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DELEERS

Construction, Inc.

PEOPLE AND PROCESS

“It boils down to two things,” says Jim DeLeers, the third-generation President of DeLeers Construction, Inc., a turnkey, one-stop-shop, general contracting firm based in De Pere, Wisconsin. “People and process. We have a very intentional culture within our organization; it’s a family business with family values that started with my grand-

father and carried on through my dad and now through my leadership. We don’t just hire anybody; we’re very intentional about the people we hire. It’s culture first, talent second. And, because of our people, and the way that our people work with our clients, we earn the clients’ trust. We don’t want a client for the first build; we want a client for



AT A GLANCE
DELEERS
CONSTRUCTION, INC.

WHAT: A general contracting firm

WHERE: De Pere, Wisconsin

WEBSITE: www.deleers.com



the first build and every build, after. We want to do their business, their home, their re-models. To do that, you have to build a relationship and earn trust.”

DeLeers Construction was started in 1945 by Jim’s grandfather, Joseph A. DeLeers, commonly known as ‘Jake.’ “My grandfather served in World War II as a Navy SeaBee,” grandson Jim recounts, “and upon returning to Green Bay, Wisconsin, armed with the skills that he learned in the service, along with some that he had learned before going in the service, he found that there was a pent up demand from returning men and service women and others in the northeast Wisconsin area, for quality housing at a fair price with no corners cut. So, he started to build

homes. He did some speculative building at the time, but mainly custom homes and he built his reputation. From there, DeLeers expanded from homes to commercial construction.”

Jim’s dad, Jerry, continued the family tradition of quality work, sound ethics, and good service. “As a teenager, he started building cabinets in the basement of my grandparents’ home at night and later started another company called ‘Jerry’s Cabinets & Supplies,’” Jim continues. “He was definitely a driving force and had a far larger vision than my grandfather did. He really hit a growth spurt in the 1980s. He got heavier into commercial construction and the luxury home market – high-end, custom homes, banks, schools, religious facilities, nursing homes, dental clinics.”



Jim’s turn to run the company came in 2010. “My brother, Paul and I, purchased the company from my dad and his brother who was a fifty-percent partner. At that time, the business was located in Bellevue, which is a small suburb of Green Bay,” he relates. “In 2011, we relocated the business to De Pere. After purchasing the business, we continued to focus on the high-end luxury homes and also on renovations. And we have a much larger focus on the commercial spectrum. We’re doing multi-family housing projects, light industrial projects, all kinds of clinics, office space, and retail space. And we have a service division which consists of a crew of six service techs who take care of



small projects.” Another way in which the third generation has chosen to expand the business is in the area of ‘self-performing’ - completing critical construction components themselves, rather than sub-contracting them out. “Each year,

we’ve been choosing to self-perform a little bit more work,” says Jim. “And one of the reasons is the industry is busy, right now, and it allows us to better control the overall project schedule. So, as long as we can perform efficiently, it’s another source of revenue and profit. We always self-perform all our finished carpentry projects; we have an internal paint shop and we have external paint crews to self-perform our painting; we do a lot of our sidings, soffits, fascia, and window install; we do quite a bit of our wood framing; steel stud framing. We have our own cabinet shop, so we’re able to self-perform commercial plastic laminate casework, custom wood veneers, and custom kitchens. Right now, we only self-perform a little bit of concrete, but we’re going to start self-performing more of our concrete work in the future.” Today, DeLeers has a total of 115 employees who do most of their work within a 150-mile radius of Green Bay. “But we also travel to other states,” says Jim. “Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota; we’ve even gotten to Ohio, on occasion.” Regarding its marketing efforts, he says that being very involved



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in the local community is key to building the kinds of relationships that often turn into contracts. “We attend many charity events in town and we get our hands dirty helping out with some of the local organizations,” he says. “So, in terms of our brand, we’re recognized in the community as a company that helps to support it. I don’t look at that as necessarily a marketing tactic, but it helps us gain some opportunities. Beyond that, we’re networking constantly; whether it’s meeting with bankers, other business owners, insurance folks, or past clients. We have a fairly large fleet of vehicles which are branded really nicely. We have some large job trailers and job signage that support our brand. But, in terms of

dumping a lot of dollars into marketing, I can’t say that we do.”

Jim believes that the family-run company will continue to grow – perhaps by another 25 percent within the next five years. “Some of that growth will come from increased market share,” he states. “We will grow a little bit on the industrial sector; we will continue to grow our market space for clinics; and we will continue to grow our residential market space along with commercial and residential renovations. And we’ll grow a little internally by adding some self-perform aspects - some concrete flatwork, some concrete poured walls; we will be self-performing some of our pre-engineered steel erection and some of our excavation and earthwork.”

What likely won’t change in the DeLeers universe is the firm’s total commitment to its internal processes. “Our team and our people are riveted to protocol,” Jim exclaims. “We believe in process and communication, internally and externally. From the sales side to the point where we hand over the keys, we follow a process that makes it easy and enjoyable for the buyer and also makes it streamlined and efficient for us as a general contractor. We work on our protocol all the time. Our objective is to have raving clients. We believe that if you’re employee-centric, that ultimately equals being customer-centric. If you treat your employees right, your employees are going to take care of your clients. That’s a key piece of our business.”

People and process. It’s a way of life at DeLeers Construction.

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