



Starts with **CARING**





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Committed to the utmost integrity, professionalism, care and customer service, Sprucehill Contracting serves the residential home building and renovation needs of west, north, and greater Vancouver. Blending the form and function of construction and innovative technology, Sprucehill's detail oriented approach ensures the best quality product.



On an island on the North Shore of Vancouver, Erik Jensen was faced with a problem. Working at a kids' camp, the number one complaint he kept hearing was that the campers hated using pit toilets to go to the bathroom. After working closely and collaboratively with the camp organization, funds were pulled together and Jensen spent the

next six months constructing a building and giving the campers a suitable place to relieve themselves.

Here's the kicker: Jensen wasn't a licensed carpenter. A graduate of computer science, he was working in an office for an IT firm, managing technicians – a juxtaposition to



where life has led him since that pit toilet conundrum. Now firmly entrenched and invested as president of Sprucehill Contracting, Jensen recalls his first day in vivid detail.

“I was sitting on a bench and I went to lace up my first boot and I said to myself ‘I like these boots,’” he said. “Then when I put on my tool belt, I said ‘hey, I really like putting on this tool belt and doing this.’ From that point



forward I tried working in the construction industry for a while and I went from a senior manager in an IT firm to a labourer on a job site – it’s a bit of a change.”

Having a new found appreciation for the creating and problem solving elements of the industry, Jensen enjoyed the work and stuck with it, doing whatever was necessary to progress along the way.

“I worked for three or four contracting firms doing various tasks,” he said. “I went from a labourer to apprentice in a month. Then I went from apprentice to journey man in a year; I just picked up what we do really quickly.”

The experience taught Jensen more than just the technical aspects of construction, but the everyday business side of things – something he could relate to from his IT days and office management background.

“I quickly realized I wasn’t going to make any significant living working for somebody by the hour and that I needed to create a company,” he said. “I found that a lot of the employers that I was working for were alienating our clients and staff and doing a general shit job of being contractors. It bugged me and I thought I can do better, and I like to think at this point in time, that I am.”

CARE FACTOR

The adventurous, ambitious and entrepreneurial mentality harnessed by Jensen has served him well. Sprucehill Contracting has now gone from a one-man operation to, on average, employing between 18 and 26 people full-time. What began as a labour of love to help with campers’ complaints has now grown to embrace and encompass a mantra built on passion and honing your craft.

“All of the people that work with and for us really care about the work they do,” he said. “People that care about the work they do



tend to do a better a job, tend to pay more attention to attention and take more pride in their work.”

In the highly competitive, highly-crowded and highly skilled world of North shore Vancouver’s construction scene, Jensen’s ability to identify gaps of differentiation by leveraging technology and helps to deliver a far superior product.

“What sets us apart is our care factor and my technical ability,” he said. “We use online project management software called smart sheets to document and detail out all specifications and make sure that project managers and site supervisors have access to all the information at their fingertips.” Perhaps inspired by his background in IT and his real experiences working for others, Jensen’s customer service outlook is defined by his unwillingness to compromise and a penchant for always keeping the client connected from all angles.

“We try to provide our clients with the tools to educate themselves and to try and train them,” Jensen said.

“If we’re not providing our clients with re-

porting, invoices and graphs and documentation to show where they’re money is going, as a contractor you’re selling them short,” he continued. “By providing detailed reporting on a real-time basis, the clients are able to see a comprehensive and accurate projection of their final budget.”

DEMPSEY ROAD

When you’re company prides itself on quality and superior products, Jensen is quick to point out the challenges he faces when upholding the core values and craftsmanship that Sprucehill is best known for.

“Staffing - skilled staffing. Both at the sub trade and Sprucehill level,” he said. “Finding skilled trades people is not easy. There are a lot of hacks. Like I said, it starts with caring, and I’ve hired guys who have cared, but just cause they care doesn’t make them a good carpenter.”

So what makes a good contractor in the eyes of Jensen?

“Progressive training and making sure the project managers are aware of what’s acceptable” he said. “From there, quality control. Going through and double checking all the



work that's been done. What I tell my project managers is when you show up to a site, assume that everything that's been done while you weren't there, was done wrong."

"If you start with that assumption and go around and double check that everything

has been done correctly, you're going to get it right every time," Jensen continued. "Whereas, if you assume people have done their jobs properly, you're going to be let down."

Taking on between three and five custom homes and between 20 and 40 renovations

per year, every project is a special one for Sprucehill Contracting. But one in particular stands out most for Jensen – Dempsey Road.

“Dempsey Road is probably one of the most interesting and coolest projects that we’ve done to date,” he said. “It sits on top of a creek. And around here, doing any construction work around a creek has a lot of ramifications and issues.”

“The designer was able to sign-off on some aggressive renovations plans for that house

that we gutted from studs and started from scratch. It started from an ugly piece of crap to a stunning contemporary home. It was tough and expensive, but the end result was phenomenal.”

NURTURING ORGANICALLY

Never one for the romanticism associated with innovation and doing things first, Jensen’s laid back outlook to running his business proves that patience is a vital trait in the always-developing and evolving world of construction, home building and renovations.





“There are shows in Vegas everywhere with gadgets that you can put into homes, but for us it’s mostly organic,” he said. “It’s not something I ever felt the need to push towards because I always found that leading edge is always bleeding edge, so I’d rather have someone try it out first before I just jump in.”

A key component to Sprucehill’s growing reputation as a trusted builder in the North Shore is Jensen’s own belief that communication and letting people know what’s going on remains a key component for a successful client relationship. Backed by a proven track

record of no customer complaints, Sprucehill’s loyalty to their long term suppliers helps them remain in the hearts and minds of satisfied clients.

“My claim to fame is that we can build an amazing house really quickly,” Jensen said. “That’s not something a lot of people can do. The reason why we’re able to execute on that and make it happen is because we have relationships with vendors who stand on their head and get us our product when we need it.”

“Sure. we’re going to pay a bit of a premium for that, but I tell clients that they can either: pay the vendor a little bit more to get their materials on time, pay the bank more for your mortgage, or pay the person you’re renting from another month’s rents because you’re trying to save \$200,” he continued.

“When you show people the numbers and explain that speed trumps money, people get it.”

THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, Sprucehill Contracting has many cool projects on the horizon. Executing design and engineering to deliver gorgeous, warm and comforting homes built with care and superior quality is what mat-

ters most to Jensen.

His journey from IT office life to the president of a construction company was a difficult one. But Jensen’s mission for the future is clear.

“I would like to continue to nurture and stick with doing as much renovation work as we’re currently doing,” Jensen said. “I’d like to ideally get away for clients on new home builds and start building them for myself on spec and go into that general category.”

“For me, my goal is to keep the company at current size or get slightly bigger and hopefully in 10 to 12 years, semi-retire,” he continued. “That’s the hope anyways.”



