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NEW VIEW FROM ABOVE

Business strategies change,
core values remain the same

Michael Lallier, President
Lallier Construction, Inc.

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NEW VIEW FROM ABOVE

Business strategies change, core values remain the same
for Lallier Construction, Inc.'s, Michael Lallier

by Theresa M. Casey

In 2012, Michael Lallier, President of Colorado-based Lallier Construction, Inc. (LCI) and Western Architectural Metals, made a conscious decision to transform his role from working contractor to deliberate business owner. With this newfound focus, he grew the roofing and siding business from \$1.5 million in annual revenues to \$16 million in just three years.

"I went from being *in* the business to being *on top of* the business," Michael explains. "When I was in the business, I was a small contractor who simply enjoyed the trade." He was inspired, however, while networking with a larger contractor and realized there was opportunity in the market to expand his business. Michael became aware of different ways to look at the industry and how to position the company for growth. "So instead of being a contractor in business, I started to focus on managing the business."

He was driven to develop more aggressive business goals and to forge a plan to get there. "I learned about the benefits of professionally managing the business, which is much more than just being good at your trade," says Michael. "I believed I could build and improve upon these newfound concepts and business practices, tailoring them to better serve our customers and to more closely match our company values and brand."

FOCUSING ON THE BUSINESS AND GROWTH

Michael's new appreciation for business management peaked his interest in learning as much as he could about it. Watching for trends and opportunities, harnessing new technology and tracking key performance indicators became his



Michael Lallier (left) hired Andrew (Andy) Coria as General Manager in 2014. Andy combines his professional background in the banking, mortgage and finance industries with lessons learned in construction and concrete during his younger years to help Michael lead the business.

COURTESY OF DAVID HEWITT, LALLIER CONSTRUCTION, INC.



(Top) Lallier Construction, Inc. installed a fully adhered 90-millimeter firestone EPDM rubber roofing membrane on the nine-story Equitable Building located in downtown Denver. **(Right)** Crew members on the snowy rooftop of the historic Equitable Building in downtown Denver.



new focus. He signed up for business courses, completed additional research on his own, and conferred with employees and others in the industry. He learned many applicable skills, such as finance and accounting, human resources and marketing.

Many staff members had been with the company for 10-15 years, but with expansion in sight, Michael hired and trained additional field technicians, foremen, superintendents and project managers to free his time. He added new professionals to help run the business, such as a marketing director, controller and in-house estimators.


It was in 2014 that Michael hired Andrew (Andy) Coria as General

Manager. Andy's professional background was in the banking, mortgage and finance industries, but he had a stint in his younger years in construction and concrete. "It may sound like a roundabout career path, but in actuality, it helped me understand the connection of various industries and prepared me to help a business—and therefore helped me personally—to flourish and prosper," says Andy.

But Michael didn't stop there with his plans to grow. He had been searching for a way to expand his business. Encouraged by a sheet metal contractor and colleague with whom he had worked for years, Michael applied his marketing acumen with his expanded technical knowledge

of working with metals. In 2015, he decided to make a bold move and founded Western Architectural Metals, vertically integrating and expanding LCI's services to include in-house fabrication.

Not surprisingly, Michael also had his own ideas on how to improve and customize industry standards to better meet his business model, and as a result, he says the company can custom fabricate sheet metal much more quickly than area competitors. Western Architectural Metals also provides standing seam metal roofs that help to prevent damaging water infiltration and ice buildup, a quality that is especially beneficial in Colorado's extreme weather.



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Michael Lallier, Founder and President,
Lallier Construction, Inc. and Western Architectural Metals

LCI and Western Architectural Metals have amassed an impressive portfolio of projects, which include rubber, asphalt and metal roofs, as well as gutters, soffits and metal cladding.

For instance, LCI installed a fully adhered 90-millimeter Firestone ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM) rubber roofing membrane on the nine-story Equitable Building in downtown Denver. The historic structure was built in 1892 and held the distinction as the tallest building in the city until 1911. "This project threw many challenges at us," explains Andy, "due to local sporting event traffic, the requirement of a crane to load material, historical preservation regulations, and Regional Transportation District light rail tracks running next to the building." LCI hired a safety engineer specifically for this project, secured all the necessary permits, and used two-shift workdays to accommodate train and sporting event schedules. The job was completed without any incidents or accidents.

