

Learn How Viking ECs Growth

portside.portofportland.online/2018/05/viking/

May 3, 2018





In honor of National Small Business Week, we asked Viking Engineering + Construction President Cecil DelaCruz about operating a small business and participating in our small business program. Here's what he had to say.

Tell us about your business?

Our vision for Viking Engineering + Construction is to be a leader in the construction of highly complex, diverse projects for clients in the government, healthcare, high-tech and industrial sectors. Rather than specialize in one construction, we specialize in working in specific types of environments; namely, mission-critical facilities and infrastructure.

Typically, you might find us working in airports and hangars, hospitals and medical clinics, government and corporate offices, industrial production areas, military bases, and any place where there are highly sensitive and/or secure operations that simply can't be interrupted.

Why did you get involved in our small business program?

We knew that Viking had a great deal of potential, and wanted to take the company to a very high level, but we knew that we would need a lot of help and guidance along the way to get there. We needed to see a picture of what it looked like to operate on that high level from people that had already been there. We wanted to learn from the best and emulate them as much as we could. Viking has always prided itself on being a small company with sophistication and capabilities beyond its small size, and we wanted to make sure we could live up to that vision.

What did you learn through the program?

Participating in the Port of Portland's mentor-protégé program, and our relationships established with our two mentors has been extremely beneficial. To be honest, at first it seemed like we were just being interrogated at every session and we weren't really solving a lot of urgent issues in our business, but the more we grew and more complex things got in our business, the more we realized that our mentors were asking the right questions from day one—it just took us a while to really catch up.

What they already knew—and what we would have to learn through experiencing it—was that they were trying to get us to lift our heads up and look over the horizon to see the challenges that still laid ahead of us a year or more down the road; ones that may not have seemed urgent at the time, but were very important and were the kind of challenges that if you let them become urgent, it's too late.

Has the program led to any jobs?

We believe the program was instrumental in helping us win a spot on the Port's job order contract, which has been a great experience for our company. We love working in the kind of dynamic and high-profile environment that the Port and its facilities provide. We feel like it's been a win-win for both sides and hope the Port feels the same. It's been a symbiotic relationship between the job order contract and the mentor-protégé program. The Port needs us to get better and more capable with each project so we can take on bigger and more complex work, and at the same time the mentor-protégé program is helping us do just that through the combination of classes, mentoring, and the budget the Port allocates to consultants to help us on multiple fronts like marketing, accounting and training.

We want to give a huge thank you to everyone involved in developing this program, supporting the program, funding the program, believing in this program, and especially those people freely volunteering their time and efforts to make the program what it has become today. We feel that we are incredibly more capable now than when we entered the program.