



RAPID RISER

From fence repair to nationwide projects, *Ryan Contractors Inc.* grows swiftly in seven years

by Jay Landers

The past seven years have been something of a whirlwind for Ryan Contractors Inc. (RCI), a general contractor based in Rancho Cucamonga, California. Incorporated in 2012, RCI was begun by CEO and President Shawn Ryan, who brought in Vice President Rob Dalrymple six months later. Since then, the company has grown to 25 team members while entering new sectors, consistently doubling its business each year and expanding its reach to a growing number of states.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

RCI completed its first job in early 2012, repairing a fence for the modest sum of \$600. Since then, RCI has come a long way in a relatively short time. "We believe you have to be faithful with the small projects before you can be faithful with the big projects," Ryan says.

"Our first two company vehicles were a 1997 Toyota RAV4 and a 2007 Ford F-150," Dalrymple says. "We recently added two contracts: One for \$6 million and the other for \$10 million," he says. "In seven years, the size of the projects has really grown exponentially. We've been very, very blessed."

RCI's growth has enabled the company to expand its offerings and capabilities. "As the company has grown, our overall volume has grown substantially, and our bonding capacity has increased to \$10 million," Ryan says. "We've been good stewards with our clients," he says, "and we've continued to grow as they've needed us to grow and do larger and larger projects."

Ryan Contractors Inc. is working with the Union Pacific Corporation to construct a new maintenance building for the railroad company in downtown Los Angeles.

At first, RCI mainly built restaurants before entering the “big box” sector of large commercial retail companies, doing work for such nationwide clients as Best Buy Co. Inc. Staples, Inc. and Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc. “We started off as a heavy retail contractor,” Dalrymple says. “We’ve been keeping that side of the business alive, along with branching off to other sectors. Though the majority of our business is still retail, we’ve reinvented our firm and diversified our project portfolio.” RCI’s client list also includes the Union Pacific Corporation and Rose Hills Memorial Park & Mortuaries.

Recently, RCI completed the construction of a distribution center for Staples. RCI expects to engage in more projects like this. It looks to keep pace with a fast-changing market in which Amazon and other online retailers have succeeded, sometimes at the expense of traditional brick-and-mortar stores. “We’re looking to get more into the construction of distribution centers and fulfillment centers,” Dalrymple explains.

A PASSION TO BUILD

For both Ryan and Dalrymple, RCI is the latest venture in careers that have long been dedicated to construction. “I’ve always enjoyed working with my hands,” Ryan says. “I enjoy building. I started out working as a laborer, digging trenches. It’s always resonated with me. I enjoy what I do, and I love to see buildings come out of the ground.”

Everyone on the staff of RCI shares this same sort of enthusiasm, Ryan says. “We have a similar passion to see projects come together,” he says.

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Shawn Ryan, CEO and President,
Ryan Contractors Inc.

For Dalrymple, each successfully completed project motivates him to do even more. The satisfaction of completing a job in accordance with the client’s wishes “just feeds the passion to do the next one and do it even better than the last one,” he adds.

CULTURE OF CAMARADERIE

Much of the credit for the tremendous success of RCI goes to the company’s hardworking staff, Dalrymple says. “A lot of that has to do with the people who are in the company and who have helped us grow,” he says. “We couldn’t do it by ourselves. It really is a team effort. Everybody here can do two or three different jobs, and sometimes they have to do them almost simultaneously.”

The dedication and loyalty of the RCI staff reflects the company’s “extremely strong team atmosphere and culture of camaraderie,” Ryan says. “There are not a lot of egos,” he says. “It’s a team that works together. Everyone is willing to pitch in to do his or her share. You might see a superintendent sweeping the floor, or you might see a laborer helping out on a computer. They’ll do whatever it takes to get the job done for the team.”

Team members frequently go above and beyond the call of duty, Dalrymple notes. For example, administrative staff will sometimes stay at the office late at night or come in on weekends to ensure that critical work is completed on time. In other cases, staff members have been known to take



Based in Rancho Cucamonga, California, Ryan Contractors Inc. (RCI) is headed by CEO and President Shawn Ryan (right) and Vice President Rob Dalrymple.

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even more drastic measures to see to it that RCI meets its commitments to its clients. "I've seen project managers delay their vacations because a project wasn't finished when it was supposed to be, because of weather delays," Dalrymple says. "That's never asked of them. They just do that on their own, which I think says something about their dedication."

Despite its rapid growth, RCI continues to try to "maintain a family atmosphere," Dalrymple says. "I always wanted this company to be the kind of place where I would want to work, if I worked for somebody," he says. "I think Shawn and I are good at understanding the employees because

we're not that far removed from being in the field. We've been in the trenches, and it wasn't that long ago that we were there."

BEYOND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Another trait that has helped RCI gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace is the company's willingness to embrace technology. "Everyone in the field has an iPhone, an iPad and a laptop," Dalrymple says.

In the office, RCI staff use project management software from Procore Technologies, Inc. that is designed specifically for the construction industry. "It helps out tremendously with

job management and communication, not only with the guys in the field, but also with the client," Dalrymple says. Using the software, RCI is able to send its clients daily reports and photos of their job site. "We're big on communication," he says. The technology complements the company's use of various products from The Blue Book Building & Construction Network to develop and pursue job leads and communicate with vendors.

Through teamwork and technology, RCI has expanded its scope of operations far beyond Southern California. "We're licensed in more than 35 states," Dalrymple says.

In large part, this expansion has resulted from RCI's strong relationship with many of the big national retailers, which have stores across the country. After successfully helping such a retailer construct a new store or modify an existing location, RCI often receives requests to work on projects from the same company in other states, Dalrymple says. "We can travel to meet their needs, so they don't have to look for a local general contractor," he notes. "They can just call us."

Whether a project is small or large, or local or far from home, RCI is ready and willing to handle it. "We can build whatever it is," Dalrymple says. "Just give us a set of plans, and we'll take care of it." 🐼

For nearly two decades, writer and editor Jay Landers has specialized in reporting on design, construction and infrastructure issues for major publications.