

Twin Cities Edition

COMMERCIAL Builder/Architect

A BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR THE COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



Construction Results Corporation

Hard Work and Quality Employees Are Keys
to Mid-Size General Contractor's Success

Construction Results Corporation

Hard Work and Quality Employees Are Keys to Mid-Size General Contractor's Success

By Mason Riddle

Construction Results Corporation is a company on the move. Apparently, *The Business Journal* noticed that too. In 2003 and 2004, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul publication named Construction Results one of the 50 fastest-growing companies in the 11-county metropolitan area. In 2006 it was recognized again for a "Best Small Business" award on *Diversitybusiness.com's* nationwide list. In September 2007, the publication *Inc. Magazine* named Construction Results to its

"Inc. 5,000" list of Fastest-Growing Private Companies in America. A commercial and industrial general contracting company located in Plymouth, Construction Results is obviously doing the right thing.

Started in 2000 by Mark Snyder, President, and Steven Lindroos, Vice President, the small to mid-size general contractor has leap-frogged its way from \$2.4 million in revenues in its first year to \$12.9 million in 2006. To date it has completed

Construction Results Corporation group photo





PHOTO BY MARK SNYDER

Basil's Restaurant Renovation, Downtown Minneapolis

over \$60 million in projects that have ranged from more modest “service type” projects of several thousand dollars, up thru multimillion-dollar “full-scope” general contracting projects. It can bond projects over \$5 million.

Versatile and skilled, Construction Results Corporation takes on a range of projects working under a variety of contract methods, including negotiated, cost-plus, lump-sum bid and design-build. More than half of its revenue is from tenant finish projects, some of which are design-build and others of which are plan-spec projects. Construction Results also lists retail, food services, worship facilities, health care, industrial and manufacturing businesses, and educational facilities as clients.

In July 2007, Snyder became sole owner of Construction Results when Lindroos retired to his hometown in northern Minnesota. “Steve put in an incredible amount of time and hard work into the business,” recalls Snyder. “We simply would not have been as successful as we are without him.”

Snyder also credits the company’s success to personal goals,

hard work and quality employees. “I have very high expectations. I expect a lot out of my employees and even more out of myself,” he says. “We are growing and we are successful — so I guess it has worked. I feel very blessed.” Since 2000 the staff has mushroomed from two to 30 (consisting of eight in the office and the remainder in the field).

Interviewing Snyder, his brother John, Senior Project Manager and Estimator, and Ned Meyer, Vice President of Field Operations, on a clear windy October afternoon, it is not hard to see why the company is thriving. Earnest, articulate and easygoing, all three men respond thoughtfully to two hours of questions, ribbing each other on several issues. John and Ned both joined the business in 2001. Collectively, the three represent over 75 years of experience in the industry.

The company’s very first project in 2000 was replacing a ring beam gasket at the Metrodome, where the concrete ring beam around the tensile fabric roof meets the structural wall. The purchase order for the job hangs proudly — framed — on Snyder’s wall. “We don’t ever want to forget that one,”

he smiles. “That was the beginning.

“The majority of our work is with repeat clients,” states Snyder. “To me, personally, that is a tangible pat on the back. It tells me that we are *all* doing a good job and I am most proud of that. One of our goals is to foster good relationships with owners, architects and engineers.”

Why did Snyder decide to start his own business when he was successful working for other companies? He worked as a project manager for a local heavy-highway contractor, working on roads and bridge projects of \$1 million thru \$36 million, including a hydroelectric plant. Then he was an estimator and P.M. for another local mid-size commercial general contractor. “I wanted to do things my way,” says Snyder. “I began to believe there was a better way to do things with regard to service and quality. Clients expect a high level of performance and I thought we could improve on that. I wanted to see if we could make it work; besides, I had always wanted to be an owner.”

So Snyder jumped in. All was rosy until September 11, 2001 when the brakes were applied sharply to many industries, which affected construction as well. “It was tough getting jobs

for awhile, but we survived,” he says.

