

a kinder world of commerce



The women who work at Allen Construction



A FOUNDATION BUILT TO LAST: *A Conversation between Monica Lenches, Realtor, Claudia Rucker, Business Owner, and Aaron Pick, CEO*

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This month's socially responsible business, Allen Construction, is regionally and nationally recognized for its leadership in sustainable building. Almost 40 years ago, Dennis Allen, a pioneer in the green building movement, founded a value-based company dedicated to building homes that are healthy, comfortable, durable, and energy and water-efficient. In 2018, Aaron Pick, a seasoned entrepreneur with an MBA focused on corporate social responsibility, took the helm as CEO and is dedicated to up-leveling their commitment to reducing their company's carbon footprint and respecting the Santa Barbara community's resources.

And while much is known about the beautiful, environmentally sustainable homes and estates built by Allen Construction, what may not be known to many is what goes on in the boardroom behind closed doors when no one is watching. This interview focuses on the time, energy, and heart that go into creating a nurturing and thriving corporate culture based on socially responsible values.



Hillside residence

ML/CR: What are you most proud of as CEO of Allen Construction?

AP: Any business ultimately comes down to its people, and I'm incredibly proud of our team and the way we've rallied around the community, sustainability, and sharing a common mission as employee-owners. We have over 15 people who have been at Allen for more than a decade and six that have been with us for more than 20 years, which really establishes a culture of care and connection to one another. Just last year, we became a majority employee-owned company, which gives me a lot of pride knowing that we all share in this together.

ML/CR: In addition to green building and reducing your carbon footprint, what other core values motivate and inspire you and your company, and how do you operationalize them?

AP: We have four additional core values, and they've really become the heart of everything we do. They include 1. relationships first 2. humbly confident 3. always learning and 4. do what you say. The values are probably what excites me most about the company because they are the foundation of our reviews, our hiring process, and the way we expect to interact together and with clients. It helps us stay aligned, grounded, and committed to a common purpose.

The entire company votes on an "Employee of the Year" who most embodies these values collectively, and we also choose an individual for each core value that best exemplifies that value in practice. Knowing that your colleagues chose you for the Relationships First Award or another core value has become a really inspiring and fun tradition for us and helps embed that culture. We also have everyone do a self-assessment on these values each year, so it's a major part of who we are.

ML/CR: What is something that inspires you about the way that Allen Construction operates?

AP: Construction typically struggles to bring women into the field, so I'm super excited to see that we have a significant number of women who are running the company. Outside of our founder Dennis Allen, our management team is 50% women, and it's something we have really celebrated together. March was Women in Construction Month, and we highlighted every woman

in the company at our companywide meeting. It was so authentic and inspiring to see how women have substantially improved the company at all levels.

ML/CR: What are some practical ways you've connected with the community through corporate social responsibility efforts?

AP: Beyond our commitment to green building and environmental causes here in Santa Barbara, we really try to utilize the experience we have in construction to find

ways to give back. One of my favorites this past year was the Locals Helping Locals work we did during the beginning of the pandemic to provide free labor to build parklets for local restaurants. We started with nominations for a few, but it ended up being over 10 that we built around the town, and it was great to connect with local businesses around something we love to do and was significant for them.

ML/CR: Where do you envision taking Allen Construction both in the near future and in the long run?

AP: We have a history of focusing heavily on sustainability and doing what we can to be pioneers in green building. Fortunately, there has been positive movement in that area on a national level, so we're committed to taking the next step and pushing things forward with several all-electric homes in the near future. At a broader level, I would like to see us get certified as a B Corporation, which aligns closely with who we are as a company around our commitment to social, environmental, and community efforts. For me, that would really help bring everything together around our work with sustainability and employee ownership while connecting us to a global community that is dedicated to using business for good.

Aaron Pick is CEO of Allen Construction and can be reached at 805-448-8099 or apick@buildallen.com. To learn more about Allen Construction, visit www.buildallen.com. To enjoy the full video interview, visit: www.startwithvisionsb.com/community-matters.