

Taking Saskatoon by storm



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Since 2008, Delonix Construction Ltd. has been delivering top-quality residential constructions and renovations to satisfied clients in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In that time, Delonix has developed a "reputation of excellence" and they have become regarded as specialists in their field based on their superior quality of work and dedication to exceeding client expectations.

Darryl Shannon started the company seven years ago after relocating from Vancouver to Saskatoon. With several years of experience under his belt as a fully licensed carpenter, he viewed the move as an opportunity to "get back to the roots" of plying his trade on higher end renovations and finishes.

"From there, our business and our reputation blossomed," he recalled. "Customer satisfaction, honesty and integrity are what we're known for, and we've been able to leverage our work and pretty much ride the name of what we've established over the seven years we've been out here."

Today, Delonix builds custom homes ranging in price from roughly \$300,000 to \$1 million in addition to doing renovations. According to Shannon, the company has seized a "huge opportunity to be a very different builder" in the Saskatoon market by staffing a team of skilled carpenters to make up their labour force.



"Our people are full apprenticing carpenters or fully licensed journeymen carpenters that have run the gamut of the entire construction and carpentry trade," he explained. "We usually have five carpenters on staff. It fluctuates depending on the season, but most of our carpenters are long-term carpenters that have been with the business for about five to six years."

Delonix has also secured a core group of reliable and highly qualified subcontractors, including plumbing, electrical and mechanical contractors who have worked with the com-

pany for more than five years each. In choosing subcontractors, Shannon indicated that he's more concerned with qualifications and reputation than he is with the cost of their services.

"We work diligently and have a massive amount of practice and research in getting a strong network of sub-trades that go by all the same standards that we do in terms of quality and integrity," he explained. "So we have a very tight-knit group of guys that we associate ourselves with and it has proven to be absolutely invaluable to our success."

STARTING FRESH

A major factor in Shannon's decision to "move halfway across the country to start something fresh" seven years ago was his desire to have a more intimate, one-on-one relationship with his clients. He recalled having minimal interaction with homeowners during his time in Vancouver, which stifled the human element of his work.

"Now when we get an inquiry for a project, our number one objective is to actually meet face-to-face with the client," he said. "It doesn't matter if it's a small garage that we're building or if it's a million-dollar home, we want to immediately start building those relationships. The long and short of it is – we are there for our clients. We want to do everything we can to meet their expectations and exceed them, and I think the first part to doing that is being able to be open and honest in face-to-face conversations."

On each project, Shannon sits down with the client to go over all the various aspects of the work to ensure they see the value in what they're getting from Delonix. This includes "very, very thorough" contracts that outline the smallest details, from kitchen faucets to tiling and beyond.

Throughout the construction phase, Delonix maintains open lines of communication with the client so they're able to voice any concerns they may have to Shannon directly. Once the project is completed, the team also shows the client "every single aspect of the house" to make sure they're familiar with new systems, features and technologies. Afterwards, the company performs a 30-day follow-up with the client to make sure they're available to address any issues that may have arisen. The goal is to guarantee that nothing is overlooked.



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This commitment to client satisfaction has been integral to the company's rapid growth over the years. In addition to having several repeat clients who have used the company for multiple residential projects, Delonix also earns a great deal of work through referrals.

"Word-of-mouth is our biggest advertising tool," said Shannon. "We don't do a lot of advertising because 95 per cent of our business comes from word-of-mouth. I don't think there's a more gratifying way to get business than through word-of-mouth."

Delonix's commitment to quality has also

led to a substantial amount of industry recognition. They picked up two major awards for Best Design and Renovator of the Year at the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association's 23rd Annual Bridges Awards. According to Shannon, the Home Builders' Association is the "best association to be involved with" for residential builders since they're specific to the industry, which makes the accolades even more meaningful to the company.

WEST COAST FEEL

Delonix is coming off of a very successful 2014 campaign which yielded an annual turnover of \$2.5 million. Over the next five

years, Shannon would like to see that number doubled as part of the company's attempt to continue building their brand in the Saskatoon marketplace.

"Saskatoon has seen a little bit of a hit and a little bit of a correction, which is great for the industry because we think it's really going to weed out a lot of the part-time builders and part-time renovators that aren't really invested in the trade," he said. "So what we'd really like to do is be a frontrunner in basically working through this correction to become a leader in custom homes."

Over the course of the next 36 months, Delonix will be putting together a package of three different custom home designs – a bungalow, a bi-level style home and a two-storey home – that "fit beautifully" into Saskatoon's narrow residential lots.

"Saskatoon has these little pockets throughout the city where they build these narrow homes," Shannon explained. "What we're seeing right now is a real change from the \$600,000 to \$700,000 home bracket down to the \$350,000 to \$450,000 price home, and we've had such amazing reviews from the several houses that we've done over the last

12 months on these narrow lots. We want to be the leading home builder for those styles of houses while keeping our higher priced homes to maybe two or three a year."

Shannon believes the company will be successful in this regard because their custom designs incorporate "a little bit of the West Coast feel" which is unique to the city. He



also sees Delonix reducing the number of renovation projects they take on to make room for this increased workload.

"We would like to limit the amount of renovations that we do from five to maybe two more exclusive renovations," he concluded. "We don't want to let go of that completely because we have definitely made a name for ourselves in the city for renovations, but we want to be a leader in the industry for home building here in Saskatoon."

The logo features the text "DELONIX HOMES" in a large, serif font. A thin, dark grey arc curves over the top of the word "HOMES". A small red square icon with a white grid pattern is positioned between "DELONIX" and "HOMES". Below this, the words "& DEVELOPMENTS" are written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font, flanked by two horizontal lines. At the bottom, the tagline "BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION ON INTEGRITY" is written in a small, dark grey, sans-serif font.

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