

BUSINESS

Teamwork Helps Contractor Thrive During Downturn

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[Bush Construction Company, Inc.](#) has made huge strides since the firm was founded in 2008, going from zero to \$18 million in revenue in its first full year of business. As a general contractor, design-builder and professional construction manager, its team members have worked on a range of industrial, educational, government and commercial projects in the Quad-Cities and throughout the Midwest.

According to A.J. Loss, president, the company has been awarded more than \$60 million in projects to date. What makes its growth so exceptional is the fact that it took place during a nationwide recession with an accompanying construction industry slump.

Bush Construction has succeeded in its endeavors through a collaborative approach to business, Loss states. "Through collaborative relationships with our clients, designers and subcontractors, we have established an unconventional approach to the world of commercial building construction," he says. "This high degree of collaboration is only possible in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect."

The company believes strongly in the power of teamwork. "By embracing a collaborative environment with our project teams," Loss notes, "we have been able to deliver some very complex projects on time, under budget and with happy clients."

Turning an Urban Brownfield into a Green Success

Bush Construction maintained its early growth while handling a number of philanthropic projects, spending considerable time and resources in the community. Recently, it was honored during the 23rd annual Hard Hat awards presentation, receiving the Collette Hinrichsen Award for Philanthropy for its contributions to the Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation (RIEGC).

Bush Construction worked with RIEGC on the Jackson Square project, a brownfield area in downtown Rock Island, IL, that was turned into an attractive 30-unit apartment complex. RIEGC, the owner of the property, attained the necessary funding for the project. Bush Construction acted as the construction manager on the project, and EnviroNET, Inc., served as the environmental contractor.

"The Illinois Oil Products warehouse used to operate on the property," says Ryan Schertz, Bush Construction's superintendent in charge of the project, who served as on-site manager for all activities on the site. "The work took about 15 months. The land had environmental issues. It was a brownfield site with multiple tanks and lots of oil everywhere. There were tanks within the building as well as underground. We had chemical infiltration throughout the site that needed to be remediated."

According to Rob Davis, Bush Construction project manager, the environmental concerns were the No. 1 challenge. "Remedial action was carried out while construction was taking place, so both endeavors had to be coordinated for greatest efficiency," Davis states. "EnviroNET, Inc., provided the remedial action plan, collected soil samples, did the modeling, and determined how the contaminated soil might migrate. Rainwater can drive contaminants deeper into the ground. The pollutants travel below the grade and along the bedrock, and can be forced into more porous materials along the way."



Thorough documentation of the contamination was needed. Based on the models provided by EnviroNET, plans for the ecological renewal of the property were approved by the federal and state Environmental Protection Agency.

"The contractor hauled off the contaminated soil, and work performed by Bush was scheduled around that contractor. This closely coordinated teamwork allowed the project to proceed at a steady, efficient pace," Davis says. "When the project was done, we received a clean bill of health for the land. The EPA confirmed that no further action was required."

As part of the project, EnviroNET was required to pump the underground tanks dry, rendering them harmless, and then fill them with a flowable grout material. The site also included cisterns. For those, the walls were removed to below ground level and the cisterns were packed with sand and left in place.

"Architecturally speaking, the designs for the project were based on the existing buildings," Davis notes. "We did not want to lose the historical significance of the area. So, storage tanks were used decoratively as planters to keep the architectural heritage intact. We wanted to keep the flavor of the past and make Jackson Square a historical point of interest."

Davis adds that Jackson Square represents a major step forward for Rock Island's downtown community. "You would never guess that this attractive residential area with green spaces used to be a brownfield," he comments. "The entire Bush team is proud to be a part of this project."

The Best People for the Best Results

The success of the Bush Construction team relies strongly on the combined talents of its members. "The staff is highly experienced," says Schertz. "The team really makes a difference. What we can handle is pretty limitless for us."

According to Loss, Bush Construction is committed to finding and retaining the best staff members. "We give careful consideration to every resume we receive," he says. "It takes the best people to bring about the best results."

The teamwork manifesto at Bush Construction also extends to its clientele and subcontractors. "Building a strong customer relationship takes daily diligence, planning, care and ongoing communication," Loss states. "We listen to what our clients have to say, since we are helping to build the future success of their businesses. We treat our subcontractors as team members, as well, by working with them in an ethical manner.

"Our unwavering position against bid-shopping and our commitment to ensuring timely payments to our subcontractors has reinforced these important relationships and, in turn, provided a unique market advantage," he asserts. "Teamwork is the key to success in construction – and really, in any industry."



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