



# VAN VEGHTEN CONSTRUCTION

LLC

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## Success Magazine: What does success mean to you?

*Shawn VanVeghten: Success, first and foremost is gained through family. To be the best person you can be and to know that there are those who stand behind you and support you in whatever you do. It is an appreciation for what you have and where you come from. To succeed is to possess a true passion for what you do day in and day out. To live by your word through your actions. To put forth total effort. To find your specific roll in life and to pursue it. To set goals and work hard to achieve them. To exhaust yourself daily. To fall flat on your face and have the will to try again. To see opportunity and solutions – not problems. The satisfaction from a job well done. One of my favorite quotes is Ralph Waldo Emerson's take on success, "To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; To appreciate beauty; To find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a redeemed social condition, or a job well done; To know that even one other life has breathed easier because you lived – This is to have succeeded." I have this quote hanging in my office, and it inspires me every day.*

### SM: Why did you choose to become a contractor?

SV: I feel that I am lucky to have found and recognized a talent for the construction trade early on in my life. It was inevitable that I would eventually become a builder. With this ability, I share a true passion and respect for the trade. I appreciate the planning, time, effort, interaction, and leadership (to list a few) that are employed on every job large or small. Above all, I enjoy seeing a raw piece of property, envisioning the end product, and watching it transform into a house that a family will call home. I get such a rush when the home is finished, tailored to our customer's requests, and I get to see the smiles on their faces when I hand them the keys to their new home.

### SM: What experience or educational training did you have to prepare you for becoming a contractor?

SV: My upbringing was influenced by hands on lessons. I have always found myself surrounded in a construction atmosphere working on crews that carried out specific jobs that are part of the home building process. It was in these jobs that I learned a lot of skills, and a deeper understanding of what goes into building a house. I also attended Union College and graduated with a BA in Economics. Although my Union College education may not be considered most suitable for a construction background, it has given me a strong understanding of economic practicalities that has contributed in shaping my business career. Knowing that I would be an entrepreneur, I pursued a curriculum and took advantage of opportunities that would strengthen my future.

### SM: When you started your business what vision did you have for your company?

SV: In the beginning, my vision was simple: to create a construction company that would earn

a reputation that would gain longevity. My vision is long term, and my initial plan was, and still is, to create several subsidiary businesses (or divisions), all having construction and real estate relevance. Each will perform in specific markets that will come together and lay the framework for my business. My idea is to form each division separately and unite them when they are established. VanVeghten Construction, LLC is the first of five companies and serves as the life blood for the others.

### SM: Did you develop a business and marketing plan?

SV: Yes. A business plan is crucial for any business intending to establish and carry out its vision. It provides a source of organization. Although having a business plan is important, it must be referenced frequently and updated as well. My business plan outlines what we do, our intentions, how they will be met and carried out, the structure of the company, and of course, a marketing plan.

### SM: What type of contracting are you specializing in?

SV: We specialize in single family residential home building. We also do our share of additions.

### SM: Why did you choose home building and additions as your area of focus?

SV: I feel we are well geared for new construction and constantly improving on the building experience for our customers. I also enjoy the relationships I gain with new home customers and take pleasure in the enthusiasm they have.

### SM: How do you market your business?

SV: We are marketing through home buyer guides and our website. I am also currently looking into launching a referral program.

### SM: There are many contractors in the area. Why should someone choose you over another contractor?

SV: Although our quality is excellent and I place a huge importance on it, I do not feel it is a point for a sales pitch. I believe that quality is simply the way it should be – you don't set out every morning to do mediocre work. What I feel truly sets us apart is our approach to a job, from start to finish. We offer a more personal and better building experience. We are driven to keep our clients informed and aware of the process, not only before the project begins, but throughout the duration of the build. We offer design professionals and other services to ease the process for our clients. Our clients can also go to our website and log in to a personal database that will allow them to view progress, view options and upgrades, track change

orders, view scheduling, and see photos of the build 24/7 from any computer with an internet connection. We also offer flexibility and endless options for our clients. We stand behind our process and our work, and believe that our work and past clients will speak the difference.

**SM:** It is hard to be that one source for contracting. What is your area of specialty?

**SV:** Design, personal amenities, and creating a home that is a reflection of your way of life. We focus on the construction of the home, but the process of planning for it is where we take it to the next level. By working closely with our customers and really listening to their wants, needs, and goals, we are able to create a home that is perfectly tailored to their lifestyle. We enjoy creating unique, one-of-a-kind homes – inside and out.

**SM:** Many contractors are hit and run. How many jobs do you schedule and work on at any given time?

**SV:** I will never schedule to have two home starts simultaneously. I feel strongly that starting one home at a time is important to establish a smooth build schedule and coordinate the necessary details and mapping options our clients want. This way there is no confusion and our time can be spent keeping our customers informed. Not until the build has matured and is well on its way for completion will we start the next home.

**SM:** What are your keys to success?

**SV:** Satisfying customers one home at a time by doing what we say we will do. Keeping an open mind and optimistic attitude. Adapting to market change as well as buyer behavior and building trends. To provide a truly valuable commodity in the eyes of our potential clients. And, above all, setting a higher standard in home building. Setting goals and following our business model by always looking to improve what we do. Expressing our values and following through with them. Having and securing a strong marketing plan.

**SM:** With the upcoming downturn of the economy how do you make your company recession proof?

**SV:** For me, it is important to not overextend capabilities or prematurely diversify. I believe that scaling back will not necessarily be the answer and will only put me that far behind when the economy strengthens. I believe focusing and perfecting what we do and staying the course will be far more beneficial. Obviously, we will keep a close watch on expenses and look for market opportunities when they rise.

**SM:** What future plans do you have for your company?

**SV:** Broadening our demographics, large parcel land development, and diversifying in other construction and real estate production.

**SM:** If you had to describe yourself in one word what would that be?

**SV:** Determined.

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