



Background

Reid Commercial Engineering (RCE) is a venerable, Charlotte-based firm specializing in the design, construction and sale of retail office space and shopping centers across the southeast. Led by their Principle Engineer and Chief Operating Officer, Kenneth Reid, RCE has made a name for itself as the only minority-owned business of its type and scale operating today in Charlotte (and surrounding). Having established a very deep base of relationships spanning their various entities and related divisions, RCE is proud of its commitment to working with local businesses (subcontractors) to achieve spectacular results while enhancing the adjacent economies.

Challenge

It is no surprise that jobs come in all shapes and sizes, from the monstrous and overly-complex months-long projects, to quick 4- or 5-day projects where you're in and out before you know it. And believe it or not, it can be those shorter projects where the most things have the potential of going sideways. Kenneth Reid calls that his 'I Told You So' theory. And his employees have come to understand exactly what that means, in good times and bad.

In the 28 years since RCE has been in business, steadily gaining traction in the Charlotte market, making gains in their cornerstone divisions of electrical engineering, construction and retail real estate, the business climate had seen its share of significant changes. One of those changes, was the increasing adoption and employment of Notice to Proceed, one of the single-most effective ways to guarantee change orders and compromised quality of work product.

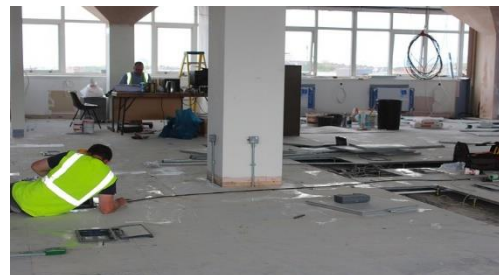
"Even on a 4-day project, let's say we're retrofitting a smaller retail space that's going from a clothing boutique to a bespoke toy store, there's a particular schedule that my Project Managers and General Contractors create and are tasked with following. You can imagine how something like that would compare to the construction of a shopping

center with eight buildings and roadways that all have to be created from scratch. It's huge.

But the one thing they have in common is time." And running out of time is never a good thing, especially when the boss is expecting a perfect outcome.

RCE had a subcontractor tasked with removing the weathered wooden flooring from the boutique, and replacing it with a much more durable VCT product. The sub had already ordered the replacement flooring, he was at the very outset of the demo to remove the old product, had his people on site, and then disaster.

"As best as I can put it," says RCE Project Manager, Ann Robinson, "he disappeared from the face of the earth." One and two days went by without any contact, no updates on progress, and worst of all - no work.



Notice to Proceed wasn't the first thing Ann thought about when approaching Kenneth with the bad news about the boutique. She needed somebody in there fast to take over the project and the first company that came to mind was Tino Tile & Marble. Having bid on the business initially, Ann knew what Ryan Rosa, Tino's president, would be charging. Three days into a 5-day job where zero progress had been made, Ann swallowed her pride, took the hit, and brought Tino Tile onto the project.

"I don't believe in Notice to Proceed, we're going to use the best materials for the job, and I'll promise to get you right as quickly as I can," Ryan told her. And he got to work.

Solution

The day Ann called Tino Tile and got Ryan's commitment to the project, everything started in motion the way it should have when the project plan timeline was created. Ryan and his foreman, Rodney Steve, made a trip out to the site to assess what they needed, looked at the already-ordered material sheets, and made a plan.

"Tino Tile & Marble has been installing VCT floor systems since the product was invented nearly 40 years ago. As a result of that long history, consistent labor team and knowledgeable Project Managers, there's no exaggeration in saying they we can expertly handle any sub floor preparation issue."



The flooring team at Tino Tile & Marble got to work immediately, performing to the highest of industry standards. Ryan and Rodney decided it would be much better to scrap the already-ordered (although inferior) product as Tino Tile has access to the finest VCT products from companies like **Armstrong, Mannington, Azrock/Tarkett, and Mohawk**. More importantly, Tino Tile & Marble's Senior Project Managers are continually involved in the installation process: from the estimation, planning, and VCT sub floor preparation stages, to the final installation and waxing of the VCT Tiles.

During their initial assessment of the site, Ryan and Rodney discovered a litany of issues which would have bogged down even the most seasoned crew. The bid entailed the demolition of the main flooring - antique, possibly reclaimed hardwood flooring over a decades old subfloor of pitted concrete and unevenly poor filler; aggregate was even visible in some places where the concrete must have been worn thin by the patrons of whatever was replaced by the clothing boutique.

It was impossible to determine the age of the materials, although the structure, itself, set in an idyllic southern downtown promenade was at least 60 years old. That, alone, should give an idea of the life cycle of the structure, the differing types of tenants and the underlying complexity of pulling up one flooring type and installing another.

Factoring in the replacement of the originally-sourced VCT, the 3-day deficit, the mystery of what part of the structure was sound, from where the demolition could begin, what kinds of and methods for conditioning the subflooring prior to the installation of the VCT would be required, not to mention working 24-hour days in December inside a historic building void of working central heating, the challenges seemed to be insurmountable.

The Result

"For the life of me, and I'm not one to say that often," commented Rodney, "I don't know how our guys did it." He smiled and shook his head. "But they sure did."

Kenneth and Ryan's father, Tino, had known each other as they were both coming up in the construction business, and each had a great respect for the other. Echoing his father's mantra, Tino Tile isn't the cheapest flooring sub in the business, "but what they bring to the table, especially in adversity, coming out on the other side making your project shine like a new penny," Kenneth says, "is equivalent to being saved by that guy in the long, red cape." He thinks about it for a second and says, "But don't tell Ryan I said that."

Having pulled a couple of guys off of other jobs, setting up shop that third evening of that third day, and getting down to business, Tino Tile made quick work of the demo. The next day, after taking the necessary steps to inspect, repair and certify the subfloor, the VCT was laid out, cut to precise specifications around odd shapes like pillars and several oblong tables which would serve as both sales counters and work benches.

Contact Information

To learn more about Tino Tile & Marble, and how we can help your commercial flooring projects - large and small - please visit us at www.TinoTile.com or call 704-636-7735.

A purpose-built vinyl adhesive was laid down...an adhesive which Tino Tile sourced specifically for the conditions present at installation - with a time-released property designated to ensure proper fitment as the weather turned warmer, affecting the subfloor and the tolerances of the nearly imperceptible contracting and expanding of the tiles, themselves. The VCT was laid down on what would have been day 5 of the job (day 3 for Tino Tile). Notice to Proceed was not required, "and I don't think Ryan would have signed it, anyway," Rodney quipped. "We do our work on time, the first time, and we're good for it."

"They certainly saved the day." That's what Ann wrote in her final report prior to signing off on the flooring, making way for the resumption of the schedule now that the remaining subs had a quality surface on which to work.

"Tino Tile, Ryan, and his team of professionals, put in some long hours to get this right, fixing something somebody else screwed up. They understand the concepts of fall down and its horrific downstream effects, they understand scheduling, and they brought a quality effort, hell, a Herculean effort, to this job. That goes a long way in the minds of a GC or PM."

Kenneth leaned into Ann's office, and with a raised eyebrow said, "And it goes a long way in the mind of the guy who owns the company."

