



Geared up in a reflective vest and hardhat, Green shows that site safety is a priority when he's working on a project. (Photos by John Marinelli)

Keep the HAMMER DOWN

Connecticut's Mark Green is a hands-on, cash-buying, race-lovin' installer who keeps the pedal to the metal to grow his start-up business

By *Scottie Dayton*

Relying on family and friends helped Mark Green grow Green Construction Management from a small residential firm to one capable of handling large commercial, industrial and municipal projects. Opened in 2010, the Waterbury, Conn., company removes fuel oil

tanks, does general commercial/industrial construction on a small scale, and installs commercial and residential onsite systems throughout the state and southern Massachusetts.

Green's business acumen and resolve never to refuse a job enabled him to triple the company's revenue – split 50/50 between environmental remediation and onsite installations – in three years. He attributes much of the growth to not having full-time employees and paying cash for everything. Green has no financial backing or credit cards. If he initially lacked money to fund a project, he did the work anyway, gambling that clients would honor their commitments. They did.

The company's success has propelled Green, 41, to a crossroad. He must decide whether to expand the company to meet customer demand, or reject work to retain absolute control of its quality. His ultimate goal is to spend more time with his wife and young daughter. It's a workaholic's dilemma.

TASTE OF SUCCESS

Green spent his childhood riding heavy construction equipment with his maternal grandfather Joseph Papparazzo, owner of Joseph Papparazzo and Son. The pair installed Green's first onsite system when he was 13. After graduating from high school, he tried working for Coca-Cola like his father. "I lasted a week," says Green. "Construction was in my blood."

The 22-year-old withdrew all his savings, bought a 1986 dump truck,

Green Construction Management, Waterbury, Conn.



OWNER: Mark Green

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 3

EMPLOYEES: 2

MARKET AREA: 50-mile radius

SPECIALTY: Onsite system design and installation, environmental site remediation and construction management

AFFILIATIONS: Connecticut Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association

WEBSITE: www.greenconstructionmanagement.com



ABOVE: Wayne Green uses a Spectrum LL500 laser/target (Spectra Precision) to confirm the proper height of a double row CULTEC Contactor 100 chambers at a work site.

BELOW: Mark Green's young company serves customers in a 50-mile radius around Waterbury, Conn. Here he poses on a work site with his Volvo 250 excavator in the background.

and opened Green Enterprise in 1994. Everywhere he hauled gravel, sand and contaminated soil, he found contractors needing more trucks. Green eventually rounded up 30 independent truckers, receiving a 10 percent finder's fee for each one. "I did almost \$1 million in revenue my first year," he says. "Then I began brokering trucks and paying the truckers."

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Mark Green

However, the success and responsibilities overwhelmed the young entrepreneur and he returned to the family business. Green married Victoria in 2001 and Kaitlyn arrived in 2003. With a family to support, he curbed his independent spirit until 2010 when the urge to strike out on his own again hit hard. "I had enough clients who believed in me to find work, but it was slow the first year," says Green.

Lacking equipment, Green found projects suitable for subcontracting to cousin James Harrison and his company, HLC Excavation and Tank Removal in Woodbury, Conn. Green functioned as project manager. Although he made a good profit, cash flow the first year remained his biggest challenge. "I refused to carry credit, yet I wanted a reputation for paying subcontractors within 30 days," he says.



Meanwhile, Wayne Green retired from Coca-Cola and joined his son in the field a few days a week. In 2011, Wayne became the company's project supervisor and the only other full-time employee besides Mark Green. "Working together has elevated our relationship," he says. "Dad has become one of my closest friends."

GAINING A FOOHOLD

The company's first environmental remediation job was subcontracting for GeoQuest, a full service environmental management and consulting firm in Bloomfield, Conn. GeoQuest's client had a leaking No. 2 fuel oil tank. Harrison's crew saw-cut and ripped out the asphalt, excavated the contaminated soil,

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Mark Green

stockpiled and covered it onsite, backfilled with structural material, and restored the paving. "Once the analytical and sampling reports were in the manifest, Jimmy hauled the soil to a landfill," says Green.

GeoQuest became a regular client, enabling Green to meet more people in the environmental field. Those associations led to a six-month project at Westover Air Reserve Base in Springfield, Mass., removing 22 550- to 5,000-gallon underground fuel oil storage tanks and remediating the site. Green and Harrison's crew worked 14-hour days, slept in a hotel on base, and went home on weekends. Green hired local truckers to transport the materials.

After the second remediation, Green became bonded and began bidding on municipal projects. He won the Town of Southington, Conn., contract to remove two underground No. 2 fuel oil storage tanks, remediate contaminated soil and install an above-ground combo concrete storage tank. "I managed the job and Jimmy's crew did the work," says Green. "During the project, I became friends with the town engineer, who gave me more tank jobs. With those two clients, the work really started rolling in."

