

An Efficient Endeavor: Shell Roofing Solutions Succeeds by Delivering Sustainability

Contractor Profile



Pictured are (from left) Vice President and COO Hector Gutierrez and President and CEO Rudy Gutierrez.



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Rudy Gutierrez knew he was taking a risk when he founded a family-owned roofing company in the midst of an economic recession, but he was confident that his strategic business model would differentiate him from local competitors. “We started in a recession and have grown very quickly in the industry because we have the right plan and worked hard,” he said.

Located in Chino, Calif., Shell Roofing Solutions was established in November 2008 by President and CEO Rudy Gutierrez and his brother, Vice President and COO Hector Gutierrez. “At the beginning of 2008, sitting at a coffee table at home, I worked on plans for a long time, and then the time was right,” Gutierrez explained. “I started to act on that plan and develop the company, and I got the right partnership with my brother. We went from the dinner table with very little money to moving within a couple of months to a nice office. From there we moved to warehousing, and now we’re moving to a building that’s five times the size of the one we’re at now.”

According to Gutierrez, it was important to launch the company in their local community. “Chino is centrally located for us, and we can be in the Greater Los Angeles area within an hour,” he explained. “It’s the neighborhood where our kids grew up, and we’re very much involved with the community. We decided to open our business here, and we had a lot of support from the community. Southern California is the market that we really thrive in.”

The company specializes in commercial roofing, and its business plan is very specific to energy efficiency. “Our company was started with the premise of being an energy company,” Gutierrez said. “Our focus is the reduction of energy consumption in buildings through basic building principles like energy-efficient roofing, insulation and daylighting. The time was right in 2008, as zoning managers were looking for areas to cut costs. Shell Roofing Solutions was just the right opportunity for those building owners that I personally knew, and that my partner and some of our team members knew. It was right for them, and it was right for us.”

Gutierrez started in construction when he was just 15 years old, working part time for a relative’s construction company. He went on to get an education, started in the heavy equipment industry, and then worked in the entertainment industry for his own pre-production management company, where he used single-ply membranes to create water special effects. Eventually, Gutierrez was offered a position with Carlisle Construction Materials, where he worked for about 20 years before starting Shell Roofing Solutions. Much of his work at Carlisle involved reducing energy use in areas where consumption was high, and he continues that focus with his own company. “That’s

definitely our strategy, and it sets us apart from the typical roofing contractor,” he said. “Our strategy is energy efficiency, and I have years of experience selling at that level. It differentiates us from the competition.”

According to Gutierrez, Shell has been successful because it functions as a business development firm. The company targets a very specific market, creates its own opportunities and doesn’t waste time chasing empty leads. “We don’t get involved in systems that are not energy efficient,” he said. “We have a focused strategy. We believe in market segmentation. We value each other’s strengths, and we don’t overextend ourselves. You can’t be everything to the market, but you can be a very good contractor to very specific areas of the market.”

Concentrating solely on sustainable building practices has landed the company a variety of high-profile projects, including jobs for South Bay Lexus, Le Fiell Manufacturing and UrbanOG. For each of these three facilities, Shell worked with the building owners to create an individualized energy strategy using cool roofing, insulation and daylighting to reduce energy consumption, improve working conditions, increase production and ultimately leverage savings against investments. “To me, those are three projects that I’m very proud of,” Gutierrez said. “Three diverse companies with similar results, and the coolest part was that we didn’t disrupt their business flow at all. We joined their processes and systematically worked with them.”

Gutierrez noted that top-quality workmanship on these projects is essential, and he explained how the company ensures it. “Training, training, training, training, training” he said. “We ask for guidance from our manufacturer friends. We re-train and re-certify every year. We take our young team and actually travel to manufacturing plants, and we go through their two, three or sometimes four-day training courses. We ensure that we understand the specifications that we’re installing, the conditions of the facility that we’re working in, their work environment and their safety program. It all goes back to training.”

Safety is also a key factor for all projects. “We have a program that we constantly update. We look at every specific area of a project and then develop a safety checklist, which includes about 15 to 20 points,” Gutierrez explained. “Before we start a project, we have a pre-construction meeting on safety and planning. We talk about all the conditions of the facility all the way to driving safely to the job. We are consistently training and overtraining. We lead with safety.”

Gutierrez noted that Shell’s manufacturers and suppliers, which include Versico, Carlisle, Tropical and Allied Building Products, have been instrumental to its success. These partnerships combined with the company’s targeted business plan have allowed Shell to stand out among its competitors and thrive despite harsh economic conditions. “The market is climbing out of a tumultuous

period, but that's for the general roofing market," Gutierrez explained. "For us, we haven't seen too many challenges. I know that's kind of crazy. Our challenge is not having enough reach at the moment to cover all of the areas that we want to go after. We grew quickly, so not having enough space and having to increase personnel — those are probably the challenges, but there haven't been too many. It's just hard work and having the right plan. We've been very blessed."

For Gutierrez, it all comes down to loving his job and his business. "You can turn a non-efficient facility into a very efficient facility by selecting the right components. Instead of firing employees, look at energy consumption. That's the way I see it," he said. "I have a passion for what I do. When I was going to school, I never thought that roofing would be my career, but I have a passion for roofing. I understand roofing. Working for Carlisle gave me a background that I'm so proud of, and it led me to parts of the world that I could only dream of. The roofing industry has really afforded me a lifestyle, and I look forward to the next generation of minds who will lead us."

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