

US BUILDERS REVIEW

THE MAGAZINE FOR LEADING CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVES



KOWALSKI CONSTRUCTION INC.

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Kowalski Construction Inc.

Family business approaches 50 years of restoration contracting

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Phoenix-based Kowalski Construction Inc. has been an award-winning, family-operated business since the company began nearly 50 years ago. As a general contracting firm, Kowalski specializes in insurance restoration work with one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the region. With a focus on building relationships, Kowalski provides quality and reliable contracting services to property managers, owners, municipalities and developers.



Second-generation owners Steve and Jim Kowalski grew up in the family business founded by their father, Adam Kowalski Jr., in 1967. While restoration work has always remained the primary focus for Kowalski, the company also performs rehabilitation, remediation, repairs and remodeling work for both commercial and residential clients. As numerous construction companies enter the restoration market, Kowalski has found a way to stand out from the pack by emphasizing what the company refers to as its “Three Uniques,” which are: an award-winning, third-generation, family-operated business; the ability to minimize client exposure through proprietary disaster preparedness and planning software; and being a nationally-recognized restoration leader in Arizona.

With approximately 55 employees, Kowalski serves the entire state of Arizona and operates out of its single location in Phoenix. “We’re a very mobile organization,” says Jim, who in addition to co-owning the company with his brother, is the vice president of sales and marketing. “Our people are in the field and on the jobsites. We believe that quality construction is managed on-site, not in an office.”

Up to the task

Kowalski possesses the ability to immediately respond to clients in an emergency situation. A recent example of this was exhibited when the company was contacted by a 165-room hotel with a request for water damage emergency services as the result of a large storm. The initial reports indicated approximately 125 rooms on four floors had been affected by the damage, as well as a business center, meeting facility and storage rooms. Kowalski immediately deployed its crews and work began immediately and continued around the clock to mitigate the damages.



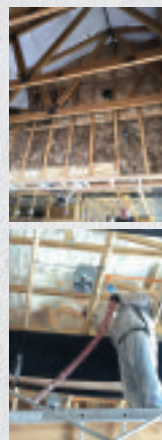
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on all of your outstanding achievements. As a long time partner and associate, we are proud to share in the acknowledgement and recognition by US Builders Review.



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A major obstacle presented to both parties in this project was the fact that the hotel did not have nearly enough vacant rooms to relocate the affected guests. Closing was not an option so work was coordinated to create the least impact possible on existing operation as well as the guests. The facility lacked a service elevator and had only two guest elevators, which created a challenge for moving equipment, materials and personnel. Kowalski removed windows from the building in order to expedite debris removal while still protecting the landscape and guests from harm.

Throughout the entire project, Kowalski maintained a clean and functional environment for the hotel guests and staff. The floors were protected and the walkways and parking lots were power-washed with a trailer-mounted pump twice a week to maintain a welcoming appearance for new guests. Even with all of the dangerous conditions, no injuries were reported and Kowalski was able to react quickly to changing conditions, uncovered damages, a failed fire protection system and city building department's requirements, all the while managing to keep the project on schedule. The project was fully restored and did not close at any time due to the loss.

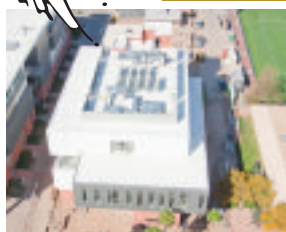
Making a difference

Working in the restoration industry, Kowalski often deals with clients who have experienced one of the most traumatizing experiences of their lives, especially in the residential sector. The company has become well-known for being experts in assisting customers through the stressful process of putting their lives back together.