COMMERCIAL CLIENTS

For the first two years, Green used HLC exclusively. As the scope of projects broadened, he subcontracted Tom Dauti, owner of Dauti Masonry in Prospect, Conn., for masonry work, and Vincent Noad of R V Noad Construction in Goshen, Conn., to install municipal sewer and water mains. Green relied on Herb Holden of Herb Holden Trucking in Broad Brook,



Mark Green (center) and daughter Kaitlyn Green are shown with driver David Gravel and his car. (Photo courtesy of Mark Green)

The race is on

Mark Green, owner of Green Construction Management in Waterbury, Conn., has been involved with modified class auto racing on asphalt tracks since his teenage years. He worked on the cars as a hobby, while his father helped on modified tours and even ran televised races. "Before marrying, I went to the local speedway once or twice a week," says Green.

After becoming a husband and father, Green abandoned his hobby for 10 years. Then his father joined the company in 2011 and reignited their love of racing. "Racing brought me closer to my father and now we're doing more things together outside of work," says Green.

Green never had the financing to become a driver, but now he enjoys sponsoring newcomers like David Gravel. The 20-year-old World of Outlaws STP Sprint Car Series competitor from Watertown drives No. 89G. "His father and I have been friends since high school," says Green. "We're proud of Dave. He was the 2008 360-Sprint Car Rookie of the Year and he's always a top-10 finisher. He'll be a national contender one day, and I'm pleased to help make his dreams come true."

Conn., to transport equipment and supplies. "We've known each other for 20 years and work well together," he says.

In 2013, Green bought a Volvo 250 excavator and EC35 rubber-tracked mini excavator, a Caterpillar 277 tracked skid-steer, Komatsu 380 wheel loader, and a Ford F-550 mason dump truck, and stored them in a rented garage. Father and son maintain the equipment, from oil changes to major repairs.

The company's onsite branch installs three to five residential systems a year plus an occasional system for a restaurant. Most designs are conventional with gravelless chambers in trenches. He sometimes utilizes CULTEC chambers for the work. Then the Town of Litchfield, Conn., posted a bid for an onsite system servicing a snack shop with restrooms on Sandy Beach. Green won the contract calling for a 1,000-gallon grease interceptor,

(continued)



Mark Green is at the controls of his workhorse Volvo excavator installing a new drainfield.

2,000-gallon septic tank, and a 2,000-gallon pump tank discharging 800 feet uphill to a splitter box dosing a 100- by 300-foot chambered drainfield.

“The logistics were incredible,” says Green. “We brought in the septic gravel while the sand was frozen, enabling the trucks to cross the beach and run up the hill to the drainfield area.” With the beach still somewhat frozen that spring, HLC excavated holes for the tanks, but groundwater rushed in and collapsed the walls. Workers shored the excavations and the two dewatering pits where pumps ran continuously.

“When the truck arrived with the tanks, it couldn’t get traction on the sand, so we pulled it with the excavator,” says Green. The next challenge was maneuvering the truck close enough to set the tanks without settling it in the sand. Strong winds off the lake whipped water and sand in workers’ faces and numbed exposed flesh. Despite everything, the job convinced Green that he could manage large commercial systems.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

The opportunity emerged from a small septic job Green did for DYMAR Corp. Its engineer, Mark Lancor, was designing a 27,476 gpd onsite system at a college preparatory school in South Kent, Conn., and invited Green to bid on it. “I thought I was in over my head, but it was just opening-night jitters,” he says. After completing the job with HLC, Dauti Masonry, and his father, Green worked with DYMAR on commercial onsite systems, stormwater drainage improvements, and repairing sediment ponds and catch basins.

While Green faces challenges familiar to most installers – high groundwater, small lots and bedrock – he also encounters homes built on

land reclamations. One such client with a small lot was building an addition and needed to upgrade his onsite system. “I excavated what resembled a city dump from his backyard, which had bedrock running through the middle,” says Green. “The only leaching system that fit with inches to spare was the S-Box from Geomatrix Systems.” The 50-inch-long self-contained modules have serpentine filter fabric with septic sand packed into the voids.

LOOKING AHEAD

Having achieved his goals of fully paying subcontractors promptly and retaining control over every project, Green is reluctant to relinquish a single responsibility or business contact. “I never knock on doors,” he says. “All the calls come to me, and we discuss projects over lunch. Clients trust me. I can’t afford hired help screwing up a job and tarnishing my company’s reputation.”

Like many small business owners, Green faces a major challenge of chasing success and growth while balancing the need for family time. His family has been great about understanding that challenge.

“They’ve been tolerant of my absence so far, but I can’t allow the business to dominate my life forever,” he says. Rather than turn down jobs and give competitors an opening to court his clients, Green knows the ultimate solution is to find qualified managers who will maintain his standards of excellence. ▣

MORE INFO:

CULTEC, Inc.
800/428-5832
www.cultec.com

Trimble/Spectra Precision
800/874-6253
www.trimble.com

Volvo Construction Equipment
828/650-2000
www.volvoce.com