

Way to grow

Jared Mellick's construction firm to add 50 jobs by year-end
SUSAN LUNDINE, 3



O-TOWN LOWDOWN



PHOTO | JIM CARCHIDI

Jared Mellick, president of Universal Roofing Group Inc.

This family business expects to add 50 jobs by year-end

BY SUSAN LUNDINE
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Jared Mellick, 41, began accompanying his dad, Ken Mellick, to construction job sites from age 3.

He installed his first roof by age 12, and after he graduated from high school, he joined his father in the home improvement industry.

In 1989, he and his father founded home improvement firm Universal Roofing Group Inc.

In 2008, he became president of the firm, which had \$10.4 million in revenue last year, up 395 percent from \$2.1 million in 2010. For the past two years, the firm's revenue has doubled and is on pace to reach \$20 million by year-end.

Meanwhile, it has grown its workforce 97 percent, from nine employees five years ago to 97 today in Orlando and Jacksonville, including 16 family members from three generations.

The company also grew its headquarters from 2,500 square feet to 6,000 square feet in 2013. Here, Jared Mellick gives more details about new job creation, future plans and strategy:

How people will you hire this year? As we expand our services and bring labor in-house, we expect to add 50 employees by the end of the year and easily double within five years.

What are your future plans? To open a new 1,653-square-foot design center showroom at 1660 Lee Road in Winter Park this fall under the name Universal Contracting. We are leasing that space and are considering buying it. Renovations for the center totaled \$180,000. It will offer a design team for remodels, additions and interior/exterior renovations. We also will spend \$70,000 to build out and expand our 6,000-square-foot corporate office to accommodate commercial expansion, and renovate the recently leased 8,000-square-foot warehouse property across the street from the corporate building. We continue to look for new locations across Florida for continued expansion.

What was your smartest business move? To surround myself with people smarter than me. I'm always studying, reading and asking questions. I strive to continue growing.

What's your marketing strategy? Targeted Internet search-engine optimization and search-engine marketing campaigns, direct mail, online and print publications and radio advertising. My father and I also have a syndicated home improvement call-in radio show, *In the House with Ken and Jared*, on Saturdays on Orlando's News 96.5 FM at 8 a.m. and WOKV 104.5 Jacksonville at 9 a.m.

What is your growth strategy? To expand and provide even more services. We want to be a one-stop shop for home improvement.

What are some challenges you've faced and what did you learn from them? Finding the right people for the job and providing enough training for each new employee. We had to modify the process based on the amount of work we do. It is easier to monitor one job site than 10 job sites, so we are trying to hone the processes as we do more work. Our big push this year has been working to improve automation through every department to improve the customer experience.

► CLOSER LOOK

UNIVERSAL ROOFING GROUP INC.

dba Universal Contracting and Universal Roof & Contracting

Description: Residential and commercial roofing and construction firm

Top local executives: CEO Ken Mellick, 67; President Jared Mellick, 41

Headquarters: 5655 Carder Road, Orlando 32810

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www.UniversalRoof.com;
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Susan Lundine
Managing Editor
Orlando Business Journal



As **Universal Roofing Group Inc.** added more and more services to its roster, it also saw its number of workers and revenue increase rapidly. The company – which grew its revenue 395 percent and its workforce 977 percent in the past four years – does business as Universal Roof & Contracting, as well as Universal Contracting.

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Universal Roof & Contracting originally focused on residential roof repair and replacement, eventually adding siding, windows, chimneys, gutters, insulation, skylights, stucco, painting and flashing services, and, most recently, a service division for smaller handyman-type jobs.



Jared Mellick of Universal Roof & Contracting in the company's new warehouse.

JIM CARCHIDI

Here, President **Jared Mellick**, 41, tells a bit more about the company he and his dad, CEO **Ken Mellick**, founded in 1989:

What commercial services do you offer through Universal Contracting? Roof repair/restoration, ground-up construction, multifamily restoration, tenant improvements, design/build, waterproofing and painting, and retail and commercial buildouts

What are Universal Contracting's residential services? That division has grown from four employees in 2012 to 15 workers and offers interior design, kitchen and bath remodeling, additions, buildouts, remodeling, doors, exterior renovations, siding, skylights, stucco, windows and decks. Just recently, the company added electrical services to the residential construction menu.

What are some of your charitable endeavors? From food donations to veteran benefit programs, family members and employees alike have partnered over the years with community projects to impact our area residents in a positive way. Now, as a growing company, we've established the Community Works division to accelerate our efforts to see restoration, healing and progress come to the lives of Orlando and Jacksonville area residents.

For the rest of the interview, see the Sept. 4, 2015, weekly edition of *Orlando Business Journal*.

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