

Built from the 'Dirt' Up: My Personal (Professional) Journey at Horst Excavating

by Brian Kane, Vice President of Business Acquisition



I am not the type of person who is very comfortable talking about myself. Some of this is probably just my personality; the rest I'm sure is ingrained in me from my time in the Army. You learn a lot about the importance of "we" in the army. To say my experiences working in the armed forces for the United States shaped me would be an understatement - it truly helped make me the man I am today. I learned a lot about self-discipline, goals, and perseverance. Perhaps the biggest lesson I learned was that it doesn't matter what I did the day before - it's what I do today that counts.

That is something which has stuck with me throughout my life and has helped shape my work ethic as well. When I got out of the army in 2000, I needed a good job to start my civilian life. Luckily, I had a friend who worked at Horst who asked if I'd be interested in becoming a pipe layer. I had next to no experience in that type of role, but happily applied for and accepted the position at Horst Excavating. I found that the work suited me – I liked working outdoors and working in a hands-on occupation – and quickly learned that my drive was not limited to my military career. I am not one for complacency and have an ambitious streak which easily leads to my desire to continually improve and move forward. Each day is a chance to learn and grow as a person, which is something that naturally lends itself to moving through the ranks – whether in the military or corporate setting.

After working as a pipe layer for a few years, I moved into the position of pipe crew leader. I enjoyed working in

that role, leading my crew and helping to guide our portion of the project. Less than three years later, I had the opportunity to move into the office as a Project Coordinator. I decided I would be a fool not to give it a try. I was hesitant only because I wasn't sure if I would like to move into an office setting and worried a bit that I'd feel stuck inside the four walls of an office. As it turned out, the work suited me and I became engrossed enough in the role that I didn't much mind being inside.

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I really enjoyed the fact that I could work on the details of the projects, and immediately liked the idea of working toward the goal of becoming a Project Manager. I was fortunate to work with several people whom I respect greatly, and tried to learn everything I could from them in my quest. Eventually, I grew into a Project Manager position, which I held for about 4 years. I really liked project management - being involved in the details of the project, handling a new challenge every day, juggling various projects and deadlines to keep things moving along.

A New Perspective

In 2008, our company acquired another excavating company. The decision was made that I would move into the new office and assist with the transition. I became the sole Project Manager in that office, and was able to gain a new perspective about the business. I was more involved in the day-to-day operations and in the estimating of our projects, not to mention the internal dynamics of the transition. I was provided with a general oversight of the entire business - something that really helped me gain an understanding on a whole new level.

After the transition was complete, the opportunity to advance presented again. In summer of 2011, I accepted a promotion to become the Operations Manager of Horst Excavating. The move came with its challenges. Not only was I moving from managing projects to managing the whole business, but I was also suddenly the person to whom everyone reported. I experienced a few growing pains, many of which were internal to myself. I felt as though I needed to constantly prove myself - especially to those people who had significant seniority. I felt that people were thinking "what does he know?" based on my age. The lesson I learned was

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that I had the opportunity to prove myself every single day; and that's really all any of us can do. With some time, I felt more at ease in the role and eventually switched off that internal voice. The truth is I will never stop experiencing growing pains - the minute I stop learning and growing, I've failed.

Perseverance and Dedication

I closed out the year in 2012 by becoming an official officer of Horst Excavating. I earned the title of Vice President, something even I hadn't guessed could happen in the 12 years that had passed since I became employed by Horst. Every opportunity I took helped me to grow as an individual, to learn new things and fix issues as they presented themselves - which in turn helped the company and I grow together. I continue to spend each day trying my best and working hard; never forgetting that it's what I do today that matters. I was asked to write about my journey from Pipe Layer to Vice President, to show what perseverance and dedication can provide in your career. I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I do know I'm ready for the challenge.

For more information about careers with Horst Excavating, contact Brian Kane at [717.581.9985](tel:717.581.9985) or email BKane@HorstGroup.com.