



KEITH BIRMINGHAM / STAFF

**HOME DELIVERY:** Phil and Olga Rodriguez are owners of Vista Window Manufacturing in Monrovia, featuring factory-direct service.

# Windows of opportunity

## Monrovia business successful in tough times

By Kevin Smith  
Staff Writer

MONROVIA — When Phillip and Olga Rodriguez launched **Vista Window Manufacturing Inc.** in December of 2006, the economy wasn't exactly hopping.

And the subsequent run-up in gasoline prices and meltdown of the nation's housing and financial markets has made things much worse.

But despite all of that, the Rancho Cucamonga couple's Monrovia business is thriving. In fact, Vista Window is on track to generate \$1 million in sales this year.

"Thankfully, we have a business model that's keeping us pretty darn busy through this tough economic time," Phillip Rodriguez, 40, said. "I had two phone calls recently from people who had been working for our competitors. They were looking for work."

Vista, which makes a variety of custom windows and doors on-site, sells its products factory-direct. So customers typically save 15 to 20 percent as compared to buying from competing companies, he said.

"We beat the big-box stores," Rodriguez said. "People were expecting us to get our butts kicked by Home Depot and Lowe's, but we don't. And the other issue is customer service. People who go to these big stores just don't feel like they get attended to."

Rodriguez said a lot of his customers have also made a conscious effort to shop local in the San Gabriel Valley, and specifically, in Monrovia

### LADDER OF SUCCESS

#### Phillip and Olga Rodriguez

**TITLE:** Owners

**BUSINESS:** Vista Window Manufacturing Inc.

**LOCATION:** 600 E. Fig Ave., Monrovia

**WEB ADDRESS:** www.vistawindowmfg.com

**PHONE:** (626) 359-3600

**SECRET OF SUCCESS:** Selling factory direct with discounts of 15 to 20 percent

Vista's 5,000-square-foot manufacturing facility includes a showroom. Windows account for about 85 percent of the sales and patio doors make up the remaining 15 percent.

The company produces 75 to 100 windows a week.

"That allows us to keep pretty tight reins on the quality," Rodriguez said. "All of the glass is dual-paned, low-e which keeps the heat from penetrating into the house during hot days. And during the winter the heat stays inside the home. That helps people with their electric bills."

Co-owner Olga Rodriguez, 41, who handles administrative duties and customer service for the company, said there's always plenty to do.

"As co-owners, we try to do it all between the two of us," she said. "But we also have our own production guys and four installers."

Vista's most popular window style, the Regal Series, has been installed in more than 20,000 homes in Southern California, the couple said.

Kim Gillett, 44, of Glendora and her husband purchased windows from Vista for a house they were fixing up in Azusa, and Gillett said the service was good.

"They did a great job from beginning to end," she said. "They were very professional and did a great job on the installation."

Gillett learned about Vista Windows from her in-laws, who had purchased windows from the company for their Pasadena home.

"Their prices are very competitive," Gillett said.

Phil Valenzuela bought six windows from Vista — four for the west side of his home and two for the east side.

"They sent their own guy out to do the measuring ahead of time, so if anything went wrong I wouldn't be the one to blame for wrong measurements," the 61-year-old South Pasadena resident said. "And they were very professional — boom, boom, boom and they were outta' there."

Ninety percent of Vista's customer base is residential, but Phillip Rodriguez said contractors also work with the company because Vista is able to turn their orders around so quickly.

"We can turn most customer orders for windows in 10 days and if they are really in a pinch we can do it quicker," he said. "That's why contractors like working with us."

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