

Budget Blinds Celebrating 10 Years

By Wanda Kurchaba



When October rolls around this year, the Swarbrick family will be popping champagne, and they will have plenty of reason to celebrate.

For starters, it will be the 10th anniversary of their business venture in Brandon. Sue and Gord Swarbrick took a giant leap of faith in 2011 when they uprooted their family from Saskatchewan to move to a city where they didn't know a single person.

"It started with our oldest son who was employed as an installer with Budget Blinds. I then joined them as a style consultant, and we fell in love with the business. We felt that it suited both of our skill sets and decided to peek around to see what other territories were open. It turned out to be the Brandon-Westman territory that was available and here we are a decade later," said Sue Swarbrick, Budget Blinds Owner.

Budget Blinds is a North American-based company that is a successful franchising system made up of like-minded, small business owners. In Swarbrick's case, their franchise is family-run and operated. Gord is an installer and their two sons Riley and Shane are both consultants. As well, full-time installer, Laurie Smitzniuk, has become a valued family member after spending close to six years serving alongside the team. With two other loyal family members (employees) retiring recently, Swarbrick is currently training replacements for these administrative positions.

"The first six months were very scary, but by the time we got to our first year, we were hiring style consultants to keep up," said Swarbrick. "It has just grown exponentially year over year. The biggest thrill for us, and truly it is not cliché, are our customers. We would not have succeeded here without building the relationships that we have. It has been a great area to do business in."

The main showroom and warehouse for Budget Blinds is at 381 Park Avenue East, and they have a second showroom in Morden after purchasing the Southeast

territory two and a half years ago. As they prepare for their 10th anniversary, part of the celebratory plans include renovating their showroom in Brandon with the project getting underway in the coming weeks.

However, with five vans on the road, three of which are loaded with product samples from more than a dozen different vendors loaded in the vehicles, Budget Blinds is built on the rolling showroom concept and continues to deliver on that.

“We go to our customers for in-home consultations. We cover a big territory, and we know our customers appreciate that and see the value in the service and product that we provide,” said Swarbrick.

In terms of product, Swarbrick said that a key to their magic is the alliance that the company has with various vendors. Budget Blinds has access to 27 vendors through their Vendor Alliance Program, which means they can present customers with more options and price points than any other company.

“We’re sourcing fabrics and products literally from all over the world. We’re not at all limited as to what we can put in people’s homes, plus the vendors treat us like royalty so, we can pass that on to our customers. That means along with an amazing selection of products, we have warranties and services that no one else can offer. That is our magic,” said Swarbrick.

Throughout the last 16 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Budget Blinds team was running at full speed. As families spent more time at home with less travel and fewer activities, many chose to update their decor, renovate their houses, or build additions.

“People were at home so they could indulge; many chose to spend money on updating their window coverings. Fortunately for us, the blind industry wasn’t affected by production delays; the only thing that slowed us down a bit was shipping delays. It has been a very busy time for us and we are grateful.”

Working hard to stay on top of the trends and ensuring they have products available that their clients are asking for is an important part of the business as well.

“As with any industry, our products are constantly evolving. The Smart Home Automation we offer today is reliable and convenient. More and more consumers are choosing



Smart Products for their homes,” said Swarbrick. “Drapery has also made a huge comeback, specifically over the past year in our market. When we add the softness of a custom, well-made drape to a room, our customers stand back and say in wonder...why didn’t I do that sooner?”



We’re Budget Blinds, and we’re North America’s #1 provider of custom window coverings. We do it all for you; design, measure and install — because we think everyone, at every budget, deserves style, service, and the peace-of-mind of the best warranty in the business.

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