

Russell Construction Company of Texas Celebrating a Quarter Century of Teamwork

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Russell Construction Company of Texas (RCC) is a company on the short list of qualified contractors when big box retailers need to assemble a team to build new or remodel/retrofit existing stores. John Russell founded the company in 1987 and gradually built a team of experienced construction professionals specializing in retail renovations, interior fixture modernizations and new location constructions. Operating from headquarters in Conroe, Texas, the RCC team takes pride in bringing commercial buildings up to a client's quality standards and getting new construction projects up and running on time.

RCC is a family-owned and -operated company, doing business with strong family values. Hard work, dedication, a commitment to quality workmanship and mutual respect define the company and are a large reason why RCC has been able to maintain its consistent standard of quality while working for some of the country's most recognizable big box vendors for over a quarter-century.

"We're a fixture-oriented general contractor, and even though most of our projects are similar we have the skills and experienced professionals to work with teams of all



Core Management at Russell Construction Company of Texas



sizes across the country,” expands Matt Russell, current vice president of RCC.

The core of the team consists of other Russell family members who have joined the company at various times throughout the years. Joining early on, Ty, currently serving as president, and Matt brought with them previous construction credentials, including field superintendent experience, floor laying experience and more. Having worked for outside companies early on helped Ty and Matt bring new ideas and processes

Holding everything together is office manager Linda Darsey, the go-to person for everything from invoicing to human resources.

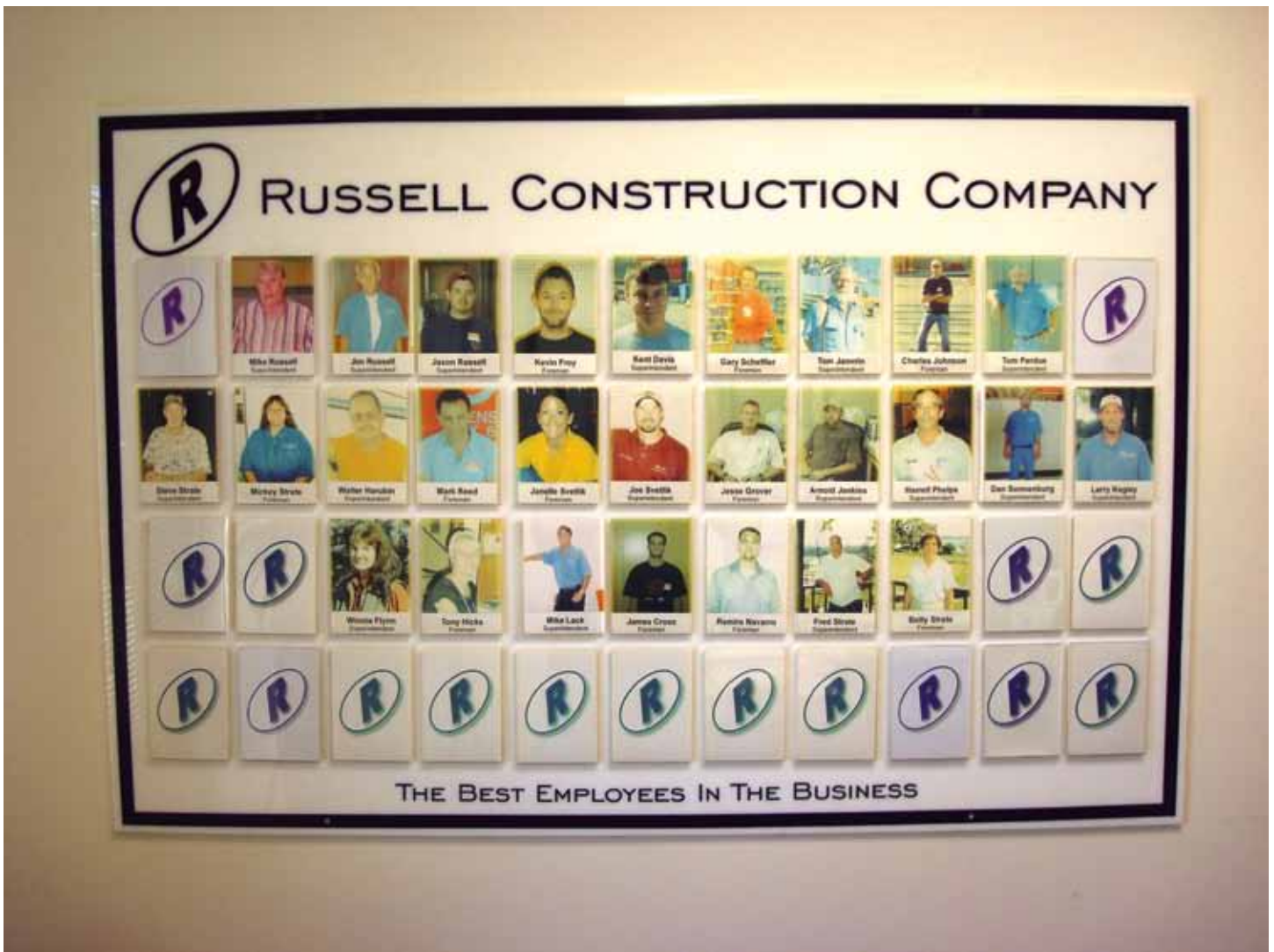
“Linda is absolutely a great asset and there’s not a thing she can’t handle,” says Matt. Finally, the person whom everyone agrees truly sets RCC apart is receptionist Judy Hazel. “A lot of times you call a company and are frustrated by the lack of that human touch; Judy is a friendly voice on the end of the phone line that our customers and field employees count on and appreciate,” explains Ty.

