

CHRONICLES

TALES OF GREATNESS IN THE MAKING FROM AWARD WINNING INSPECTORS

TIM ELLIS

PACESETTER AWARD



NPI inspector Tim Ellis of Pittsburgh couldn't have had a better background to start an NPI business in August of 2003. The technical expertise he acquired during prestigious military and corporate careers gave him the skills he needed to succeed early on in his business.

But, as a first-time entrepreneur, he was in uncharted territory when it came to structuring a company and marketing his service. That put him in the same boat as many new NPI franchise owners. However, it didn't prove to deter the resourceful inspector, who achieved the Paceset-

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ter Award for outstanding production just a year after he started his business.

“I had never worked in a 100 percent commission-based situation,” Tim said. “Some aspects of that were difficult, including learning how to structure my time.”

Sunday afternoon open houses became a key to helping him spread the word about National Property Inspections. “I tried to research who the movers and shakers were in my real estate community,” Tim said. “Then, every Sunday afternoon, I developed an itinerary to visit five or six open houses. I'd put together handouts, including my bio and NPI literature, and a box of cookies. Pens and notepads with pictures also worked well.”

While marketing was, at times, a challenge, inspections came easy for Tim, who earned a chemistry degree from the U.S. Naval Academy in

Annapolis, and later a master's degree in business. He was chief engineer of a Navy vessel, the U.S.S. Illusive, and oversaw the overhaul of the ship after the Vietnam War. “I learned a lot about the interdependence of systems, which is helping me in the job as an inspector.”

What followed were careers at Proctor & Gamble, then metal manufacturing and window manufacturing companies. All helped him hone his technical skills and strong work ethic.

Tired of travel and moving, Tim was looking for his own business when he investigated home inspections and contacted his former Naval Academy classmate, Ed Donofrio, an NPI inspector in Leesburg, Va. After talking with Ed, it didn't take him long to decide to purchase a franchise. “My biggest challenge now is keeping my business growing,” he said. “But I'm confident and optimistic.”