

## ALEX DOWNIE & SONS COMPANY

The Alex Downie & Sons Company is, at first glance, a successful general contracting firm doing business in the Youngstown and Warren area. Upon a closer look, however, the fourth-generation family-owned and operated organization represents qualities which are hard to find in today's business climate: dependable, honest, hard-working professionals who put quality and customer service at the top of the company objectives list.

*“The single most important thing to understanding our approach to business is the length of our client relationships.”*

Alex Downie & Sons Company was founded back in 1935 by Alex Downie Sr. as a general contracting firm. His sons, Alex Jr. and Douglas continued to build the business. Today, Alex Downie & Sons Co. is continued by the founder's grandsons, Ted Downie, Tom Downie, and Alex Downie, III. Brian, Ted's son, and Matt, Tom's son also work for the company.

Education and industry knowledge are key components of Alex Downie & Sons. The current leadership's experience includes Alex's license as a Professional Engineer and LEED AP. Ted holds a Masters of Business Administration. Tom is a veteran superintendent with over 30 years experience as a carpenter. All three are active estimators and project managers for their company.

The Downie business model leverages a depth of knowledge and experience within the family, giving customers an added level of service. “A Downie is always on the job,” Brian Downie says. “When a customer calls, they know they can always speak to a

Downie. From estimating, to ordering material, to supervising tradesmen, to scheduling and final billing, one of us is responsible. We are all out in the field. My father and uncles are very much a hands-on management team. They are on the job during the week and complete administrative duties on the weekends.”

Brian Downie added that this model makes the company uniquely qualified to use historical results from past projects at a customer's facility for preliminary budgeting. “We also do traditional estimating ourselves, so by the start of each job we are intimately familiar with the project.”

The model works. So much so that one customer – AT&T's (previously Ohio Bell Telephone Company) – was Alex Downie

Sr.'s first customer and remains a valued client today. Alex Downie & Sons Co. completes a variety of projects for AT&T and has to undergo specialized training in addition to 75 years of experience to work at the telephone switch buildings.

“The single most important thing to understanding our approach to business is the length of our client relationships.” Brian added.

Alex Downie & Sons Company has made its mark by specializing in new construction and interior alteration of commercial, institutional and industrial customers. A large percentage of work is in the fields of healthcare, banking, office building, telephone exchanges and food processing. If specialized training

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is needed for any of these industries, Downie employees are given the time to train appropriately. As a union shop, Alex Downie & Sons Co. has access to a well trained pool of carpenters.

The company is also a longtime member of The Builders Association of Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. Brian Downie said keeping active in that Association gives the company access to new information about governmental affairs affecting the construction industry and LEED or the “Green” building industry.

The Builders represents employers in Trumbull, Columbiana and Mahoning counties in Ohio and Mercer and Lawrence counties in Pennsylvania. It services 15 different skilled trades in the region, and is an ongoing resource for union construction contractors such as Alex Downie & Sons Co. Members of The Builders have access to state-of-the-art education and training, unlimited manpower from apprenticeship and union labor halls, contract negotiation support, and a pool of technical, administrative and support resources.

“It’s important to keep our employees highly trained because of the sensitive areas we work in, some of which require training and certifications before entering the job site,” Brian Downie said. “We’ve been a union shop since the company began. Not only is it tradition, but it

provides us with a skilled labor pool. That’s important for us – to keep highly skilled carpenters working for us, because our customers expect the quality and skill that they get from union professionals.”

*“We do the best job we can to please the customer. We focus on the customer and quality workmanship and not on maximizing profits. We feel the money will take care of itself.”*

Specialized skills are mandatory for construction work in the healthcare industry, especially when Alex Downie & Sons Co. is tasked with a job in a patient occupied area. Downie crews are specially trained and are experienced in working in surgical and emergency rooms, radiation treatment rooms, pharmacies, and labs. The company is also involved in helping to evaluate all categories of infection control, such as patient risk groups and construction project type, to determine the proper class of precautions specifically required for each project.

In addition to high levels of experience and training, Downie’s healthcare construction practice is aided by owning the right equipment to meet today’s environmental and health code standards, such as four Abatement Technology PAS 2000 HEPA filter machines, filter vacuums and various negative air/

exhaust fans. To ensure work that meets or exceeds code, Tom and Alex each hold ASHE healthcare certificates. Alex Downie & Sons Co. is also a certified in HILTI Firestop Specialty Contractor, which allows their crews to conduct inspections as well as repair deficiencies in fire walls. Alex Downie & Sons work can be found at the region’s St. Elizabeth, St. Joseph, and other hospitals.

The Schwebel Baking Company is another long-time Alex Downie & Sons Co. customer, having started its relationship with Alex Downie, Jr. over 25 years ago. Downie recently completed a 26,000 square-foot addition to a baking plant, and continues to service this client for physical plant upgrades. Financial Institutions, too, are ongoing customers of Alex Downie & Sons Co., such as J.P. Morgan Chase, PNC and Home Savings and Loan. Several of the predecessor banks to these institutions have relied on Alex Downie & Sons for over 40 years for their construction needs.

Alex Downie & Sons attributes the ability to keep its customers for so long in part to the company’s working philosophy. “We do the best job we can to please the customer. We focus on the customer and quality workmanship and not on maximizing profits. We feel the money will take care of itself.”

That grassroots philosophy, mixed with state-of-the-art equipment, union training and craftsmanship, and a commitment to hands-on customer service, keeps The Alex Downie & Sons Company at the top of the call list for its clients. And for the fourth-generation Downie family business, it’s a model that started 75 years ago and remains its lifeblood for a successful business today.

## **Alex Downie & Sons Co.**

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