

## Friendly Competition

Bob Olsen was ready to retire. But rather than close his 30-year-old construction firm, he decided to keep it going with the help of NSPE member Mark Snyder.



LAST YEAR, CONSTRUCTION RESULTS CORP. FINISHED AN ADDITION AND RENOVATION TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH IN PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA. CONSTRUCTION RESULTS RECENTLY ABSORBED THE CLIENTS, RECORDS, AND EMPLOYEES OF ONE OF ITS CHIEF RIVALS, OLSON GENERAL CONTRACTORS.

While many companies are downsizing and cutting back during these lean financial times, Mark Snyder, P.E., saw an opportunity to grow.

"There's a smaller pie these days, and we're looking for a bigger slice," says the NSPE member and president and founder of Construction Results Corp. in Minnesota.

So Snyder made an unusual move: In October, Construction Results absorbed the clients, design plans, and budget managers of one of its biggest competitors, Olson General Contractors.

"I'm not even aware of any other companies that have done this," Snyder says. "Most just go out of business because no one wants to pick up the pieces."

According to Snyder, "Olson had a good reputation for quality work, good value, honesty, and integrity. We have the same fundamental beliefs that fit well together."

Construction Results and Olson Contractors focused on the same areas of building: commercial and industrial. Construction Results works primarily on commercial projects, while Olson had more experience with industrial construction.

Absorbing Olson's clientele and management team gives Construction Results a stronger foothold in both fields.

Snyder got word in early October that Olson was planning to close its doors.

An architect who knew both Snyder and Olson owner Bob Olson introduced the two, and within two weeks, the deal was done. Construction Results has retained the last 30 years' worth of design plans from Olson and is helping complete Olson's final two projects.

Olson has said that many of his company's projects come from repeat customers, so it was important to Snyder to have the full history of those clients.

"The benefit to those clients is if they need an addition or need to expand, we know where the bearing walls are, where the studs are," Snyder says.

Bringing in Olson's clients and two employees has jump-started other changes at Construction Results as well. Snyder's company recently redesigned its logo and introduced a link on its Web site called "My Estimate." Potential clients can fill out a form describing their project and get a free e-mail response from Construction Results

with a rough estimate of what the project would cost. Snyder says he hopes the new tool can make for quicker and simpler planning between his company and clients.

All of the changes have made for a hectic time around the Construction Results office.

"All of these marketing ideas are much more time-consuming than I had originally expected," Snyder says. "I need it to be right or I'm not satisfied. I'm really finding out that it takes a lot of work to develop more work. This is especially true in the current economy."

The current economic climate wouldn't seem to lend itself to company expansion, but Snyder is proud that Construction Results has been able to cut itself a larger piece of a suddenly shrunken economic pie. And he's happy he doesn't have to step on any toes to do it.

"As we had lunch during the whole process, Bob Olson asked what projects we went through in the past few years," Snyder says. "I named one, and he looked at me hard and said, 'So that's who got that job.'"

"Coming in, we said if we're going to grow our company [this] direction, as far as Olson goes, we wouldn't be taking clients away from them," Snyder says. "That made a big difference."



MARK SNYDER, P.E.