

After success abroad, Ottawa's SiteCast Construction looks to grow at home

[OBJ Contributor](#)

Published on March 07, 2017

SiteCast Construction has been doing business in Ottawa since it was founded here 25 years ago, but company president Shawn Hickey says it's become better known internationally than at home.



By Jacob Serebrin

"We're known in the United States, where the type of construction that we're doing is predominant," Mr. Hickey says. "We're known in the States as being innovative and forward-thinking and we bring that back home, here to Ottawa, where there isn't another contractor that's doing the same work we are in our area."

SiteCast specializes in tilt-up construction, a method where concrete panels are formed at the construction site. The name comes from the fact that the panels are formed horizontally and then tilted-up to make the walls of a building.

SiteCast Construction president Shawn Hickey.

While it's popular in the U.S., it's less known in Ottawa.

That makes SiteCast unique, but it can also be a challenge, Mr. Hickey says, as it's hard to sell people on something they don't know about.

He's working to change that. These days, much of SiteCast's marketing is focused on educating consumers and professionals, such as architects and design consultants about the method.

It brings some big benefits, he argues. Buildings constructed using tilt-up use 25 to 40 per cent less energy to maintain a temperature than those built with methods more common in

Ottawa, he says.

The U.S. isn't the only international market where SiteCast has seen success. The company has also done business in Middle Eastern countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, where it worked on the first building in the country to use the tilt-up method.

In such markets, Mr. Hickey says the company takes more of a consulting role, selling its design expertise and its process, rather than doing construction.

But Mr. Hickey says SiteCast's main focus right now is on Ottawa.

The company has worked on several local schools. Most recently, it's been working on a three-storey addition for a French-language elementary school in Kanata North and is building a new elementary school in Findlay Creek.

Retail has been another focus. Mr. Hickey says he also sees new opportunities building healthcare facilities and buildings under five storeys that are used as dorms, residences or hotels.

Mr. Hickey, who has 29 years of experience in the contracting business, has been with SiteCast for most of his career. He joined the company a year after it was founded.

He says its approach to business - one built around respect for customers and the other contractors it works with - is what keeps him there.

He describes the company's owner, Jan Kaminski, as a mentor.

"The ownership, they have family values that I cherish," Mr. Hickey says. "When you work with great people, great things can happen."