For the Westend apartments in Denver, LCI installed roofing, gutters and custom metal siding with trim. The complex is highly visible from Interstate 25 due to the unusual, architecturally specified lime green exterior wall panels. The project called for three different types of roofing materials, including thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) with tapered polyisocyanurate roof insulation, EPDM membrane under concrete pavers on screw jack pedestals that support patio decks and in planter boxes, and asphalt shingles.

The recently completed Red Rocks Credit Union headquarters building project in Littleton, Colo., showcases nearly all that LCI has to offer. It includes a TPO roof, flush seam soffit metal panels, custom zinc-coated silver siding, custom fascia cladding, patio deck concrete pavers on raised pedestals, and simulated copper overlapped siding.

The LEED Silver-certified Line 28 at LoHi apartments combine rustic charm with the comforts of modern city living in the heart of downtown Denver. Lallier Construction, Inc. installed a fully adhered TPO roof and fabricated and installed the architectural standing seam metal siding panels.

COURTESY OF KEATON BAKER, LALLIER CONSTRUCTION, INC.

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STAYING TRUE TO CORE VALUES

Born and raised in the Denver suburb of Morrison, Michael prides himself on staying true to his roots. It seems he was an entrepreneur from an early age, starting his own painting, roofing and landscaping business during his senior year at Bear Creek High School. After graduation, he attended the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs on a basketball scholarship. "It turns out, college wasn't a good fit for me," recalls Michael, who left college after his junior year, where he explored both the IT and pre-med fields. "I realized my true passion was construction and decided nearly 30 years ago to commit full-time to the business."

The company culture is driven by Michael's leadership style. "We have a very diverse staff in many ways, but particularly in terms of personalities.

It's important that we treat each other like family—with respect, honesty and integrity," he says. He likes to foster personal and professional growth and has been known to support—sometimes even financially—employees who have decided to start their own businesses or go on to other companies.

"I really believe in my staff and I want them to be truly happy at work. If employees want to leave the company to try a different type of job or industry, or if employees want to take a try at starting their own companies, then we want to support that. Sometimes we may lose really good employees, but sometimes they return to us as their personal and professional situations and circumstances change. Good, trained staff is hard to find. We want them to know they are always welcome back," adds Michael.


One particularly useful tool in keeping employees satisfied is the business' Quarterly Roundup meeting. Michael takes this opportunity to remind the staff of the company's values, reviews progress toward business goals and opens the floor for discussion of virtually any topic of concern. "It's important that the staff knows that we as a company will do what we say we are going to do. We don't over-promise, nor under-deliver," he explains. "If something goes wrong, we will make it right. We work together as a team and have each other's back. That's what it means to be a family."

THE EDUCATOR/CONSULTANT MODEL

While some contractors are tied to and recommend specific products regardless of project nuances, LCI is certified in nearly all major manufacturer products and sees its role



Michael Lallier added in-house metal fabrication services and formed fully-owned subsidiary Western Architectural Metals in 2015, vertically integrating and expanding the business.



Lallier Construction, Inc., installed a 60-millimeter, fully adhered Mule-Hide TPO roof system, asphalt shingles, gutters and various metal trim elements for the distinctive Bell Cherry Hills apartments in Englewood, Colo.

“For us, it’s about building long-term relationships based on trust and integrity.”

Michael Lallier

as an educator and consultant. The LCI team reviews each project very carefully with customers and presents various options, educating customers on the pros and cons of each product and application. These customers are fully engaged and involved, and therefore are better able to make informed decisions.

LCI’s top three markets are industrial, manufacturing and multifamily residential developments. LCI works directly for facility owners and for property management companies. It also works closely with insurance

companies, assisting in damage verification and forensics, and finding cost-effective solutions. “For us, it’s about building long-term relationships based on trust and integrity,” explains Michael. “We respond just as quickly to a \$200 repair job as a request for a proposal on a multimillion-dollar contract.”

The company recently hired its first chief financial officer and opened its first branch office in Texas, providing a leadership opportunity for a long-term employee who had expressed

interest in relocating to the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Prospects continue to be bright for LCI and Western Architectural Metals, and future plans call for offering employee-ownership opportunities. In addition, the company expects within the next three to five years to have a broad national reach, providing professional growth and leadership opportunities for other employee-family members to grow and prosper along with the company. 🐾

Author Bio: Theresa M. Casey, FSMPS, CPSM, President of On Target Marketing & Communications, is a national award-winning marketer and writer who serves the real estate, design and construction industry throughout the United States and abroad.

COURTESY OF DAVID HEWITT, LALLIER CONSTRUCTION, INC.