

‘From Day One’

BY BEING INVOLVED FROM THE START OF A PROJECT, FCL BUILDERS HAS DEVELOPED STRONG CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS SINCE ITS INCEPTION 35 YEARS AGO.

> FCL BUILDERS LLC



// Known for its quality delivery of industrial facilities, FCL Builders has branched out into other areas. In retail, it built the Pasquesi Home and Gardens store in Lake Bluff, Ill.

BY STACI DAVIDSON

FCL Builders LLC has been providing design/build excellence for 35 years. During that time, FCL has successfully completed more than 760 projects – totaling more than 67 million square feet and valued at \$1.9 billion. But tallying up its numbers is not what FCL values most – the firm gives weight to the relationships it has developed as the result of its consistently successful delivery of work.

“We have a number of clients who have done three or four projects with us, and that is a great source of pride,” Executive Vice President Carmen Dodaro explains. “Our strength comes from the fact that we’ve always been a design/build contractor, and we are involved from the initial idea through project completion – preconstruction, due diligence, design and construction. By being on board from day one, we can avoid adversarial rela-

tionships, and that is what yields successful projects.”

FCL Builders is known for its con-

[PROFILE]

FCL Builders LLC

www.fclbuilders.com

Headquarters: Itasca, Ill.

Services: Design/build construction

Employees: 40

"OUR REPUTATION AMONG OWNERS AND SUBS WILL HELP US CONTINUE FORWARD. AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOUR INTEGRITY IS ALL YOU HAVE."

struction of office, manufacturing, industrial and warehouse/distribution projects; the depth of the company's portfolio also encompasses data centers, health-care, FDA/USDA processing facilities, hospitality and retail projects. Although FCL Builders primarily works in Illinois, it has spread out into Indiana, Wisconsin, Georgia, Nevada, California and Texas and is currently reviewing new opportunities in Kentucky and South Carolina. Its often clients who encourage FCL to venture to new locations, because they trust in the quality FCL provides. "We are happy to travel to other locations with our customers – it's part of the service that we provide," Dodaro notes.

From August 2001 to July 2002, for example, FCL was constructing the more than 436,000-square-foot Chicago International Produce Market, which is an FDA/USDA-certified produce distribution facility. One vendor on the project was so impressed with FCL's work that he asked the company to build a similar facility in Texas.

'A Good Base'

With 35 years of success under its belt, FCL Builders has a good idea of what enables the operation to remain strong, and



// In South Barrington, Ill., FCL Builders constructed Pinstripes, an entertainment and dining venue with bowling lanes, bocce courts and an outdoor patio.

the company's culture plays a large role in that. For example, one of FCL's owners acts as project executive on every job. That way, employees, clients and subs have easy access to the firm's management team.

"Our culture is very tight knit," Dodaro stresses. "Part of the reason for that is because clients and our employees have the company's ownership at their fingertips. A project is not successful unless you have a happy client, so we work closely with our customers to guide them through the projects and respond to any questions they have.

"Our philosophy is that we don't build buildings – we are all salespeople, and our job is to build relationships."

As a result of the slow economy in recent years, FCL Builders has become involved in aspects of projects that it had not immersed itself in previously. For example, FCL has been successful in helping to find "good investment groups" for some clients, allowing projects to move forward, Dodaro says.

Strong relationships with subcontractors, he adds, also are key in successful project delivery, and FCL continuously works to ensure its base of subs meets its high standards in quality and ethics.

"In design/build, one part of our responsibility is to assemble a great team of subs, and you really have to have faith in them," Dodaro stresses. "We use detailed

"Our philosophy is that we don't build buildings – we are all sales people, and our job is to build relationships." –Carmen Dodaro, executive vice president



scope reviews to ensure our subs meet our criteria, and with that we've developed a good base of partners. On average, we have about five subs per trade, which allows us to spread the work around but maintain the highest quality at the same time."

Better Equipped

Gaining repeat business from clients is "a huge goal" at FCL Builders, so the company works hard to demonstrate "we are the best at what we do, so customers come back with more work," Dodaro says. "For example, our job sites are always clean, safe and very professional – we can take anyone to any of our sites at any time."

Even so, the slow economy has caused

FCL's volume to drop somewhat, although Dodaro believes the market is coming back. "We're making sure we're as educated as we can be," he explains. "We're retraining ourselves and learning about the latest trends, including technological advances and green initiatives. That way, we're equipped with everything we need to give clients more options on how to build their projects successfully, sustainably and more economically."

FCL's more recent design/build experience has been in data center and food processing projects, he explains. The company also is performing more work for the Department of Defense, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers being one

of its main clients. Regardless of the customer or the type of project it is working on, FCL Builders is confident in its capability to expand upon its 35-year history.

"We have been recognized as the General Contractor of the Year by the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP), and by many of our subcontractors, which shows both ends – clients and subs – have recognized our talents," Dodaro stresses. "It is our reputation among owners and subs that will help us continue moving forward. We are known for being fair and honest, and we consistently deliver what we say we will deliver. At the end of the day, your integrity is all you have." *mt*



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