

Lean and Mean is the Recipe for Success

ML Barnard Inc.

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Albert Fedders is the Chief Financial Officer of ML Barnard Inc. (MLB), a private contractor based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Founded in 1992 by Michael Barnard, the company currently has a staff of nine employees and focuses on projects in the tri-state area of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.

Albert is a board member of the Construction Financial Management Association's Greater Cincinnati Chapter, and has been involved in the contracting and construction industry for 11 years. After graduating from The University of Kentucky, where he received both his Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Bachelor of Business Administration in Management with a minor in Marketing, Albert worked for Great American Insurance as an internal auditor. But what he really wanted to do was follow in his father's footsteps by owning or managing his own business.

"My father owned a sheet metal business, and I always wanted to be able to do what he did; to work independently, and look back and say, 'Look what I created.'" MLB has allowed me this opportunity to work independently and make a real difference in the company and community.

The Company's Niche

A majority of ML Barnard's work is undertaken in the greater Cincinnati area, where the company's reputation quickly became established. Reaching beyond the 17 years that the company has been in business, many of the senior staff have been in the industry for up to three decades, Michael Barnard being one of them. Relationships with clients, employees, and subcontractors have been developed and strengthened over time, resulting in lasting partnerships,

repeat business, and plenty of referrals.

In everything the company does, the motto, "Dedicated to Our Client's Needs," is always priority. The company is "lean and mean," as Albert puts it; everyone in the company knows what projects are current, what stage of the construction process they are in, and who is involved. By keeping things small and focused, each employee feels a shared responsibility to make sure performance is the best it can be.

Keeping a tight ship also helps with communication—both inside the company among employees, and in the company's message to the outside world. In February 2009, the efforts paid off when MLB was recognized with a Customer Focus award, from the Clermont Chamber of Commerce for "an organization





that has implemented policies that demonstrate a commitment to customers by showing extreme attention to detail and follow up.” Despite the small size, ML Barnard

does between \$5 and \$8 million of business in annual revenue.

ML Barnard performs a whole host of duties for clients as general

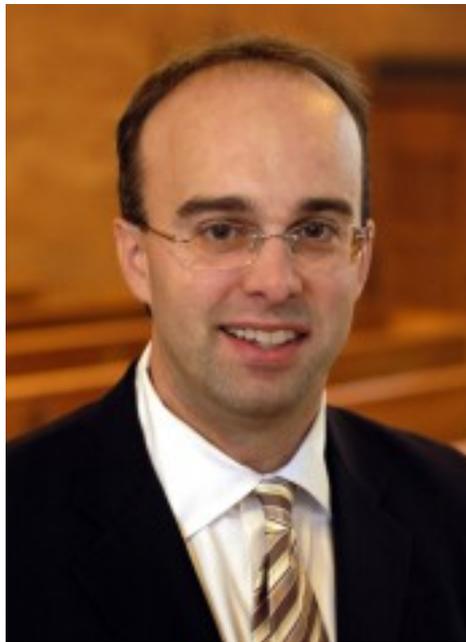
contractors, from conceptual drawings to permitting, financing, construction, and final turnover. The company manages projects from start to finish, beginning with site selection, negotiations of land purchase, dealing with zoning, and preparing and analyzing development costs, before the building project even gets underway. The meticulous attention to detail is carried through each step of the process. Since MLB is versatile and self-sufficient, the company can focus on what Albert calls their true niche: “eliminating our customers’ headaches for them. We don’t have a specialty, we just try to be the best at everything we do.”

Projects that ML Barnard undertakes tend to fall into one of the following areas: offices, warehouses, retail buildings, restaurants, or tenant finishes. In addition, the company is one of the top 10 authorized dealers of pre-engineered buildings manufactured by Nucor Building Systems. Using Nucor Building



Systems has been an area of growth for MLB in recent years. Recent Nucor projects include a 21,000 square-foot Office and Distribution Facility for Academy Rentals in Cincinnati and a 41,876 square-foot warehouse addition for Bryan Equipment Company in Loveland, Ohio.

A few additional projects for MLB in the past few years include a 5,500 square-foot medical office building for Brown County Regional Health Care in Bethel, Ohio, a 4,750 square-foot office and 6,000 square-foot truck maintenance facility for Blue Chip Pavement company. The company also completed a 36,500 square foot Christian Life Center Addition for the Erlanger Baptist Church in Erlanger, Kentucky; and this is just a sampling. Nucor Corporation happens to be the world's largest recycler of steel, and working with them makes environmental as well as fiscal sense. MLB has taken some other steps toward 'going green,' including recycling their concrete and becoming



a completely paperless office last year. MLB uses their Web site as a tracking and informational tool—not only for the public, but for employees as well. Any employee in the company can log in from anywhere there's an internet connection and check on

project progress, look at budgets and schedules, and track new developments.

MLB recently won the 10 Under 10 award from the Greater Cincinnati Businesses Excellence Award, honoring the company's success as a small business making an impact on the community.

Moving forward, MLB plans to add one or two more employees, and to keep their list of reliable subcontractors short and skilled. As Albert notes, "It's all about being efficient. We want to increase the bottom line by another two percent, but, most importantly, we are still focused on empowering our employees enabling us to shatter our client's expectations."

"We treat every project like it's our own, and every employee like they are an owner," Albert says. So far, it's been a recipe for success.



Congratulations ML Bernard! We wish you continued success.



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