Both Mark and John attribute the business’s success to their long-term understanding of the field. Both hold degrees in structural civil engineering from the University of Minnesota and Mark is a professional engineer. After graduating, both worked for other construction companies. The brothers also acknowledge their father, Dave Snyder, for introducing them to the field. Dave, too, made a career in the construction industry and it was he who steered his sons toward engineering. Equally important, Dave got his sons summer jobs as laborers, where they learned the business from the ground (literally) up. Dave still puts in a few hours for his sons estimating projects. “Yeah, Dad introduced us to the business; he gave us a real education on the field side,” laughs John. “It was enough for me to know that I didn’t want to wheel hundreds of pounds of wet concrete when I was older. Plus, it gave us a better understanding of, and respect for, the laborers and carpenters out in the field.”

So, with two brothers working together, how is the synergy at Construction Results? After a few needling comments in both directions, John replies seriously: “I admire Mark; he is

Ben & Jerry’s Valleyfair, design-build building





Underwater Adventures Ticketing Area, Mall of America



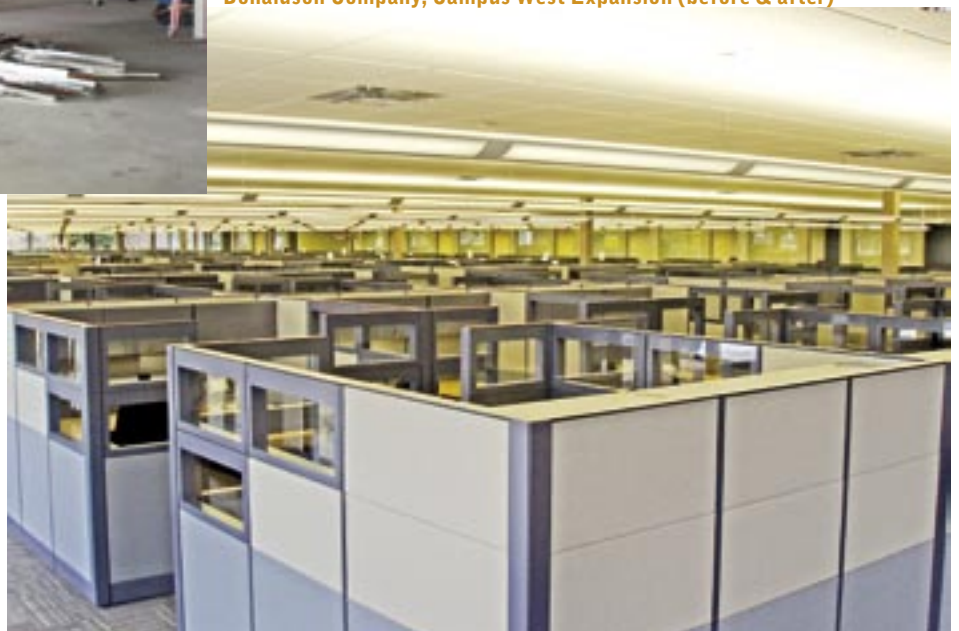
understands the concerns of structural engineers. This helps add credibility when he provides a unique solution to a difficult problem. “It is important to develop creative ways to bid projects — and some of our projects are complicated,”

Donaldson Company, Campus West Expansion (before & after)

a very smart guy. It is good to work with someone with his level of knowledge, expertise and integrity. He understands the engineering, estimates, management, insurance, bonding and the marketing of the business — he takes on what three people normally do.”

“We think a lot alike; working together is a good fit,” agrees Mark.

As a professional engineer, Snyder



he states. “Our creative problem-solving abilities work to our benefit.”

With the addition of Meyer, Construction Results has an impressive triumvirate at the helm. For his part, Meyer has logged over 30 years in the business, first in heavy commercial construction, and then as a project superintendent for 21 years before joining Construction Results. “We all have a great deal of respect for each other,” explains Meyer. “We work well together and we knew early on we would be a strong team. Our skills are complementary.”

Small to mid-size renovation and remodeling projects that require innovative solutions are Construction Results’ forte. “A lot of our projects demand creativity and an unusual amount of problem solving,” Meyer relates. “Some have been really quite difficult. But, I like these unique projects, it keeps us on our toes; it keeps it interesting.” He recalled the foundation and control building for the Steel Venom roller coaster project at

Valleyfair. “Creative problem solving is what we do best,” he says. “I mean, how many electromagnetic roller coasters are there in the upper Midwest?” John describes their expertise in solving complicated projects as a niche market. “The work does not get boring; each project is different with different problems to be solved.”

