

BUILDER PROFILE

B.J. & R

How long have you been in the construction business?

"I actually started as a kid working for my dad at age 10. He was building the Pacific Realty building down in Long Beach. I couldn't make enough money off my lemonade stand so he said he could give me a job for a buck an hour. I rode my Stingray bike back down the next day and started working. I worked for him every summer through school. Then back in 1985, I got married and he asked me if I wanted to be partner. I worked with him until 1996 and we incorporated. That's where the 'R' came from in B.J. & R. He worked until 2003 and semi retired. I've owned B.J. & R Inc. since 2003."

What motivated you pursuit it as a career?

"It's the only thing I've ever done. I started so young that I got to be handy and could make decent money compared to other high school kids. The money, for being a teenager, was good and then I got to a place where I didn't want to do anything different. I'm super fortunate to have a father that raised me in an industry that I can make a living at and I'm blessed to have a brother as talented as he is, and is also my ally."

How many employees do you have?

"We're generally around four to seven not counting me and my brother (Bob Jr.). Last year I had more than that and it was hard to manage. I think they are all good



LUKE WHITTAKER

Raymon Bonney, 53, has deep roots in the construction industry. His first job came at age 10 helping his father construct the Pacific Realty building in downtown Long Beach. "I worked with him until 1996 and we incorporated," Bonney said. "That's where the 'R' came from in B.J. & R."

human beings with a good work ethic, and they truly care about the product.

What's been the biggest lesson you've learned through experience?

"Patience and perseverance."

Is there any particular wisdom you've obtained that you wish**you knew when you started?**

"Some of the better building practices that have developed have changed since I started. When I started, it was 2x4 construction and insulboard sheathing on the wall. Now things are different. Knowing the superior way to do things with products, like anything else, is

evolving."

How does your business today compare to 10 years ago?

"We're at kind of a boom now. The variety of jobs I stay in are pretty much new construction. Ten years ago, it wasn't quite as strong and we were doing different things. My crew size would vary before,

B.J. & R

Raymon Bonney, owner
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but now it's steadied and I've had guys working for me several years. I'll do whatever it takes to keep them going."

How is the industry overall since the recession?

"I think the industry overall is strong. The recession was a big hit. I was one of those people that barely made it. I think we're smarter now than what we were then. It's been steady growth since then. Now I probably get one or two new calls a week on a new house. On the Peninsula, we're really a retirement industry. Most of the homes — 90 percent — are for people that are either going to retire or are retired. We do very few homes for new doctors or schoolteachers. The retirement industry is always going to be there, it's just whether we can build affordably for what people have saved up for."

What are the unique challenges or obstacles to building on the coast?

"The weather is number one, it's the hardest thing to deal with. The weather has a huge impact on production and moral. It's hard. We

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