

GENERATION NEXT



Walls & Ceilings has started a new tradition: Generation Next. With the Baby Boomers now in a phase of retirement, we want to highlight those who are actively striving to push through hard times and are committed to the future of their companies. Generation Next is a group of people, 40 and under, who are the future of this indus-

Ten contractors under 40 who will lead the wall and ceiling industry in the 21st century, and be known as Generation Next. **By Casey Nesterowich**

try—the “cubs” who have successfully evolved through hardships, and share the same positive outlook for a better future. They invest time into staying educated and involved

on industry matters and trends, setting higher standards for themselves, which in turn, benefits their companies in the long run. Here’s a collective of some of these heir apparents.



JUSTIN LEE
33 | Vice President
Lee Drywall Inc. | Fort Myers, Fla.

Founded in 1991 Lee Drywall is run by a father-son duo—President, Mitchell Lee and Vice President, Justin Lee. Justin was educated at Jacksonville University, Valencia Community College, and went on to receive a degree from The Carter School of Estimating at the age of 22. It was then he began working for the family business and

expanded the company’s horizons by instituting the use of specialized construction and estimating software. This initiative drastically enabled estimators to work more productively, and pushed the company to a peak level of efficiency.

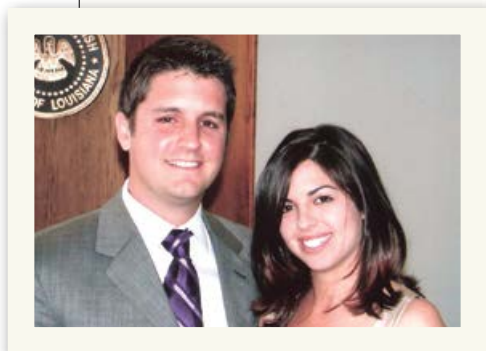
At 24, Justin became the chief estimator for Lee Drywall and shortly after broke the record for yearly company sales, with \$4 million worth of work in 2003.

“These initiatives are the reason that the business is a success and has enabled me to take the business to a

higher level,” says Lee. “I am proud to say we have created a reputation for remaining steadfast in a market that has proven to be dubious. Although not always easy, we have overcome many trials and tribulations.”

As an active member of many professional associations, holding the secretary position for Florida Wall and Ceiling Contractors Association and serving on the executive board of directors for six years, Lee strives to make a positive impact on the construction industry by raising awareness on industry related issues. During the onset of the Chinese Drywall situation, it was Lee who made it possible for industry professionals to learn more about forensic studies and laboratory analysis at the FWCCA conference with a keynote speaker, Scott Mulholland, a world-renown expert in the field of building forensic and diagnostics investigations.

Following in his father’s footsteps, Lee has instituted a sense of stewardship in the company and participates with Builders Care, a not-for-profit, community-based construction association.



JASON BERTONIERE
Founder/Owner | 31

YAMILA BERTONIERE
29
Bertoniere Interior Contractors LLC
Metairie, La.

Fresh out of high school Jason Bertoniere decided to enter the metro New Orleans construction workplace. Now in his early 30s, he has turned his desire to develop his own business into reality.

From 1999 to pre-Hurricane Katrina 2003, Bertoniere has created and kept a successful “word-of-mouth” clientele. Expanding into renovation, new construction drywall work, metal framing and acoustical ceilings in 2003 gave him the expertise for what neither he—nor anyone else—could have anticipated with Hurricane Katrina. In order to keep up with the demand for his services, it was at this time (2005-2008) that the company had to shift from

Bertoniere Interior Contractors, LLC



DEREK KARS
38 | Vice President

SHERRY SERGI
President | 39
ESCO Services LLC.
Orlando Fla.

Derek Kars started as a laborer on his father's projects when he was 15. His father was a general contractor building assisted living facilities in Michigan, where Kars would work on summer breaks. After high school, he started working as a carpenter building metal framed interiors in Orlando.

Although ESCO is first generation, Kars's son Brad started college this year at FIU and is planning on getting his structural engineering degree and joining the team full time once his schooling is complete.

"ESCO is optimistic on the current state of the construction industry. We are noticing a big demand for multifamily housing in the Central Florida area and believe this is an area everyone should be looking to," says Kars. "There is pent-up energy in the senior housing market as well and this is the market we specialize and focus on. Within the next five years, we are expecting to do around \$50 million in that area alone. However, we are not seeing new offices/tenant improvement being built nor in the design stage which is always a troubling sign. Lower-end retail stores, auto part stores and mid-range restaurants continue to build in our market and make for positive cash flow."



