



Executive of the Month: Borgenicht, founder and president of King Rose Construction: Luckiest of men

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Yoel Borgenicht,
King Rose Construction

New York, NY Yoel Borgenicht is the founder and president of King Rose Construction, a general contractor that specializes in commercial projects in the New York City market. The company is quickly gaining traction as one of our region's premier firms. The New York Real Estate Journal sat down with Borgenicht to find out what motivates him to work in this opportunity-filled, high-risk construction industry:

Q: When and why were you initially drawn to construction?

A: Ever since I was a teenager, I always loved the challenge of transforming underutilized space and making it useful for myself or for others.

Q: What were your impressions of contractors before becoming one?

A: I found that many contractors were great tradespeople yet weak administrators, or conversely good administrators who didn't fully grasp the nuts and bolts of construction. Both are of critical importance in order to be a successful contractor. I value the importance of both, and I know that every person – from the laborer to the C-level executive on the client side – is integral to the success of every project.

Shown (from left) at the King Rose conference room are: Yoel Borgenicht; Patrice Irving, superintendent; Walter Ryan, project manager; and Lejla DeRosa, assistant project manager.

Q: Construction certainly is filled with diverse personalities. What characteristics do you look for when interviewing a prospective King Rose team member?

A: I seek out people who are truly passionate about construction and who exhibit modesty and humility. A standard question we ask is, "What was a mistake you made on a project and what have you learned from it?" It's an instant red flag if candidates say they've never made mistakes or no longer do so. You have to recognize your mistakes in order to improve. To be a successful contractor, you need self-confidence and modesty in equilibrium. This is an uncompromising and exacting business, and we hire people who thrive in that environment and who are quick learners. We hire team members solely on merit, and because of that, we have a substantial percentage of women on staff compared to other firms. All of our employees support, respect and have high expectations for one another. That kind of drive makes us all better professionals.

Q: Describe a mistake you've made and what you learned from it.

A: I've made plenty throughout my career and no doubt I will continue to do so. Here's an example. One winter day, meteorologists were predicting bad weather conditions, but the client insisted that a

team member stay on a particular job into the evening. We were under pressure to get the project wrapped up. As predicted, the weather turned for the worse, and transit came to a standstill. My project manager wound up walking home from midtown over the Williamsburg Bridge to Brooklyn in a snowstorm late at night. From that moment on, I realized the importance of supporting my team members when their safety is at stake. That is paramount to anything else in this world.

Q: What keeps you motivated?

A: The complexity of working in New York City is a huge motivating factor. You never see the same job twice. It's always something new and exciting. I love this industry because we work with such diverse, interesting clients who are leaders in their field. King Rose has built for clients across a broad range of sectors, including NASA, LeFrak, Northwell Health, Dish Network, Tesla, American Express, and Mount Sinai Hospital. We build in many of New York's most renowned landmarks such as Radio City Music Hall, Ivy League Universities, University Club and Tourneau TimeMachine. We have built for many international clients like Chopard, Etihad Airways, and the consulates of Israel, Ivory Coast, Australia and Canada. Each and every project is different, exciting, challenging and certainly keeps the entire King Rose team motivated.

Shown (from left) are: Ramon Henriquez, project manager; Yoel Borgenicht; and Julio Oliveras, laborer.

Q: Is there a favorite among King Rose's projects?

A: We appreciate all of our clients in equal measure. If I had to choose, one of my favorite projects was restoring and updating the library at the University Club of New York, the largest and arguably most beautiful space of its kind. It is breathtaking to be surrounded by the architectural splendor of McKim, Mead & White and the Renaissance artistry of H. Siddons Mowbray.

Q: What are three important lessons you've learned as a general contractor?

A: One: If you think the job is simple, you are not looking at it carefully enough. Two: Don't ever assume that your safety protocols are being followed so be sure to maintain constant vigilance. And three: Never ever give up.

Q: What are some of the biggest challenges today facing contractors in NYC?

A: Insurance costs. Larger institutions and corporation are increasing their requirements to manage their risk. This drives up the cost of the work and makes it harder for smaller subcontractors to compete. Expensive construction is not good for the industry overall.

Q: How do you maintain King Rose's reputation?

A: It's a daily exercise. Reputation needs to be backed up with a guarantee of the work. I personally guarantee the work we perform – for as long as clients occupy the space. We are human. We make mistakes. No matter how much time has gone by, we come back and fix mistakes. My main role as president is keeping clients happy with our work, plain and simple.

Q: What's your idea of a perfect day?

A: I absolutely love my job. I come in early in the morning and I leave late at night, and nothing about my day tires me out. I love that I help others to make a living in what I think is the most exciting industry in the world. Every day I am proud of my team, grateful for the work and consider myself the luckiest person I know.

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