



Diligently *diversifying*

Anchored by the fundamentals of construction, **OC Construction Management** embraces diverse concepts and intelligent collaborations to lead the building sector with its in-house industry expertise



OC Construction Management

<https://oc-cm.com/>

Services:

General contractor

OC Construction Management (OC Construction) was founded with the intention of building better. The company boasts an exceptional range of diversity, owing to the extensive history of its management team. "I myself am a registered architect," begins

Jonathan Ninnis, the company's Principal and CEO. "I also worked on the development side for a number of years, while my partner and our Director of Construction, James Robinson started in civil engineering, before turning to construction, and our third partner, our COO, Michael Sci comes

from corporate real estate. So, we really do understand everything that takes place throughout a construction project. We're not pretending to be developers, but we do understand the intricate details of the process, which makes us far more able to align with the interests of the owner."

As Jonathan has progressed in his career, he has taken notice of how the construction industry has struggled with modernization, despite the forward movement of other sectors. In response, he is determined to bring about positive and impactful change. "It's probably one

of the very few areas that has remained unchanged for decades. When we started, we felt the urgency to build better, and aside from an advancement in technology and techniques, we wanted to focus on the people managing our processes," he shares.



“Culture, in particular, in our opinion has not been an area of significant investment in the building industry, and this is where OC Construction is determined to stand out. We’re a people business that is heavily dedicated to revolving our operations around the skills and talent of those who work with us. To reinforce this, we have a full-time cultural architect and leadership coach, Tim Dobbins, who works almost exclusively with our firm, and we work consistently with him, on a weekly basis, both at the partner level and throughout our entire team.

“My partners and I all come from large company and large project backgrounds, so when we set out to establish this business, we wanted to start strong out the gates, and springboard ourselves to a sizable company in the most responsible way possible. We began with internal operations by deploying the best technology and hiring the best people to create a more scalable structure, and continued to grow from there,” Jonathan explains.

This calculated approach has allowed OC Construction to achieve what others could not. Rather than directing its attention on increasing its size first, OC Construction was determined to have a united and well-coordinated core from the get-go. “From processes, to putting together playbooks, to hiring the right people, and arranging the necessary departments; that was how we prepared ourselves for future growth. It allowed us to scale up in 2018 and 2019, when the market was expanding. Then we scaled back down slightly as we’ve dealt with Covid-19, and now we’re back to scaling up again.”

Jonathan acknowledges that outside investors also originally played an instrumental role in getting the company started. “It takes a sizable amount of capital to get a major construction company off the ground, especially in New York, and so we were very fortunate to have had early investors who had a lot of faith in us. Not only did they invest dollars, but they gave

us their resources and experience, in addition to projects, that a company of our age could typically never dream of. So, when you combine the previous experience of our partners, with that level of investment and those early projects, we were able to put together a resume that levelled us up for more projects, larger projects and institutional clients.”

Diving deeper into the topic of OC Construction’s project experience, the CEO shares with us two in particular that demonstrate his company’s best practices. “Our largest project to date was the 440,000-square-foot tenant interiors contract at 390 Madison Avenue,” he says. This project involved the relocation of 16 floors of front office private banking and leadership space for one of the largest banks in the world. Notable design features included 13 floors of work place, a two floor conference and amenity center including a full kitchen to support client functions, two enhanced café stations, a functioning terrace, as well

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as various collaboration spaces and a broadcast studio.

Another project that Jonathan is keen to discuss is 368 9th Avenue. “The site was originally built in 1930 by Sears Roebuck & Company as a combined warehouse and office building. In late 2014, the property was then acquired by Nuveen Real Estate, the current landlord, from the Feil Organization and Savanna. It sits on the southeast corner of 9th Avenue and 31st Street, and is in close

proximity to Penn Station, Hudson Yards and the Chelsea neighborhoods. We were honored to lay the foundations for WeWork’s new 236,000-square-foot location at the building, which was actually the largest co-working transaction completed in New York City in 2018.

“We renovated and revamped the building’s lobby, ground floor, and elevators as well as completed upgrades to the building’s façade, and created a brand new 2000-square-foot

rooftop amenity space that overlooks the New York City skyline. The entire project was completed in the third quarter of 2019,” he says, adding that working with older building structures falls under the umbrella of the company’s strengths.

Of course, completing projects of this magnitude proved to be trickier during the pandemic. However, OC Construction worked studiously to ensure that, as a young company, it would outlast market instability, even if the strategy required in-house adjustments. “The reality of Covid-19 changed our thinking overnight. It’s not an uncommon occurrence for the direction of a young company to be influenced by external forces – the 2008 recession is a great example of this. So, in the case of Covid-19, our response was to diversify. This was due to how the commercial office sector contracted rather substantially, which forced us to open our eyes, and diversify by expanding our geography and our project type.

“One area that we refused to change was our focus on culture and the development

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of our team. In fact, when we were looking at overhead costs and how we could save dollars, we actually decided to invest more

in these efforts. We needed to keep the team together and keep moving forward. It was definitely worth it. I don't deny we

faced our challenges, and navigating that first year was incredibly difficult, but we were really able to keep the team together, and the company moving forward."

On the topic of the future, 2022 is looking to be a promising year for the business, and going forward, Jonathan is excited to see the completion of several projects in the pipeline. "We've been doing preconstruction on 23 Wall Street for the better part of two years; understandably so, as it has been a difficult market for redevelopment. So, we've been working alongside our clients there, and now finally it looks like that project is going to move forward. It's the original office building of JP Morgan down on Wall Street and Broad, and it fits perfectly in our wheelhouse of historic building redevelopment.

"Similarly, there's another project underway at 14 Vesey Street. Fortunately, it looks like that project is going to be moving forward this year as well. These are substantial contracts, and they're phenomenal buildings, so we're really looking forward to getting moving on them as soon as possible," he informs us.

"In this industry, we do believe that scale is meaningful, from the perspective of cost control, maximizing efficiencies and buying power. So, the goal for us is to keep growing, while balancing our commitment to our clients."

OC Construction would also like to continue its expansion throughout the Tri-State area. "Over the last two years, we have opened offices in Newark, New Jersey,

and Stamford, Connecticut. To support our move towards diversification, we are pushing into retail, industrial, and multi-family residential work in those geographies in addition to our historic strengths in the commercial office market. I believe if we continue with this strategy, the next five years or so will be incredibly prosperous for us," Jonathan says.

Our conversation ends on a note of gratitude as Jonathan pays homage to the clients with whom the company works, and he looks forward to the many more projects ahead. "Who we're working for is indicative of how we operate. The majority of our clients are institutional, class-A owners and landlords. Whether its Trinity Church, Beacon Capital, Boston Properties, Related or Nuveen, and many others, we are incredibly privileged to be working with them. I'm especially grateful for the fact that the vast majority of these clients are repeat clients, and I think that speaks to how we perform and how we operate," he concludes. ☺



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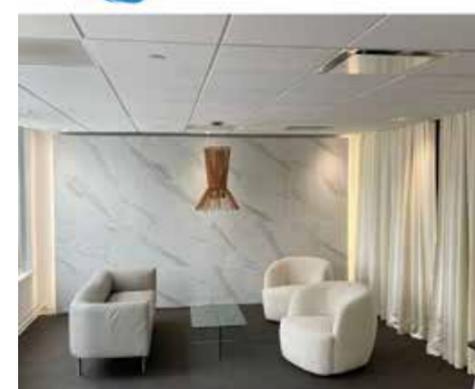
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Streamstown Construction is a drywall and carpentry contractor based in the New York City area.

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