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Yonkers Paving Concepts' Growth Built On Customer Needs

By Janie Franz

Twenty-one years ago when Yonkers Paving Concepts in Pelham Manor NY, started as a residential asphalt sealcoating contractor, the company's crews began listening intently to what their customers said. "We moved into the paving market because our customers were not happy with the performance of some of the local contractors in the area," says Ron Belizze, owner of Yonkers Paving Concepts. "We were going in and repairing people's driveways that were paved only a year or two years prior. The customers had been promised to receive two inches of asphalt and only a skim coat of product was put on. It cracked. So we started involving ourselves with repair work."

As the company listened, they began to shape their identity as a paving business. "As your customer base grows, you grow along with it. You have to be adaptable to change," Belizze says. "We got involved in the decorative world about six years after we started paving. We started stamping asphalt. We used to do work for a lot of local contractors who did the paving. We wanted to do something additional, but not to compete with them."



Today Yonkers Paving Concepts is a family owned and operated business, offering a variety of construction services, including excavating, asphalt reclaiming, finish grading, paving, milling, and decorative paving technologies. They serve lower Westchester County and portions of the Bronx



and Long Island in New York. The company has also completed projects in Connecticut and New Jersey. The focus of their business now is mainly commercial and municipal with few residential projects.

The company has grown from four or five employees when they began in 1989. Though they have had as many as 15-18 guys handling a variety of projects, Belizze realized that ten men was their most productive and efficient size, especially for some of the projects that require artistic and technological expertise.



Yonkers Paving Concepts utilizes this core crew to operate a variety of equipment they have to complete a range of projects. "We have a Leeboy 8515 paver and an Ingersoll Rand 3120 as backup. We have a motor grader and three rollers— a Hamm VV 14, a Dynapack DD24, and a Dynapack DD12S. We have skid-steers. We have a 20,000 pound mini excavator, a Case 580 backhoe, and

an air compressor. We have 2 tri-axle dump trucks, a 6-wheel dump truck, and various box trucks. This is in addition to the heating apparatus that we do for the decorative world. We also have compactor plates and all of those additional types of equipment."

Though Yonkers Paving Concepts has a solid reputation as a quality paving and paving maintenance contractor that can also do excavation, drainage and masonry work, it is their work with innovative paving technologies, such as stamped and stencil coated asphalt and concrete pavements, that are setting this company apart from its competitors. They are able to do driveway beautification and enhancements, decorative patios, crosswalks and sidewalks, safety friction coatings, and even commercial logos. This company has laid down logos for sports teams, universities, and dealerships. One of their most unique was the Harley Davidson logo stamped onto a dealer's parking lot.

Yonkers Paving Concepts offers a variety of different solutions, customized to fit their customers' needs. Some of these include various styles, patterns, and uses for decorative technologies such as StencilCoat™, FrictionPave™, Friction-Print™, ThermoPrint™, stamped asphalt, and traditional masonry (stone walls and steps). Available in solid or multi-color non-pattern designs, StencilCoat™ can be used for asphalt or concrete driveways, sidewalks, crosswalks, patios, pool decks, and entrances. Stamped asphalt uses various designs and colors for imprinting asphalt driveways. Thermo-Print™, a method that inlays thermal plastics flush with the surface for snow plow resistance, is ideal for crosswalks and



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Contractor of the Month

"If you specialize in quality and you want to be on top of your game, you want to promote the services that sell themselves. That gives you repeat business,"

comes in a variety of patterns with red, white, or yellow colors. FrictionPrint™, an epoxy and natural stone inlaid into asphalt, and FrictionPave™, a stone and two-part binder that is applied to the surface of asphalt or concrete, are often used in traffic circles, medians, crosswalks and curb-to-curb street treatments.

"We are finding a lot of our customers who are using our decorative paving systems and products are using them mostly in the municipal and the commercial sector for the simple reason it is cost effective, the speed of installation, and the flexibility of an asphalt product. What they are ending up with is a finished pavement that is not asphalt. It is a stamped system. It is decorative. It is easy to maintain, and it is not susceptible to frost heaving associated with brick pavers where water can get into the joints and cause movement of the pavers," Belize says.



"If you specialize in quality and you want to be on top of your game, you want to promote the services that sell themselves.

That gives you repeat business," Belize says. The majority of his business comes from previous customers who either need work done or who recommend Yonkers Paving Concepts to friends and colleagues. The company does no real advertising other than a monthly newsletter that is sent out to their database of customers. The company also has a good working relationship with other contractors in the area. "Again, by putting a quality product forward and being able to promote the end result has really gotten us to a point where business is sustainable, even in this economy," he says. "People know what we do and they know what to expect. At the end of the day, that is what is keeping us alive."

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The quality of their finished projects and their willingness to work hard will carry them through an uncertain winter this year. "We used to do the snow plowing for City Corp corporate headquarters, which was located in Marinack NY. We would move all of our equipment up there in a staging area to plow snow, clean sidewalks and driveways, salt and sand, and so forth. At the height of the economic downturn, everybody downsized, and City Corp moved out of that facility last year."

Belizze is hopeful, though. "In a bad economy, you just work a little harder...Personal appearance with your customers is very important. At the end of the day, you do what works. We found that this works."

In the meantime, Belizze continues to train his men in new technologies. "We get certifications for the systems that we provide through Pattern Paving Products," he says. "In addition to that, we learn in the field as well. There are things that are not always taught in the trainings, little nuances that you learn by doing. You are going to pick up little tools of the trade." In addition, he maintains his involvement with the New York chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA).

So what does the future hold for Yonkers Paving Concepts? "It is challenging," Belizze says. "We are ever changing in our technology, and we are adapting to different systems to differentiate and to somewhat mitigate what we see as far as the economic trends and the challenges of the economy. We anticipate some significant growth within the next couple of years. Roads do fail. They do not last forever. They need to be maintained. We are hoping that we are at the forefront of the repair work that is necessary and are leaders in new improvements to the infrastructure." 