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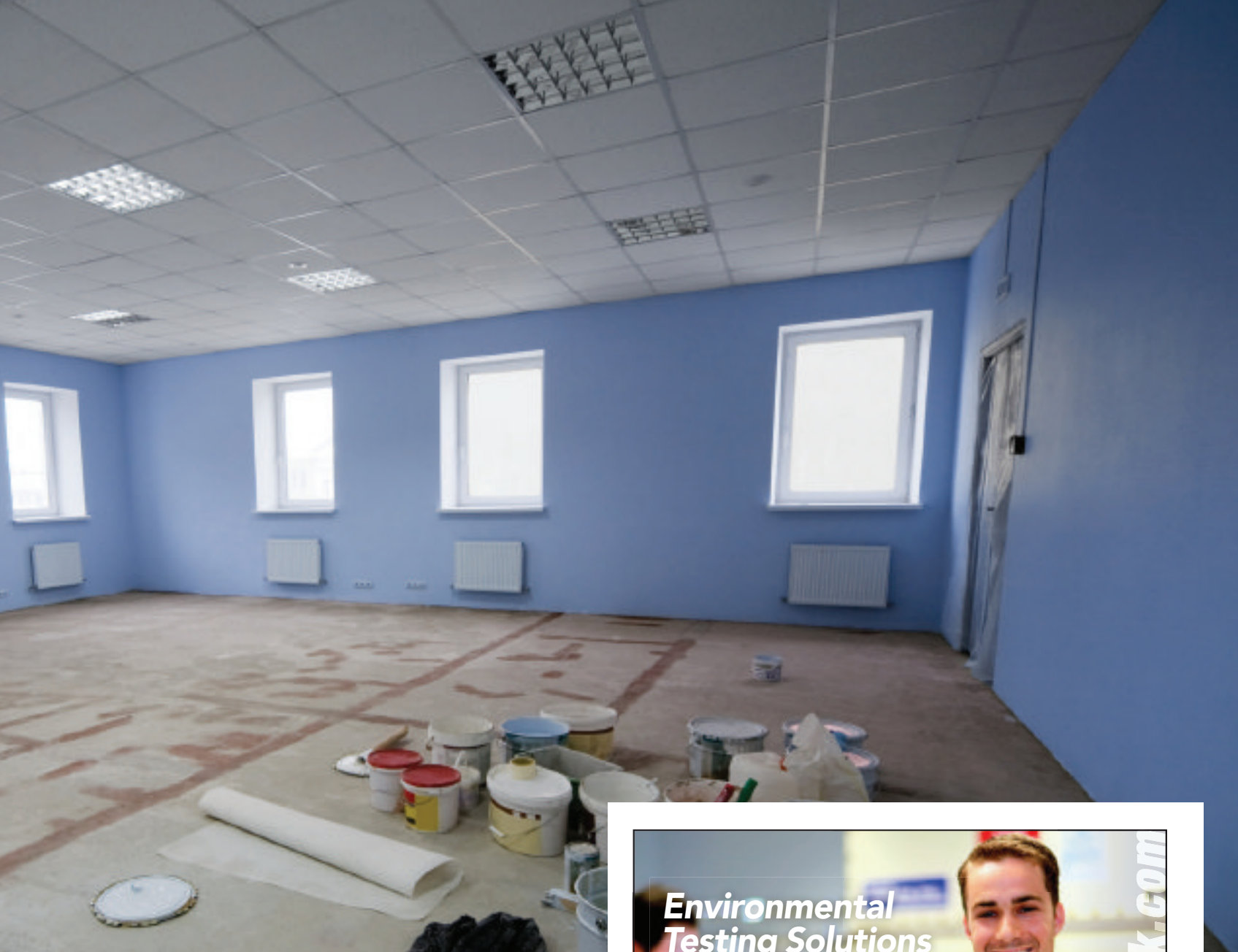
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Kowalski was able to receive a firsthand experience of this situation when Jim's son, Brandon, who is the company's emergency service large loss division manager, experienced a fire at his home. "This experience totally revolutionized our approach to working with customers who have experienced a loss," says Jim. "I've always felt that we were as good as anybody out there in dealing with these situations but to have someone within our company experience it really gave us some insight into what the client is really going through and how we can take a more empathetic approach."



Growing up surrounded by the family business, Jim and Steve both take great pride in being the second generation owners of the company, along with the fact that the third generation is also involved. The Kowalski spirit is present not only in the family, but throughout the entire company. “We are always striving to do better,” says Jim. “It’s not only the people with the Kowalski last name, it’s a combined contribution from all of our employees.”

As Kowalski approaches 50 years in business, the company will continue to reinvent itself. “Being a part of Restoration Affiliates, which is a national network of independent, full-service disaster restoration companies, helps us so much because we are able to see and recognize trends and innovations in the industry that we can adapt to,” Jim explains. As long the company remains one step ahead of its competitors, the best years are still to come for Kowalski Construction Inc. •

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