

Ben Reed of B.E. REED on Humility, Integrity, and Starting a Company

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Ben Reed knows his clients and knows himself. I sat down with him at his favorite restaurant where he ate his favorite dish and we were greeted with a warm smile by a server who knew him well. He said he liked this place. It was consistent, pleasant, and didn't break the bank. I didn't realize it until after, but this was a testament to Ben's outlook on life.

Ben is the founder and head of B.E. REED. His firm provides civil and mechanical design, construction inspection, and project delivery services for infrastructure projects. His clients are community strongholds – the Department of Public Works, Citizens Energy Group (where he got his start), and the Indianapolis Airport Authority to name a few.

He told me that starting a company was about giving himself a chance to grow and achieve new heights. The goal was simple: do the needed work and do it well.

We discussed the value of visionaries and achieving the next big thing, but highlighted the equally important need to finish what is here and now. Ben told me he's assembled a team that understands that need. The staff at B.E. REED know their discipline, know their projects, and can be trusted to get the work done. B.E. REED is not about the bells and whistles; it's about fulfilling the mission while earning the trust of clients and colleagues along the way.

When I asked about the pressures of starting a company, Ben was remarkably humble. He told me that it was only recently that a friend encouraged him to reflect on how difficult the last five years was to build the company. Ben's dedication to filling a need he saw in the industry kept him on his path. Owning a business is not without challenges. He's had to work with the different needs of his staff, allocate resources, and make big decisions like any other business, but to Ben, that's all part of his duty.

I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Ben because it was clear that he was already a rooted staple of the community. He very much cares for Indiana and I think that care extends to anyone who crosses his path.

I wanted to hear about his experience in his own words, so I asked him a few questions:



"When did you start your company, and what made you take that step?"

Well, the date on my Articles of Organization is April 8, 2021, but I effectively started the business July 6, 2021. I launched the company to fill a gap in the market by offering services that prioritize partnership, transparent communication, technical excellence, accountability, and rapid responsiveness.

"What problems are you looking to solve with your company, and what services do you provide to solve those problems?"

The trend I started to noticed was this need for a right-size consulting company. Not every task or project needs a mega multi-national firm. There are critical infrastructure projects that need to be delivered that will not pique the interest of some firms. This is where we come in, we can adjust our workforce and structure to align with the needs of our clients. This ensures we are agile and able to deploy civil/mechanical design, on-demand project delivery, GIS consultation, and construction inspection services rapidly.

"What is the best lesson you have learned in the engineering business that you think everyone should know?"

Caring is a value proposition. Over the years, I've been taken aback when clients told me they appreciated how much I cared. I thought, "doesn't everyone care about their clients and what they are doing in business?" More and more it became evident that not everyone cares and it can be a differentiator for B.E. REED. Another lesson I've learned is, our Clients don't want us to exceed their expectations; in the words of a good friend, they will be "tickled pink" if we would just meet them. So, What does this mean? It means, do what you say you're going to do.

"What's something we should know about B.E. REED?"

We embrace challenges. You are working with a firm that has strong values – humility, integrity, intelligence, imperative, quality, and accountability – and we bring those values to everything we do.

"What do you love about our community in Indiana?"

I love that we have a very active professional organization in ACEC. Networking and professional development opportunities have shaped firms and individuals including myself. The continuing education, workshops, workforce development, and training opportunities have been invaluable. It's a pipeline for partnership. I've met and reconnected with industry friends through ACEC-sponsored events and advocacy.

"What is your vision for your future and the future of our industry?"

My future will consist of doing the work that I enjoy for the people I enjoy working for. My vision for the future of our industry is to see my colleagues get more recognition for being unsung heroes, they are the backbone of society. We design, build, and maintain essential infrastructure – like roads, bridges, water systems, and buildings – that support daily life, public health, economic activity, and ensures thriving communities.

"What project that you have worked on has stuck with you over your career?"

I worked on the Dig Indy Tunnel, where I managed the Engineering team tasked with designing the near-surface consolidation sewers and drop shafts. The Dig Indy Tunnel system is arguably one of the largest and most ecologically impactful infrastructure projects this city has seen and will always hold a special place in my heart.