CHRISTOPHER GARRETT NELSON
36 | President
Garrett Custom Homes Inc.
Hollywood Hills/
Los Angeles, Calif.

"Growing up, I always had a hammer or broom in my hand. Coming from a long line of contractors, it was only natural that I went into the family business," says Christopher Nelson, explaining how productivity and a penchant for constructing is in his blood. Beginning with his great grandfather who built commercial units in Southern California, Nelson's grandfather and dad all were builders within California and Oregon.

Even though Nelson's family is strongly rooted in contracting, Garrett Custom Homes starts with him. The company specializes in high-end custom homes throughout the Los Angeles, Beverly Hills and Malibu area. The company is also licensed in to build in Las Vegas. The company will do major remodels or restorations, such as the Ray Kappe-Strand House restoration as project manager and superintendent. Garrett works with architects in town. The company can price projects and coordinate everything from locating land, to coordinating architectural designs, submittals for permitting and running the job through completion. Furthermore, the company has experience in assessing damage and/or defects. The company will assess, create a plan and budget the repair for customers and insurance.

One factor that Nelson says contributes to the company's success is the latest in technology.

"I utilize construction software to keep all budget and paperwork in order," he says. "This is not only for my books but to make sure everything from the budget and billing to the schedule is crystal clear for the client."



—Jason Bertoniere and Yamila Bertoniere continued—
a small business with a three-man crew to a more diverse and practical one that employed up to 10 men. The responsibility and experience of managing a business and attempting to help rebuild an entire city gave Bertoniere the core foundation to establish Bertoniere Interior Contractors as a reputable construction company in New Orleans. The company credits local contractors Margsiglia Construction and Isacks Con-

struction Co., respectively, as being instrumental to its success.

In 2006, an infusion of good fortune took place when Bertoniere met and married Yamila, an Argentinean native. Yamila has worked side-by-side with her husband in the business—helping manage the daily business issues and payroll.

Yet success in business is not their only goal. Throughout this process of watching his company grow, Bertoniere put himself through

Tulane University and graduated this year. Yamila is currently pursuing a degree in Accounting from the University of New Orleans. In spite of their struggle of maintaining these two priorities, together they are working very hard toward establishing a solid family business presently grossing approximately \$500,000 and looking toward a goal of \$1 million in the upcoming years when they can pass on their business to their now young son Jeremy.



ANTHONY ROSETTI
35 | Regional Manager
Performance Contracting Group Inc.
Arizona, New Mexico and Southern California

“Before my college years, I did not have much involvement in the trades,” says Anthony Rosetti. “While attending California State University, Chico I had the intent of getting into civil engineering since I enjoyed math and was actually pretty good at it. After several classes, I came to find that it didn’t quite interest me. I found that construction management would be a better fit. After two internships, one

building wine caves and the other in roadwork, I realized commercial construction is where I belong.”

So begins Rosetti’s career in the trades. The history of PCG dates back to 1950 when the company operated as part of Owens Corning Fiberglas Contracting Division, which later created Performance Contracting Group, in 1984, as a separate subsidiary.

“Performance Contracting Group places a strong emphasis in employee training and preparing the next generation of managers and company leaders,” Rosetti says. “The company’s leadership group openly expresses long-term goals, succession planning, and expectations of the corporation. I attribute my success to the outstanding mentorship and training provided by the organization.”



MARK WEIAND
32 | Project Superintendent
Cox Construction Co. | Vista, Calif.

After receiving his Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering, Weiland was more interested in the construction side of the industry than the design, and has found his way to Cox Construction Co., a business that’s been around for three decades and in its third generation of owners.

“I see first-hand the shortage of superintendents coming up in the industry,” says Weiland. “Technology and higher education is rapidly changing the construction industry, making it possible to have a career at a much younger age, that’s typically been reserved for those in the trades for 20 years.”

“The owners at Cox Construction Co. have always been very open when it comes to the business management side of the company,” he continues. “Rather than keeping us solely focused on just the construction side of the business, they give us insight into how the day to day financial operations are run and how a single project ties into the success of the company as a whole.”

