

CUSTOMER PROFILE

THE W.I. CLARK COMPANY



VMS specializes in jobs with tight confines, such as this drainage improvement project on Route 6 in Bristol, CT.

Victor Serrambana, Jr. wasn't just handed the keys to the family business - he earned them. The second generation contractor, currently President of VMS Construction Company of Vernon, Conn., learned the contracting business from the ground up.

"When people ask when I started working in the business, I'll usually tell them when I started to walk," says Serrambana with a smile. "The truth is when I was about 12, I started greasing and washing machines in the shop. When I was 16, I began working summers for my father, I drove trucks - did some paving - I did a little bit of everything."

But if Victor Serrambana Jr., was going to help manage the family business, the first thing he was going to do was finish his education.

"It was important to my father that I get a degree," explained Serrambana. "So that was the first step in the process"

After earning a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute he went on to graduate school and got his Masters Degree at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

"Having those degrees has no doubt made it easier for me at times. It certainly makes it easier to talk to the engineers on the job. Sometimes they call me to get my input on a specific part of a job."

After finishing school in 1991, Victor was ready to work full time. And by then VMS Construction was

a well respected sewer and water contractor.

"The company always had a reputation for handling tough water and sewer jobs with a lot of dewatering. That was how my father made his mark in the business." Victor Serrambana Sr. had formed the company in 1982.

A key element to the success of the company from the beginning has been its people. Three of the four Foremen currently with the company helped train young Victor Serrambana Jr. when he started out working summers. Most of the 25 employees have been with the company 10 years or more.

The type of work VMS Construction bids and completes has changed a bit since 1982. "Like everyone else we have had to diversify" said Serrambana. "We still look for the difficult sewer jobs - in fact we like the challenge. But we'll do other jobs too. We've been successful doing streetscape work. And I like to think we have an advantage because we don't sub out a lot of work. I learned that from my father. He always tried to be as self sufficient as possible."

One area where Victor Jr. has made some changes is in the brand of equipment. His preference has become equipment manufactured by John Deere.

"My father had a lot of equipment but there was only one piece of John



Victor Serrambana Jr., President of VMS Construction Company, on a 500C backhoe that has been part of the company since the inception.

Deere equipment - a 500C backhoe he bought when the company was formed. When it came time to replacing equipment I looked at Deere equipment and I liked what I saw. I convinced my father it was the direction we should go."

VMS Construction now owns two 624J Loaders, two 160C Excavators, a 330CLC Excavator, a 200CLC Excavator, a 650J Crawler Dozer, a 595D Wheeled Excavator and a 300D Articulated Truck.

"I have a lot of confidence in the equipment - but the dealer is also an important part of the decision making process," says Serrambana. "I have a good relationship with our sales rep and W.I. Clark does a good job after the sale. Whether we need a part or service on one of the machines, they are always there whenever we need them."