
CHAIN REACTION

A SERIES OF CASE STUDIES ON SASKATCHEWAN'S
INDUSTRIAL AND MINING SUPPLY CHAIN

3TWENTY MODULAR

CASE STUDY # 0 0 5



3twenty Modular: A 180-bed facility – in 59 days

Keeping your promise to your customer is what keeps companies growing. In this case, the customer was the Canadian Department of National Defense, and a half-million-dollar performance bond was on the line. Best not to keep them waiting.

Bryan McCrea, co-founder of 3twenty Modular, was in a hotel room in China when he received a faxed message from back home. The Canadian Department of National Defense had accepted his company's proposal to build a 90-bedroom complex at the fighter base in Cold Lake, Alberta. Bryan immediately called his partner, Evan Willoughby. "We won the DND bid. We've now got two months to do it."

More precisely, 3twenty had 59 days to design, build and install the accommodations – including sewer, water, power, communications and bathrooms with showers – for 180 international air force pilots being hosted by 4 Wing Cold Lake at their competition, the Maple Flag Exercises. The \$3 million contract would be 3twenty's biggest project in its young history. There was also more than just reputation on the line. If 3twenty missed the March 29 deadline, they would lose their \$500,000 performance bond.

"The call for proposals from Defence Construction Canada was very much to the point," recalls McCrea. "It essentially asked for a cost per bed, and little more. We were not allowed to include promotional material on our company, for example, or preliminary plans."

Greg Sheppard, who at the time was the project manager with Defence Construction Canada, commends 3twenty for not making the mistake many companies make when submitting a bid. "You have to read the tender very carefully page by page, then provide exactly what is asked for, and nothing more. If the tender asks for a ten-page submission, don't think it is better to give them twelve. You could actually disqualify yourself immediately." He admits that the project was unusual in some respects, in that the tender basically asked the bidder to determine how many beds they could deliver for a set amount of money. Thus, says Sheppard, "When we started with 3twenty, we couldn't see what we were buying, because the design had not yet been done."

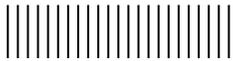
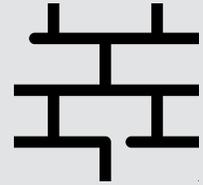


PHOTO:
3twenty's innovative three story design allowed them to deliver this high profile project on time and on budget.



Modular efficiency



On-time performance



Lower per-unit costs





“We were able to stay on schedule primarily because of Evan’s innovative design,” says McCrea. “It was our simplest yet most creative concept ever.” Thinking outside the box, and inside the box, was what had propelled the launch of 3twenty. While still in university, McCrea and Willoughby had come up with the idea of re-purposing large shipping containers as housing units which could be easily transported to remote areas or for temporary construction camps. Willoughby’s design for Cold Lake configured each of the modular units so that the exterior walls on each side were connected with a modular floor that created an interior hallway. This saved money and precious time.

With design approved and conforming to all strict safety and building codes of the DND, 3twenty worked relentlessly in the harsh winter months to meet the deadline. In just two weeks, 3twenty doubled their labour force from 15 to 30, in a strong Saskatchewan market where skilled labour was at a premium. More than 30 winch trucks delivered the units over three weeks. The staircases were also built in modules, then trucked and craned into place. The finished result was a 15,350 square foot, 3-storey permanent structure with 90 fully-furnished bedrooms, 24 private bathrooms, and six laundry rooms.

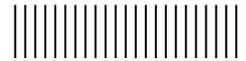


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The call for proposals from Defence Construction Canada was to the point. How many beds can you construct for this fee, within this timeframe?

3twenty Modular delivered, using an innovative design that took its modular construction enterprise to a new level.

3twenty's determination and performance during the construction created admirers. "It seemed as though everyone was cheering for us," remembers McCrea. With the project completed on time, even W. Brett Wilson, who had served as a mentor and partner for 3twenty since their appearance on the television show, Dragons' Den, showed up for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

One of the new admirers was Greg Sheppard from Defense Construction Canada. "You could see that 3twenty wanted to do their best for you. I enjoyed working with them throughout the entire project. They're good guys, very cooperative, very helpful."

As for 3twenty, "This project increased our corporate focus on contract management, staffing, and project management," says McCrea. "It really built our capacity and has enabled us to take on major projects for national and international companies."



SIMSA is the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association, representing Saskatchewan based companies who provide goods and services to industrial projects.

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