Weiland has worked all over the nation including state projects in Chicago, large retail projects in Jonesboro, Ariz., Baton Rouge, La., Sacramento, Calif., and government projects in San Diego.

“Throughout my travels and career, I’ve never met anyone who aspired to be a construction superintendent,” he says. “I didn’t know I would end up being one myself until years after I graduated college.”



RICHARD HUNTLEY
34 | President
WeKanDo Construction, Inc
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Richard Huntley is a 2000 graduate from the Isenberg School of Management in the University of Massachusetts with a degree in Business Management. He started his apprenticeship working in the office and as a mechanic in the field during the summers of his school years. He is a fourth-generation contractor, from Homer P. Huntley to Josiah Dale Huntley to Harold Renny Huntley and now Richard Huntley. The Huntley’s companies, under various monikers, grew and expanded from being just a plastering company to a specialized company in spray-on fireproofing, exterior metal framing, EIFS, lath and plaster, specialty wall and finish systems.

Always one to keep current on trends and services, Huntley is certified as a professional in EIFS by AWCI, has completed courses in fireproofing with Iso-latek International, welding at the Welding Institute and Technical Services, 30 hours of construction security by PROSHA, and many other courses specialized in the industry. He attends educational seminars throughout the year in order to increase his knowledge of the industry and participates in AWCI Technical Committees.

WKD has been operating since 2004 but the family and its legacy has been in Puerto Rico since the 1950s, with Huntley’s great grandfather beginning the roots as a plastering contractor circa 1920 in East St. Louis.





TRAVIS VAP
35 | CEO
South Valley Drywall Inc.
Littleton, Colo.

Travis Vap knew he would end up working in construction somehow, some way. He just didn't figure it would be that soon.

"I was hired by Arthur Andersen out of college but then Enron happened," he recalls. "I then went to work for a small financial

firm valuing business. At the end of the agreement, my dad offered me a job to work at South Valley. I agreed to work for him on the condition that I would work six months in-field, learning various skills and at anytime I was not a fit he would let me go."

Well, it seems the reluctant figure was a fit and now Vap is leading the second-generation into another era, continuing the success founded by his dad Richard. The drywall contractor has immersed itself with the latest in construction and design software.

"Interesting things we are involved in are BIM, panelization, digital plan updating, digital production tracking, and web-based quality control systems," Vap says.



JORDAN POOLE
27 | Vice President
Pooles Construction Inc./
PCI Drywall Contractors
Los Angeles



Poole represents PCI's second familial generation and holds memories of working onsite when he 15. Working his way from the bottom up, he gained an incredible amount of knowledge about the materials used on projects while driving the company truck and upholding the warehouse and inventory.

"I maintain a great respect for the traditions of hard-work and honesty that our trade was built upon," says Poole. "It seems every initiative we have employed in the last few years was reactionary to market demands."

Poole's spirited mindset pushes him to be an industry ambassador by staying open-minded and offering a fresh perspective with an energetic approach to his work. Currently, the company's projects include: a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Camarillo, Calif., with two floors of core, shell, and tenant construction encompassing approximately 16,000 square feet, as well as, a Los Angeles office for Towers Watson, which is a full, single floor tenant improvement construction project that will take up just over 21,000 square feet.



COBY WELCH
Vice President | 38
Wal-Mark Contracting Group LLC
Orlando, Fla.

While attending The University of Florida's Building Construction program, Welch interned for a general contractor for two years as he earned a bachelor degree in construction. In January 2000, he started with Wal-Mark Contracting Group, working as an assistant

project manager in Tampa and was promoted within the company over the course of several years. In 2006, Welch was promoted to vice president at the company's Orlando office.

Wal-Mark Contracting Group is one of 14 wholly-owned subsidiaries that offer its clients a collective experience of specialized capabilities in all types of construction projects. Its parent company, National Construction Enterprises, was established in 1966 and has been consistently ranked as one of the nation's

largest wall and ceiling and specialty contractors. NCE subsidiaries provide general contracting, construction management, Design-Build and specialty interior contracting.

"Our industry boasts a great group of men and women who are not only dedicated to their profession but are also civic leaders with a commitment to making a positive impact on our community," he continues. "As for me, I am fortunate to work in a career that I am fulfilled doing, and benefit from working with a group of individuals that I respect and enjoy working with. Our industry is dynamic and growth oriented, and is historically a driving force behind economic activity in our country."



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