In addition to work at the Metrodome and Steel Venom, Construction Results has worked for a wide range of clients. On the more tame side of the construction equation lie projects for several Dunn Bros Coffee shops, Luther car dealerships, General Mills’ Oat Processing facility in Fridley, Bethel University and Seminary, CenterPoint Energy and additional projects at the Dome for the Minnesota Twins and Vikings.

On the more demanding side of the equation is a recent \$2.4 million project for St. Barnabas Lutheran Church in Plymouth. This complicated and multifaceted two-story addition and renovation job drew upon Construction Results’

range of expertise, creative problem solving and value-engineering skills. This project had some unique combinations of materials than typically found on one project. For example, the walls consisted of curved and segmented insulated concrete form (ICF) foundation walls, masonry walls and metal stud bearing walls; and the roof structure included steel bar-joists, wood trusses and glulam beams. All of this work was performed while congregation still worshipped in the church each week. That the church was situated near wetlands with clay soil didn’t help.

Nevertheless, the project came in on time and under budget, causing Pastor Wayne Peterson to refer Construction Results to the Prince of Peace Church in St. Louis Park, another job that required careful navigation. Here, a two-story narthex addition was built *inside* the courtyard of the existing church, which required transporting equipment and materials either through or over the top of the building, and cleaning up the site each week for Sunday services.

John underscores the complexity of a construction project at an ongoing business. “People still need to conduct business, in spite of the construction,” he explains. “This requires that we be

CenterPoint Energy, Headquarters Renovation





Dunn Bros. Coffee, Freight House Remodel

conscientious on the job with regard to noise, language and cleanup. Our superintendents do a great job keeping it all under control.”

“We bid projects that are harder to do,” states Meyer. “But, we have good field workers and projects managers that can do it. They like the challenge too.”

Snyder lists other challenging projects: the renovation of the public ticketing and reception space for Underwater Adventures on the lower level of Mall of America; renovating Basil’s Restaurant in the IDS Crystal Court; 25,000-square-foot design-build expedited tenant-finish project for Donaldson Company; and extending an elevator to the rooftop level of a recently renovated historic loft building in downtown Minneapolis. The fact that the building was already occupied and this was the only elevator for the tenants, compounded project issues and demanded a high level of ingenuity, expertise and professionalism.

Snyder shrugs with a smile. “The difficult we do immediately, the impossible just takes a little longer.”



Good Samaritan Society, three-story addition



PHOTOS BY MARK SWYDER

St. Barnabas Church, addition and renovation

Has Construction Results' business approach and philosophy changed in the current, softer construction market? "It is a tougher market now than a couple of years ago," acknowledges Snyder. "The majority of our work is with repeat clients; and when their budgets tighten, we need to look for work with other clients. We are bidding on more public projects as well."

It has also updated its website, www.constructionresults.com, to show the wide range of completed projects, and it continues to maintain low overhead.

"I don't focus on profits," explains Snyder. "I've learned that if we do a good job, the money will follow."

For Meyer, the current industry is about working smarter rather than harder. "I can only push the field guys so hard. It is far more effective to carefully pre-plan the job than push the guys to the limit during the process." He is quick to credit much of Construction Results' current successes to the field

staff, some of whom have worked for the company for years. Atypically, Construction Results self-performs most of its demolition, concrete, carpentry and supervision. "This really helps give us control over the schedule and quality of our projects; everyone knows where they should be and when they should be doing it," says Meyer. "It also saves costs for the client."

John concurs. "Again, the majority of our projects are from repeat clients, or word of mouth. Our job is to earn our clients' confidence and trust," he says. "What is the best marketing strategy? To treat clients how I want to be treated. Our clients know the construction schedule; they understand the costs. No one likes surprises."

"It's all about doing a good job on a project the first time around," Snyder states. "Clients return if they are happy with the job. We make sure our clients are satisfied, that they had good results. You know, Construction Results." ■