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From tilted floors to 20% annual growth, one firm's 10-year consulting journey



GUEST VIEW Scott Ford

California Builder Services (CBS), a real estate consulting business located in the Central Valley, is celebrating 10 years of service.

Founded in 2014 by the dynamic mother-son duo, Alice Ford and myself, the company has grown to become a trusted entity within the real estate sector, catering to clients throughout the state. In addition, CBS has made education within the industry a priority through collaboration with clients and organizations across California. We have presented valuable industry-related information to builders and other members of the industry. In recognition of our dedication to furthering education in the industry, CBS has been twice honored as the recipient of the Vision Award by the California Association of Community Managers organization. We've been invited to speak at building industry association events throughout the state, and I'm the chair of the California Building Industry Association's DRE (Department of Real Estate) Committee.

Ten years ago, my mom and I worked at a prominent title company, serving as vice president of the builder services division and assistant V.P. and subdivision consultant, respectively. Sparked by an entrepreneurial spirit and a shared commitment to delivering unmatched service, we ensured transparency and informed our clients at the title company of our new venture — California Builder Services.

When going out on our own, I spoke with many of our clients and told them of the transition. After those calls, I'd estimated that we would retain about 75% of our initial clients. However, only about 50% followed us to our new company for various reasons. That changed our initial cashflow projections dramatically.

We started operations with 31 files for the budget department and 67 for the DRE department. In 2015, we established a reserve study department, and I completed four studies that year. Fast forward to 2023, the company has completed over 120 budgets, processed 400-plus DRE filings, and conducted 282 reserve

studies for that year. The company has averaged a 20% year-over-year increase since inception.

When reflecting on the realities of business ownership, I acknowledged that money can be tight during the establishment and growth process, I stayed the lowest-paid person at the company for the first few years to ensure that payroll was never late or missed. It felt wrong to take a paycheck while we had little cash in the bank and had balances on our credit cards, too, especially those with interest. Paying those off felt essential, so finances were incredibly tight during these early phases of the business.

In reminiscing about our first office space, my mom Alice fondly recalls, "It was the only office space that would take us; the floor was so tilted that if you placed a marble on it, it would roll across the room. Pencils would roll off your desk and the drawers would randomly open." Currently, CBS is headquartered in Clovis, off Tollhouse and Sunnyside. The company has two other locations in California, one in Sacramento, and another in Huntington Beach.

As we celebrate this milestone, we would like to express our gratitude to clients, partners, and the dedicated team members who have played an integral role in our success. From humble beginnings with just two employees, the company has experienced remarkable growth, now with a team of 17 talented individuals, with more growth on the horizon.

Looking to the future, we remain committed to upholding our success. We believe in excellence, integrity, and dedication to serving clients with utmost professionalism. As a testament to this level of service, many of the clients who entrusted their projects to California Builder Services a decade ago have remained loyal clients to this day.

With a military background and experience in law enforcement, Scott Ford is keenly sensitive to compliance with legal requirements. Specializing in budgets and reserve studies, Scott has handled full caseloads of projects that range from small parcel maps to large multi-phase condominiums. Scott earned his MBA with an emphasis in Real Estate Finance and has been instrumental in moving California Builder Services into a new era of service through technology. In addition to these accomplishments, he is also a General B Contractor, further enhancing his capabilities in the field.