

R.D. OLSON

CONSTRUCTION

Boutique Builder

R.D. Olson's hands-on service has earned it a loyal client base

One of the key traits of R.D. Olson Construction is to understand our customer's product and vision. We negotiate 80 percent of our business and are always working closely with the customer to build something that they are happy with and the company is proud of. Over time we have seen an increase in design-build type projects and have a sister company whose sole purpose is new development. Both entities work as very selective companies that know how to manage and make what they work on a success. Whether it is initially just a sketch on a napkin or a particularly detailed mission, the end result will always be what the customer wants to achieve.

Considering the amount of significance that is placed on the customer, R.D. Olson maintains a focus on keeping already existing clients satisfied. These strong relationships are what we use to build their future endeavors. A belief that I like to impart on our employees is that if 80 percent of the effort is put into the relationships with the clients that we already have, then it will generate 70 percent of the opportunities coming in. A major part of that is the company's use of its resources, which focus on those relationships and not geographic boundaries for where we will and won't build. Clients value working with 1 or 2 key R.D. Olson individuals that will be managing the project from the design development and estimating stage all the way through complete build out, punch list and property walks with property management.

R.D. Olson Construction specializes in being a "boutique builder" for its clients. We're providing hands-on service, and our employees are committed "from top to bottom" to our customers.

This approach has paid off for R.D. Olson. Today, 80 percent of our work is negotiated with clients and 70 percent of our annual volume is repeat business with prior clients.

Based in Irvine, Calif., our general contracting and construction management firm has extensive experience in hospitality work, as well as healthcare and multi-unit projects. Founder Bob Olson started the company 38 years ago, after working for a small general contractor.

Bob was concerned that the builder he was employed with was not delivering on its promises. He said, "I'm going to go out and start my own business." Bob began grassroots by doing home remodels and additions.

He then moved into the restaurant industry after meeting actor and singer Sonny Bono. Sonny asked Bob if he'd be willing to do the first Bono's restaurant. R.D. Olson built several locations for Bono until his death in 1998.

Today, the company's portfolio also includes hotels, offices, country and athletic clubs, and healthcare and higher education projects. In the last 25 years I have been at R.D. Olson, I attribute our success to the work environment, which gives autonomy to its employees.

Not only are they allowed to make important decisions, we empower them to be entrepreneurs and run this as their own company. We make sure to provide the support and guidance they need and it is our culture that ensures they feel a part of a team and a family.

R.D. Olson is keeping busy with a full slate of projects. We're running anywhere from 10 to 15 projects at a time. These can range from a \$2 million lobby renovations to a \$75 million high rise.

The company is also heavily involved in many adaptive reuse projects like renovating an office building into a hotel or turning a hotel into a timeshare development. That has been a very big segment for us.

One such project is the NoMad Hotel location in downtown Los Angeles in which R.D. Olson is converting a bank building originally built in 1923 into a 240-room, five-star property for The Sydell Group. This project is probably one of the most anticipated in the West Coast hospitality market today. We're looking to have heads on beds this Fall.

R.D. Olson's recent initiatives include updating our technology. Last year, we took

a step back and looked at everything. While the company is ahead of the industry in many areas, we've insisted on staying innovative which means improvements.

We invested heavily across the board, improving all our platforms. Our objective is to have a complete collaboration between all our different departments, from daily construction operations to accounting to our ongoing execution of contracts.

The company also aims to go completely paperless on our job sites. Our associates are building their projects on the mobile platforms they have available to them. They pull up plans, they pull up RFIs and have real-time information at their fingertips. These changes have made R.D. Olson more efficient in its work. We're able to respond quicker, and the software available to us keeps getting better and better.

R.D. Olson is coping with challenges managing the quality of resources, especially when selecting subcontractors. The industry has been crazy for the last number of years. We're all busy and we're all very careful with our selections because we have limited quality resources.

Additional market conditions have made work more challenging. Our clients are experiencing that financing is getting a bit tougher to get. The hotel industry is being cautious about how many more products of a certain type they allow in particular geographic areas.

Everyone is trying to balance the scale of supply and demand, and we predict the market will get less intense in the next two years. What I'm now starting to see is that things could start to slow down a little bit. The company sustains by partnering with customers earlier on projects. It's a way to start the negotiation process and keeps it in check until everyone gets a pulse on what's actually going to happen.

Despite these conditions, we predict much future success for R.D. Olson. Although conditions have plateaued in some of the company's markets, work will continue, and we should see our amount of renovation, as well as new build work increase.

There is obviously an interest in growing the company, but even more than that there is a desire to grow the individuals that work within our company. We have an education reimbursement program that allows our employees to continue their education on whatever aspect that they deem would help them be a better person both independently and professionally. This, combined with the community involvement that the company is devoted to, encourages long term association because employees know that the company stands for not only its own improvement, but the improvement of others. The involvement in local communities is something that R.D. Olson prides itself on. One example of our commendable work towards the greater good is the ongoing eight year relationship with the Golf Charity Tournament for the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation, for whom we raised more than \$70,000 in 2017 alone. It is this sort of long standing belief in making change that sets apart the R.D. Olson employee; they each strive to make their workers the example of their company just as much as the projects that they complete.

For more information, contact R.D. Olson at info@rdolson.com or by calling 949.474.2001.

Bill Wilhelm

A leader in the construction industry with more than 30 years of experience, Bill Wilhelm serves as R.D. Olson Construction's president. Bill's team-oriented leadership approach inspires an entrepreneurial mindset that attracts the best talent in the industry. Bill has played a pivotal role in shaping R.D. Olson Construction to become one of the nation's top contracting firms. From spearheading team events to build homes for Habitat for Humanity, to pro-bono work for Cal Poly Pomona, Rady's Children's Hospital and work for the Ronald McDonald Corporation, community development is at the heart of Bill's leadership style.



About R.D. Olson Construction

Founded by Bob Olson in 1979 and led by President Bill Wilhelm, R.D. Olson Construction is one of the top 50 general contracting firms in California. R.D. Olson Construction is a premier builder of hotel properties for several national hoteliers, including Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, Ritz Carlton, and Starwood. R.D. Olson Construction is also an experienced builder of office, retail, restaurant, multi-family, assisted living and recreational projects. www.rdolson.com