



PRECISE PLANNING: Project Management Overcomes Obstacles

Long Island paving company relies on longtime employees, attention to detail, to complete out-of-state project ahead of schedule.

Royal Pavement Solutions of Islip, N.Y., used ingenuity, experienced employees and preplanning to tackle the many challenges of the job that earned it this year's Parking Lot Pavement Award. The company had landed a job in Shelton, Conn., 100 miles away from its Long Island headquarters. Once on site, the crew dealt with adverse weather conditions and equipment malfunctions.

"Despite facing unexpected challenges, the project showcases the team's unwavering commitment to excellence. The team's dedication was evident throughout the project, as they demonstrated a remarkable work ethic and adaptability," the award nomination stated.

Royal Pavement won the bid for the large parking lot repaving project during the summer months. The job was for a new client, and Royal Pavement landed the job by putting together a unique project scope with fewer phases than the competitors.

"A lot of people present scopes that are very boilerplate, but I always want to look at the project in a unique way," said Royal Pavement Founder Kenneth Roy. "If there's another way to save money, potentially, why not?"

The customer did not contact Royal Pavement again until September, and asked if the job could be done before the end of the year. The main tenant of the building had left, and the property owner wanted the parking lot repaved before a new tenant moved in.



"We were like, 'What?' And then we're like, 'We'll figure it out, we always do,'" Roy said. "We were the only company who agreed that we could do it in less than three phases. Everybody else said they needed five or six phases. I didn't understand why these other companies felt they needed so much time on it. We're a pretty efficient crew, though, so it could have been a part of it."

EXPEDITING AN OUT-OF-STATE JOB

Royal Pavement drew up a schedule, booked hotels and planned out how to ship up their equipment and other supplies. Among the equipment they shipped to the site was two dump trucks, a utility body truck, paver, three loaders, skid steer, sweeper, rollers and a mini excavator.

It was new territory for Royal Pavement, with new vendors, new asphalt plants, new trucking companies.

"So, there's all these new pieces, new vendors; it's a new layer of complexities,

The building owner's main tenant had moved out, and there was a brief window of time to repave the lot while fewer people were using it.

Royal Pavement Solutions

plus the weather at the end of the year," Roy said.

They milled on a Thursday and Friday and returned to pave on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

"After Day One, we were almost complete. Day Two was used to finish the milling," Roy said. "When you mill that fast, I find a lot of companies will say, 'Oh, we can mill this much square feet in a day.' But is it perfectly ready for paving? Or did you just get the stuff milled up and now there's piles of dust everywhere? Is it pave ready or is it just milled? There's a difference."

Additional to the project was asphalt curbing that needed to be ripped out and a concrete sidewalk at grade that needed to be removed, which is why they brought along the mini excavator.

"Ownership was like blown out of the water," he said. "They were like, 'How the heck did you guys get this parking lot done in just two days?'"

The paving was completed in three days.

"I'll be honest, we could have done it in two, but because we were working so far from home, we opted to do two shorter paving days and on the third day, finish paving by 11 a.m. or 12 p.m. and pack the equipment back up for the trip back to Long Island," Roy said.

The crew finished with a yield that was less than 0.5 percent.

"I forget how many tons the job was, but if it called for 2,000 tons, we put down 2,003 tons. We were exactly where we needed to be," he said.

Roy, the self-proclaimed "Yield God," recently taught a class on project management and low yield results at PAVE/X, a tradeshow for the pavement industry that hosted its inaugural show earlier this month in San Antonio.

"I believe that by taking a proper look at it, I can get any project within 0.5 percent," he said. "I get so excited about getting deals perfect."

The crew spent the final day cleaning up and the customer was "thrilled," Roy said.

REDUCING ERRORS THROUGH PREPLANNING

Because of the company's extensive preplanning, the crew is able to adapt to problems on the site as they arise.

"I'd say we have a relatively low amount of things that go wrong, but that's because of how much emphasis we put on pre-planning and being prepared for the job," Roy said. "That limits it, but stuff still happens."

For example, on the first day of paving, the crew lost two hours of time because of an equipment mishap.

"We fired up the paver, everything's good to go and we're ready to work. Asphalt showed up at the jobsite," Roy said. "We go to move the paver, and the bolts that hold the tracks in were

sheared right off, which blew the tracks out. It's out of commission."

It was one of those moments where the company's expertise paid off.

"Now, we're sitting there, three hours away from my mechanic's shop, asphalt is on site and we have a massive breakdown of our paver," he said. "Our operations manager, Hector, he's one of the most valuable guys you could have on a jobsite. This dude has it figured out and fixed in like an hour and a half. He fixed it enough to get us through the day."

Hector later spent most of that evening to properly fix the paver so it would be functional the next day.

On a different day, the tack distribution truck was parked in a way that blocked the parking lot and work that needed to be done. When the driver was called to move the truck, it turned out that he had locked the truck, taken the keys with him and was two hours away, headed to another job. The truck driver turned around and the Royal Pavement crew adjusted, shifting to a different area of work while waiting for the truck driver.

"Not everything goes perfectly, things do go wrong," Roy said. "But I think we pride ourselves on the fact that when things go wrong, we're the best company to handle those challenges. Nothing throws us off. You could throw anything at us. It's like, 'So this just happened, what are we going to do now? We'll deal with it.' We're very good at managing processes."

On the first day of paving, it rained, and the temperature was not ideal. The crew saw the forecast ahead of time and decided to shift their attention to a binder repair during the worst of the downpour.

"Weather is always a challenge, but every paving company, at least in the Northeast, they're always going to struggle with that, especially when you're working far from home," he said. "If that job was only 20 minutes away from our yard, maybe we would have handled it a little differently and rescheduled the job completely. But we were already up there, the equipment is in place, we've

already got the hotel rooms, so what are we supposed to do? So it's just another complexity."

All told, the company finished the project early.

"Completing the project ahead of schedule showed their meticulous planning and expert execution," the award nomination stated. "The team's attention to detail extended to cleanup and complex areas, emphasizing their commitment to a polished and aesthetically pleasing finished product."

CONTINUING THE FAMILY BUSINESS

For Roy, paving is the family business. His grandfather, father and uncle all worked for the family's paving company, before selling it to a private equity firm when Roy was in his early 20s. When the private equity firm went bankrupt a few years later, Roy was able to buy all the old equipment and hire the employees he and his family had worked with for decades.

"We handpicked all the really good people that were still there and/or had left the company," Roy said. "We had picked this dream team. And we got the equipment. The customers that they were still working with, they needed help. They remembered us, they still liked us. So the customers are there, the equipment is there, the dream team is put back together. The flame has been lit; we just need to ignite it now."

"My goal is to create an organization that can lead the industry," he said. "I want to be in that conversation. That's what we're trying to build." ■



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