



Dealer of the Quarter: Family & quality are top priorities at Bullock Access

Clifford Bullock is happy to stake his reputation on the quality of his service and products. It's why he called his company Bullock Access — to show he stands behind life-improving accessibility products his East Hartford showroom sells.

"I've never been one to shy away from putting my name on a product or a job," Bullock says. "When I started the business, I knew there were needs for people with limited mobility. I knew there must be a way I could help."

Bullock and his family sell products that allow people with physical limitations to live in and move comfortably around their homes, including barrier-free showers made by Bestbath[®]. Bullock Access has become a go-to resource for both contractors and homeowners, making the company a worthy recipient for Bestbath's Dealer of the Quarter award.



Bullock installed aging-in-place products, including walk-in showers, as a remodeler before transitioning into the dealership business (though Bullock Access still does some remodeling). When he decided to open a showroom, he said he knew he wanted Bestbath to be a cornerstone for his business.

BULLOCK
ACCESS
EAST HARTFORD, CONN.



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“Being in the remodeling business for a long time, I'd installed a lot of different shower products, and Bestbath was by far the best,” he says. “It's a great company to work with. They are always there for you, and the product sells itself.”

All five Bullock Access employees are family members. Clifford's son, Dave, serves as vice president of the company and handles most of the shower sales. The matriarch, Nancy, handles the books as company director. Daughter Amie Bullock Broughal is the customer account executive. Nephew Bill McAllister is a technician in training, and family member and honorary sixth employee, Jill McAllister, handles marketing as an outside contractor.

Dave Bullock says working with family can be challenging because they all expect excellence from one another. But their work yields more satisfying results than if he punched a clock for a non-family run company.

“You expect more out of a family member than an employee,” he says. “They are expecting the same thing. We're thinking the same things because we are basically the same people.”

Being a family business also helps Bullock Access build rapport with customers.

“When I take a call for a shower evaluation, I tell them my son will be there the next week, and that if they call, it will be my daughter on the phone,” Clifford Bullock says. “They know we're local. They know we'll back up the product. That usually makes the sale right there.”

From Remodeler to Showroom Success

Clifford and Dave Bullock made Bestbath a centerpiece of their transition from remodelers to dealers in 2008. The pair flew out to Bestbath headquarters to participate in the company's Dealer Day educational program. The father-son team learned that, in order to become Bestbath dealers, they needed a showroom that displayed at least four Bestbath products. That became the impetus for opening their first showroom, which they later expanded in order to display more shower and lift products.

“It spiraled out after that,” Dave Bullock says. “That was our foot in the door when we went from remodeling to mostly being a dealership. It was definitely a big change from putting on a tool belt every day to selling and servicing accessibility products.”



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Business has doubled in the past five years thanks in part to growth of the aging-in-place movement, Clifford Bullock says. More families are saving money and increasing quality of life for aging parents by installing barrier-free showers, making homes wheelchair accessible and making other accessibility enhancements.

“Nursing homes and rehab facilities are so expensive now,” Clifford Bullock says. “It’s now a lot less expensive for an older person or somebody rehabbing to stay at home. They are a lot happier there than in a hospital room, and people visit more than at a facility.”

However, only a third of Bullock Access products are installed in homes for elderly customers, Clifford Bullock says.

“The rest are people of all ages with different afflictions, from car accidents to people with diseases like Cerebral Palsy or ALS that have no cure,” he says. “Our family takes pride in helping other families make life as enjoyable as possible for these folks.”

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