



PJ DE GRANDE

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

"IF YOU DREAM SOMETHING, YOU NEED TO RESPECT YOUR DREAM AND GIVE IT THE SHOT IT DESERVES. YOU DON'T EVER FAIL AT ANYTHING UNTIL YOU QUIT."

PJ De Grande owns a construction company where he does a little bit of everything pertaining to households such as painting, kitchens, and bathrooms.

WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE GENIUS?

"My unique genius is being able to troubleshoot things before it's even trouble."

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THIS CAREER?

"My father and my uncles started a construction company, so I was kind of born into it. Growing up, me and my brother [would] always get little scrap pieces of wood and make our own toys. As we got older, we started fixing things around the neighborhood—sheds, roofs, siding. Eventually, we were old enough to start our own businesses."

"I went back and forth trying different things throughout my life, but this is always my go to."

IN WHAT WAYS IS YOUR CAREER A PERFECT FIT FOR YOU?

"I've done everything. I think all the jobs I've done, trying to find my way and find what it is that I really enjoyed doing landed me in this role."

WHAT DOES A DAY IN THE LIFE LOOK LIKE?

"A general contractor is the guy who manages and picks up all the trades together. When [I'm hired], it's not for me to do the exact job, but to manage the job. I move the circus around so to speak. I tend to be the one to meet with the customers [and learn] about what they want to do. We spend time at the house [and then] I schedule the jobs [and] order all the materials for the jobs."

I spend time at home every night looking over blueprints and making material lists for certain jobs. [I also] spend time pricing out materials. I'm constantly on the phone with different vendors trying to get the best price."

WHAT SKILLS DOES IT TAKE TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR JOB?

"You need to know a little bit about each job that pertains to the project you're doing. You need to be organized, which I am not. I have a different mentality about things. I'm sort of like a chameleon—I could adapt to any environment."

I've kind of adapted to my own chaotic environment in some weird way. But if I had to tell somebody what skills they need, I would definitely say number one would be to be organized. Everything is fast paced and you're dealing with other people's money."

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER?

"I wish I would have started a little bit earlier in life. It's easier to learn while you're young. I wasted a lot of time trying to fulfill my family's dreams of me going to school. I delayed what I knew was what I really wanted to do my whole life."

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ON YOUR JOURNEY?

"I'm most proud of how far I've come—the fact that I saw my vision and I knew what I wanted to be and I made it happen. Being an entrepreneur is survival. You [have] to know how to juggle life, juggle money, and juggle people."

WHAT IS THE COOLEST PART OF YOUR JOB? WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR JOB?

"The ultimate satisfaction for me is walking into [homes] where the house should have been done maybe 20 years ago. When you're able to go in and help people out and give them a better space to live, it's a great feeling."

The most challenging part of the job would be the financial aspect of it—juggling money, budgeting the jobs. But like I said, you're really in business for yourself because you love what you do. The more you learn to love what you do, the more you'll realize that the money is irrelevant."

That's why I tried so many different things in my life. I was out there chasing the money instead of chasing the dream. It wasn't till I started really liking what I did that [money] started coming."

"It's [about] how happy you are doing what you're doing because you have to do it the rest of your life."

WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR FIELD/JOB?

"The biggest thing is how much goes into what I do behind the scenes. After the day's work, a lot goes on to get the job done right. Whether it be calling my guys, trying to find a guy to do [a] particular job, finding the right trade, working on material list, pricing out a job, or looking at a blueprint. People don't understand it's not easy. They think you own a business and you're just raking in all this money all the time. It doesn't work like that."

WHAT WAS A DEFINING MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE?

"The sense of accomplishment I had after building my first full house. The fact that I was able to take this from nothing and make it into something start to finish."