

# WORK HARD AND THE MONEY FOLLOWS

DENUCCI CONSTRUCTORS LLC MEETS THE CHALLENGES OF RAPID GROWTH

By Richard Rybka



Take care of your biggest asset – your employees and customers.” This statement by Paul DeNucci demonstrates his understanding that empathy is critically important to success in contracting. He has followed this mantra for the past 28 years. Equally important to his business philosophy are the words that has kept his company solvent and prosperous: “Work hard and the money follows.”

Since 1992, DeNucci has taken his company from a start-up to a highly competitive, multi-functional construction company in a tough market. It took more than a sound business philosophy to move through the ever-changing landscape of construction. Learning the company’s history and transitions will reveal the motivating factors that made his business a true success story.

## Starting Out With Chains and Hubs

In 1992, DeNucci founded his company in Austin, Texas. That was back in the day when “technology” was a non-existent term in the construction business. For a site work contractor, that meant slow and tedious tasks for layout, grade staking, blue tops, and as-builts. A tripod-mounted construction level and a grade rod were the most innovative tools available for construction survey work.

Today, DeNucci Constructors LLC is a major player in the Austin construction industry. His company is licensed both as a commercial general building contractor and as a utilities construction company, providing services to public government entities and private customers. DeNucci’s typical mix of construction contracts includes residential subdivisions, assisted living facilities, sanitary and storm sewer systems, urban street improvements, and recreational parks.

## Rapid Growth Spurs Change

As of April 2019, Austin, Texas, is the fastest growing major metropolitan area in the United States. This growth spurt extends well beyond the city center area into five surrounding counties.

A contractor operating in this economic environment faces two challenges – increased competition and pricing pressure. DeNucci was determined to continue the growth of his company in this fast-changing market. Not quite sure of how the future of his company would unfold, he maintained an open mind and an expansive perspective.

“We were always looking for technology and other innovation to help give us an edge and increase production,” DeNucci said. Willingness to explore new options was and continues to be what keeps his company moving into the future. It also gave him the advantage he needed to stay ahead of the competition.

## Expediting the Transition to Technology

Coming from the old school way of doing things, DeNucci admits that he was a “hard sell” when it came to adopting GPS technology.

He tried integrating GPS into his workflows, but was not having much luck with the first system he purchased. Looking for a better solution, he met John Favret in June 2015. Favret is Senior Machine Control Sales Specialist, based at GeoShack’s store in Austin.





The Austin location is one of 21 stores in eight U.S. states and has the resources to provide a total solution to its customers – the most advance technology products, highly competent sales consultants, and unlimited support.

Favret demoed Topcon's HiPer V base and rover system to DeNucci, his son, Ryan, and General Superintendent Josh Walenta. With Pocket 3D software on the field controller, it is a perfect solution for layout, grade staking, and collecting as-built information. Quickly seeing how Topcon's GPS system out-performed his existing system, he made the switch. He noticed a huge improvement in managing his subdivision projects.

Within a few months, DeNucci became eager to explore machine control systems. He asked Favret to install a Topcon 3D-MC2 on a Caterpillar D8 Dozer. Shortly thereafter, another system was installed on a Caterpillar 140 M3 Motor Grader.

DeNucci purchased his first Topcon 3D-MCMAX dozer system in August 2017. That was just the beginning. Today, the company owns three 3D-MCMAX-equipped dozers, one 3D-MC2 dozer, two 3D-MC motor graders, and two sets of HiPer V base and rover systems.

## A Typical DeNucci Project

Santa Rita Ranch, a premier master-planned community, is located in Williamson County, Texas. Upon completion of total build-out, the project will include approximately 6,500 homes located in nine distinct villages and more than 200 acres of commercial and multifamily development.

The site work, grading, and excavation required for the project includes construction of numerous water quality ponds, drainage structures, water and wastewater systems, lift stations, curb and gutter, HMAC paving, dry utilities, sidewalks, signage, and other amenities.

DeNucci explained how this complex project showcases the use of Topcon GPS systems for every phase of the massive development:

"Our Topcon equipment has allowed us to localize and seamlessly move from section to section within the subdivision, locate erosion controls and other items of work with our rovers, complete our rough cutting and lot grading operations with our 950 and D10 dozers with machine control followed by our motor graders with their machine control to complete the road base operations and final grading before the final HMAC installation."



## A Word from the Man in the Field

Josh Walenta has been with DeNucci for 13 years and experienced first-hand the growth and changes that have taken place. Walenta is the man who oversees the day-to-day field operations.

Before the company started using machine control systems, they depended on surveyors to set grade stakes and blue tops. Earthmoving and grade work depended on the schedules of others. Equipment and operators were often delayed from making progress on a job while they waited for layout information.

Walenta says the most significant advantages to machine control systems are speed and cost savings. “No waiting on anybody, no scheduling,” he explained. Once others set control points, there is no need for outside consultants.

Field checking, when necessary, is done with a Topcon HiPer V rover and Pocket 3D software. “Most of the time if there’s a question or problem you can check in on something with an existing elevation, like a manhole or an inlet, and figure out what’s going on - instead of waiting on someone or building it and having to come back and fix it later,” Walenta remarked.

## When a Dealer Becomes Part of the Team

All the technology in the world cannot achieve its full potential without knowledgeable support from the supplier. It’s not just about selling a product and answering support phone calls. It’s about seamless integration of technology with the user.

John Favret received the highest compliment that a sales consultant can expect to receive from a customer. “John is an invaluable part of our team and his service after the sell is unmatched in our industry”, said DeNucci.

GeoShack, Topcon, and Favret give DeNucci the advantage he needs to not just stay competitive, but to thrive in one of the toughest markets. It also gives DeNucci confidence in an ally that can help him control his company’s destiny.

DeNucci claims an optimistic future for his company: “We look forward to continuing to grow with the Topcon products and utilize the ever-changing technology as they continue to innovate.”

