

Success Story: B.E.R. Enterprises, LLC (doing business as Veterans Integrity Exteriors)



Cedar shake roof repair completed by Veterans Integrity Exteriors following storm damage in Eden Prairie, Minnesota

Problem: Homeowners in Minnesota face the never-ending possibility of damage caused by weather conditions such as hail, heavy snow, tornadoes, high winds and torrential rains. The potential for weather-related damage is always present regardless of the season.

Challenge: Finding a reliable contractor to work with when damage occurs is difficult and can result in a frustrating and costly experience for the homeowner.

Solution: Provide home repair and renovation services based on the guiding principal of integrity. That's what Blake Rothnem decided to do in 2005. The concept is simple but effective: Provide consistently superior service that exceeds homeowner expectations.

Owner's Background: Blake returned from combat services in Iraq in 2005 and formed B. E. R. Enterprises, LLC. His main business was working with real estate buyers who purchased properties that had to be repaired or renovated before resale. That market segment prospered for a couple of years until housing sales fell with the rest of the economy in about 2008. To keep the business going, Blake did contract work for other companies but that was sporadic and did not provide the desired level of income. In 2014, while contemplating his future and trying to figure out what to do next, he decided to visit the SBA website.

SCORE's Involvement: Blake first learned of SCORE while doing research on the SBA website. He made an application for free mentoring and was

"Bill gave me the critical insight I needed to focus on my business plan and become a better entrepreneur. Thanks Bill!" – Blake Rothnem, Owner.

"With a successful business plan, Blake was able to get the appropriate funding and make the right business decisions, all of which shows the importance of a good business plan." – Bill Collette, SCORE Mentor.

assigned to Bill Collette. Bill's background in contracting proved to be extremely valuable to Blake. Bill suggested that focus would be very important and that the best way to acquire and fine-tune that focus was to do a business plan. Through this process, Blake learned the difference between a scattered, haphazard approach to his business and a truly focused approach.

Business Description: Blake's business, which now operates under the name Veterans Integrity Exteriors, specializes in repairing homes that have been damaged by Minnesota's weather. His customers have come to rely on him for his knowledge of building codes, his ability to deal with insurance companies and his personal integrity. In fact, referrals have become an important part of his sales. Since beginning work with SCORE, Blake has significantly built his business. His sales in 2014 far exceeded his volume for the previous two years. With this success, Blake was able to get an SBA loan that will provide much needed working capital for his planned growth.

The Future: With timely updates to his business plan, Blake plans to focus even more on roofing repairs and replacements. This specialty offers the best volume potential along with the best cash flow. And, it's a category in need of integrity. Veterans Integrity Exteriors can fill that need.

More information:

- Veterans Integrity Exteriors: www.veteransintegrity.net
- St. Paul SCORE: www.stpaul.score.org

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