

ROCK^{TO}ROAD

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A construction worker wearing a hard hat, safety glasses, a high-visibility orange vest over a dark jacket, and light-colored pants stands on a metal walkway. He is leaning on the railings of the walkway. The background shows industrial structures, including large cylindrical tanks and a building with corrugated metal siding.

TOP 10 UNDER 40

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JARED KUEPFER
ARRO Crushing Ltd.
Owner
Millbank, Ont.

Jared Kuepfer got introduced to the construction sector through his father's dimensional stone business.

"We would go with him to different quarries in Ontario and watch the equipment, and thought it was pretty cool. We saw people pulling rocks out of the ground and crushing rocks and thought that was pretty awesome. Early on, I knew I wanted to be involved in heavy equipment," he says.

Witnessing his father start up his own business fuelled Jared's desire to do the same. While thinking up ideas for a new business he had considered an excavation business, but found the market was already saturated and too competitive. That's when he thought about a crushing operation.

"I heard it was hard to find crushing guys, so that's how I got the idea to start up a crushing company," he says.

Jared says he really enjoys creating products that go into important infrastructure.

"The public has no idea what goes on behind those [quarry] fences, realizing the amount of work it takes to build aggregate

so you can have roads and hospitals. I like being part of where society starts, building a base so you can commute to work or wherever you need to go," he says. "Sometimes you don't really know where your aggregate goes, but once in a while, you hear they hauled 10,000 tonnes to a hospital site... crushing can be hard, dirty work, and it can be very rewarding for the society that we live in, and the local economy. We're kind of an unseen industry."

When it comes to employing people, Jared isn't afraid to train someone that has no industry experience.

"I've brought in a handful of employees that came to me with zero experience in the aggregate industry and trained them from scratch," he says. "They'll come to me six months after working here and they'll say they had no idea there was so much opportunity. They had no idea there were these huge quarries within kilometres of where they live, or how much

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concrete gets recycled in this industry.”

Mark Nesbitt, founder of Nesbitt Training, has been working with Jared for well over a year, and has witnessed tremendous growth in his leadership skills.

“Jared is by far one of the most serious company owners I have ever worked with,” he says. “He understands the future of his company is completely dependent on developing, training and retaining people. His goal is to show the industry he can make crushing fun again, while remaining professional. He is doing this by creating and living his own company values that are easy to apply and live out. The results of his efforts have made ARRO a company that is always attracting new people to an industry that needs people badly.”

One of Jared’s favourite projects that his company has worked on to date is an ongoing 400-series highway project with a major contractor.

“We’ve been doing a lot of work with a major contractor, recycling concrete and asphalt off the QEW (Queen Elizabeth Way). We’ve crushed well over 100,000 tonnes of concrete and asphalt that has gotten directly laid down on that road expansion,” he says. “Recently, I drove out to that highway and showed my guys that the contractor is paving that highway with material they’re crushing right now. I tell them, ‘You’re running a crusher to feed that asphalt paver.’”

Jared says finding enough skilled labour to fill demand is the biggest challenge facing the industry.

“Hands down it’s the labour shortage. Talented labour can be tough to find. When it comes to labour, we need to do a better job showcasing what this industry does,” he says, adding that pits, quarries and recycling operations receive a lot of negative reactions from local residents that might not want the trucks on their roads or are worried about environmental impacts of operations. “We’ll always need aggregates, and we’ll always need to recycle. We need to get better at showing what we’re doing. [The public should] go ask an aggregate producer to see if they’ll give you a tour of their operations. A lot of people will be amazed at the things the aggregate industry is doing for people on a daily basis.”

When asked what advice he would give to young people looking to enter the industry, Jared says they should start by looking online at companies that are showing off their work.

“Look at their work, so you can get passionate about what they’re doing, then start applying for jobs. Be passionate about it. Try and care as much as you can. Have a good attitude and show up on time and you’re going to go places,” he says. “You hear a lot about young people not knowing how to work, I don’t buy into that. They want to work for more than their paycheque... young guys come on looking for a job in heavy machinery and say, ‘Look at the impact I’m making, and they take a lot of pride in that.’”

Jared’s future goal is to keep growing his company within the recycling industry.

“Whether that’s adding more crushing spreads or other aspects of the crushing industry – like the bio waste, for example,” he says. “The future is in recycling. We can do a lot better job in recycling

our materials. We need to reuse more through better recycling processes. As the world gets more populated, there’s going to be more and more trash. Thirty years ago, we were burying concrete all time. Now we’re essentially mining it out and turning it into aggregate because we’ve realized the value in that. I’m hopeful about the recycling industry’s future.”



VICTOR GIORDANO
Land & Environment Manager
Vicdom Sand & Gravel
Uxbridge, Ont.

Working at Vicdom Sand & Gravel is a family affair for Victor Giordano. Originally started up by his grandfather in the 1950s under the name, Giordano Sand and Gravel, before becoming VicDom Sand and Gravel in 1976, the company has been part of Victor’s life as long as he can remember.

“I grew up around the business. As soon as I could legally work, I was there,” he says.

Victor worked his way up from cutting the grass into a variety of other roles so he could get as knowledgeable of the family business as possible.

“I started with cutting grass and worked my way up from there to maintenance, compliance, all types of things. Then, all of a sudden, I’m helping out with licensing, new equipment purchases and where we’re setting up new equipment,” he says. “Being in the industry was almost a no-brainer for me, I’ve enjoyed it from a young age.”

One of Victor’s favourite aspects of working in the aggregate sector is witnessing the direct results from his work.