30 have been promoted to the Associate level since then.

This trend is fueled primarily by the recessed economy and by clients themselves, says Henson. "Clients are demanding newer technologies and constant communication. They are also more educated than ever before. These new realities have allowed us to advance rapidly under Allen Associates' performance-based approach that rewards innovation and results. At the same time, we continue to build upon the invaluable knowledge of the generation before us. We have the best of both worlds here—a wealth of building experience and a commitment to innovation."

Henson attributes his own fast trajectory at Allen Associates to an unusual combination of construction experience and a highly relevant educational background. With a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and a master's in Environmental Science and Management from UCSB's Donald Bren School, he was uniquely positioned to enter the sustainable building movement.

"Building science is very similar to environmental science," Henson says. "I arrived in 2006, at a time when green building was just beginning to gain traction in the industry, although Allen has been pioneering sustainable building for 30 years. I had nearly a decade of building experience from supporting myself through college and grad school. I also learned the business management side of things and how to communicate well with people. So, from the beginning, I fell into a role as an expert in green building practices and moved on from there."

In fact, Henson's environmental expertise has enhanced Allen's position as the region's premier green contractor, specializing in commercial and residential green building in Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez Valley and Ventura County. In 2007 he won the company's Green Innovator Award in 2007 and received *Green Builder Magazine's* Intergenerational Green Remodel, Green Builder Home of the Year Award in 2008. Recently, when a local architecture firm needed help navigating California's new Green Building Code, they called Henson.

"It's an honor to be considered a valuable resource helping others on the path of sustainable building and a real privilege to help move the industry forward," he

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BUILDER PROFILE

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says. “I hope that the green building industry will only continue to grow to the point where it doesn’t need the label ‘green’ any more, but is just the way things are done.”

Henson has served as LEED AP/Green Consultant on numerous high profile residential and commercial projects, including multiple LEED Platinum projects and two Passive House US projects. Recently, he supervised the purchase negotiations and sustainable remodel of the company’s new 2500-s.f. Santa Barbara office.

He is very involved in the community, having conducted more than 20 public educational workshops and speaking at local and regional AIA, NKBA and realtor trainings on sustainable building related topics. He teaches a class on green building at UCSB’s Donald Bren School of Environmental Science & Management and is a program advisor and lecturer for the UCSB Green Building Professional Certificate Program.

Henson’s focus on efficiency propelled him to help establish a successful new home performance division—Building Performance Specialists—last January. His other responsibilities as General Manager range from overseeing the company’s finances, marketing, human resources and training to developing sales standards and procedures. In between, he has found the time to help close deals and negotiate opportunities to the tune of nearly \$20 million in sales over the last five years.

“At Allen Associates, we are committed to being guided by our creativity and remaining at the forefront of innovation, making buildings not only look better, but perform as efficiently as possible. My job is to keep our entire staff engaged and growing in that vision and to offer the best service to our clients.”

ALLEN ASSOCIATES is located at 201 N. Milpas Street, 805-884-8777; www.dallenassoc.com.