

Ben Stroyer and the Ideal Group: A Unique Company

The owners of the Ideal Group, Ben and Art Stroyer, come from a family of 11 siblings and several dozen cousins. All of them strive at Ideal to maintain a culture of continuous improvement, both in their products and the way they meet the needs of the industry.

The company's main product lines are Stelcor® drilled displacement micropiles and high-capacity helical piles in addition to various micropile and threadbar items.

Ben Stroyer, the company CEO, says his family started out as a general contracting company working in Rochester, N.Y., in 1956. In the 1980s, at 19 years old, he married his wife of now 35 years. Shortly afterward, Stroyer and his younger brother, Art Jr., started a successful waterproofing and foundation repair business, which quickly led to the opportunity to grow and shape the high-capacity helical pile and micropile industries.

From the beginning, their purpose in expanding into the deep foundation industry was to provide solutions and resolve pain points for those who were working in the same trenches they started out in. Fast forward to today and they have five offices and distribution facilities in the U.S., and have accumulated 19 patents, including the Stelcor drilled-in displacement micropile.

Stroyer says their approach to business is to create a culture that is concentrated on the success of their clients' projects and making constant improvements in every aspect of their process, based on feedback from the field. "We strive to create a relationship of mutual respect and trust with our clients to secure the best possible outcome with every project," explains Stroyer. "We are personally invested in each project, and this becomes very evident every time there is a successful load test or confirmed order — bells ring, objects and people are thrown, and there is cheering and shouting around the office."

Further, the culture is one of mutual respect and trust within the company. This is the key to operational efficiency and encourages innovative thinking and personal development.

He attributes much of the company's success to his youthful, vibrant workers. "Younger minds are full of energy and enjoy creating solutions to problems."

"The commitment to respect and serve others and to continually improve, are the two pillars the company is built on," Stroyer says. "It's not a belief that we are never good enough, but the belief that better is always possible. At a young age, we were taught that being able to serve and care for others is a privilege and there is nothing onerous about it. It's the core of who we are and what Ideal is built upon. We know this brings tremendous value, not just to our clients, but to one another within the business, and every person in the industry that our people come in contact with."

The "fuel" that powers the core values is the team spirit and open minds, which creates a nimble, uncluttered approach to moving forward with any good idea, regardless of status or title.

A Better Mousetrap

Andrew J. Burns, vice president of Underpinning & Foundations Skanska, says Ideal "built a better mousetrap." He recalls seeing the Stelcor pile at an industry meeting in 2013 at the University of Massachusetts and thinking that there was only one problem with it. He hadn't invented it himself.

The product, Burns says, has made a "tremendous" impact within the foundation industry. He describes Ideal as a "nimble" firm, and Ben Stroyer as a patient man. The advance in their equipment is the culmination of decades of pile contractor's efforts.



Burns' lists the advantages of Stelcor: the cost per pile is less, the system is safer, and the product eliminates water at the job site. While steel displaces soil, grout displaces water. The drilled displacement micropiles eliminate vibration, while driving and drilling simultaneously. Stelcor is the company's premium product, and has been a "disruptor within the industry," according to Burns.

An Atmosphere of Creativity

Ben's son, Jay, managing director at the Ideal Group, believes the firm fosters an atmosphere of creativity. The employees do not think that just because something was done in the past, it should be accepted. "Anything is possible" is the prevailing thought process. He says, "our employees are allowed to take risks and are encouraged to think about new ideas."

According to the younger Stroyer, employees need to find a way to pursue ideas and "grow" one's goals without penalty. It is critical to leave room on the table to foster the culture, he says, to allow for new products and innovations year after year. If a problem arises, the message to employees is "work it out yourselves." This encourages growth and agility in our team members and gives them the ability to address issues as they arise and quickly provide solutions.



The younger Stroyers at SuperPile '18: Lyle Stroyer, Melissa Canfield, Ashley Stroyer, Bruce Stroyer and Glenn Stroyer

Ideas can be challenged, and this is encouraged by Ideal, according to Jay Stroyer. “People have different needs and abilities. We accept that: they should find a way to pursue their own creativity and goals. We believe in them and then let them perform! Our idea is to let them grow and give them the opportunity to do so. This way every member of our team brings value to our clients every day, and they *want to*.”

Employee Point of View

Russell Adkins, vice president of distribution and business development, is a relative newcomer to Ideal who thinks the employees are exceptional. In addition to being highly intelligent, he says the firm’s people possess a “long term” mission when doing their jobs. He thinks the “depth of the company culture is unique.”

David Frink works in the East Rochester, N.Y. office and is an educator for the design and installation of Stelcor. He says “this pile is a truly unique accomplishment and is recognized as such within the foundation industry.”

Core Values

According to Ben and Jay, all the company’s actions and initiatives are driven by company values and guiding behaviors:

- We believe in listening and open communications.
- We offer professionalism without the starch.
- Our uncontrived atmosphere encourages bold creativity.
- We are committed to a culture of achievement.
- We are known for long-standing principles of fairness and honesty.

Integrating these values into our everyday life at Ideal creates energy and loyalty,” says Jay. “We all want to grow. And while some environments stifle growth, others offer opportunity: we do the latter. We find talented and ambitious people, trust them, and challenge and inspire them to shoot for the top.”