Assembling a Team

RCC currently employs around eight office-based project management professionals and a team of 50 field superintendents and foremen (including a handful of women) who can tackle almost every component of a retail store’s interior finishing, from pre-manufactured wood fixtures, metal and glass shelving to décor packages and signage. In fact, the only items RCC regularly subcontracts out are electrical components, flooring and drywall, according to Matt.

RCC self-performs the vast majority of work, but to cover what they don’t the company takes extra care to work with





subcontractors who already have a proven portfolio of related work and a consistent track record for delivering projects on time and on schedule. This is especially important when clients pull the RCC team farther away from home. “Every project is different, but we’re always looking at the specific requirements of each job to find the partners who will work best, because our subcontractors play an important role in the success of each project,” adds Ty.

At the end of the day, the pressure is on for RCC and the project’s team to deliver a product that the Russell family can stand behind. RCC is often contracted to work on projects with ambitious turnaround timelines and strict deadlines that the retailer relies upon.

Even before crews can get to work installing new fixtures, RCC has to find suitable solutions for removing old fixtures and any building refuse. “We see more and more clients elect to reuse or repurpose old fixtures for cost savings, as well as ecological and recycling considerations,” says Matt.

Rising to the Top

The recent economic downturn has only heightened the expectations placed upon contractors in all industries to be more quality-, cost- and budget-conscious, and RCC has been able to survive 25 years in the industry by finding the most capable professionals and creating a corporate culture that engenders loyalty and a low turnover rate.

“The economy has really forced everyone to become better contractors and RCC is no exception,” reflects Ty. “The new philosophy is to work leaner, cleaner, to do it with a little bit less and a whole lot better.”

Financial metrics can only give a company a limited understanding of its performance record, and Matt maintains that RCC’s vital indicator is actually its employee turnover rate, especially since RCC has been able to stay debt-free throughout the company’s existence. “Our goal is make sure our employees stay engaged throughout the retail construction season [usually



lasting January through October], because we have built our company on a level of consistent staff and experience,” asserts Matt.

Though volume took a slight hit in the wake of the economic downturn, RCC is already seeing a slight upturn in volume, which the company expects to continue. “The reality is that many companies have held off on any new investments, but they will eventually need to replace and redesign their infrastructure to keep up with changing consumer tastes,” says Ty.

To cater to its customers, the company plans on developing additional niches within its existing target market sectors rather than expanding geographically or trying to tackle new market niches already saturated with qualified professionals. According to Matt, the key will be leveraging its strong reputation in the retail sector and targeting projects too small for most general contractors, but still too large for commercial maintenance specialists.

Though no one can tell for sure what the future will bring, the Russell family sees RCC poised to take on

the growth opportunities that harmonize well with its core capabilities and corporate culture. By focusing in on the specific talents of each professional, taking calculated risks that protect the company’s solid financial standing, and assembling teams to suit a job’s requirements, Russell Construction Company of Texas hopes to face few challenges while furthering its success in the next quarter century. •

