

INDIANA DIMENSION, INC.

Growing Through Adversity

By Anthony Schoettle

Founded in 1990 by well-known businessman, philanthropist and community activist Milt Cole and local craftsman Roy Rentschler, Logansport-based Indiana Dimension, Inc. (IDI) has become nationally known for producing high-quality hardwood components used in cabinetry, furniture and other wood product industries.

The company is particularly known for its cabinet doors, with its 110 employees making 5,000 per day. With the company's revenue on the upswing, varied product lines and customers and big plans to grow, IDI's future looks bright.

But it wasn't always that way. IDI has gotten where it is today despite – or perhaps because of – major obstacles it faced in the late 2000s.

Surviving tough times

During a tumultuous two-year period, IDI's biggest client, accounting for 90% of the company's business, went bankrupt and in 2008 IDI's entire \$3.9 million loan got called in – on Christmas Eve no less.

"We had just spent \$8.5 million to \$9 million on new equipment when all this happened," says IDI CEO Jeremy Rentschler, Roy's son.

But instead of laying down, Rentschler and his team knuckled down.

"You learn from trials and tribulations," the younger Rentschler relates. "It was stressful, but I couldn't be more thankful for the lessons I learned. It was a crash course in business ... it was great. I had to hunker down and learn what every number meant. It was all about willpower, and it took a team effort."

IDI had one other good customer when the troubles hit, and Rentschler found out what association they were in and used the association's member list to generate sales leads.

"I came off the production floor, so I didn't know what I was doing (in terms of sales and accounting)," Rentschler explains with a laugh. "But I had been with the company since I was 12, so I knew what we did, and I knew what we did well. I knew if I could get (prospective customers) to the factory and meet the team, we could earn their business."

And that he did – after a myriad of cold calls and numerous lengthy road trips.

Spreading its wings

Until 2010, 100% of the company's sales came from within Indiana. Now, 75% of IDI's sales come from outside the state. Since the tumult, the company has grown so much, it's added 40 employees. The company's primary target market is kitchen cabinet companies (original equipment manufacturers known as OEMs), furniture makers and manufacturers of recreational vehicles, which currently account for 12% of the company's sales. The target market continues to expand as well.

"You never back a wounded animal into a corner, I can tell you that," Rentschler expresses. "I'm a man of faith. So, glory goes to God. We were able to ride it out with grit and determination. We had 17 very successful

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Employees: 110

Resource: Jeremy Rentschler, CEO

years, so we had the best processes and technology and equipment and great people. It took a couple of years to get the ship turned because we were in the housing recession. But we did it, and now we're sailing."

A lot of people deserve credit for the turnaround, Rentschler extols. In addition to all the employees doing "whatever it took" to make sure the company survived, he credits the two co-founders for showing patience, providing guidance and the financial backing to weather the storm.

Rentschler, who has four children ranging in age from 10 to 20, also credits his wife, Jessica – a schoolteacher, for her support during IDI's turnaround, when he had to spend 70-plus days a year on the road marketing and promoting IDI's goods and services.

"It was a lot of sleepless nights. It was hard on me and my wife," Rentschler says. "I lost almost two full years of my life with my family."

With much of IDI's trouble in the rearview mirror, Rentschler decided to eliminate the company's debt. It took nearly three years, but in 2020, that was accomplished.

The younger Rentschler in 2025 was presented with the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association's (KCMA) Person of the Year award at the group's annual Fall Management Conference and Plant Tours event in Montreal. It's a distinction that underscores the company's standing as a reliable leader in the industry.

Betsy Natz, CEO of KCMA, noted, "No one is more deserving of this award than Jeremy. It has been an honor to work alongside him over the past 10 years. He has helped grow the KCMA membership and is appreciated by all."

Proud of the past, embracing the future

Despite the consolidation and acquisition trend in business, IDI ownership remains with the Rentschler and Cole families. Roy, 74, still comes into the office daily. Cole, a Sagamore of the Wabash recipient,



The craftsmanship and innovation of Indiana Dimension, Inc. co-founder Roy Rentschler can still be seen in many of the firm's products today.

died in 2020, but his wife, Jean, is the company's board chair.

Jeremy Rentschler eschewed college, deciding instead to spend his time learning from IDI's two co-founders.

"I had a paved road here, I just had to walk down it," he relates. "I learned from two of the best businessmen ever."

Roy Rentschler attended Purdue University, where he studied engineering. He worked in construction and owned his own construction company, Roy Rentschler Construction Company, until he and Cole started IDI. Roy poured a lot of concrete in addition to handling general construction and remodeling projects. He became a master woodworker along the way.

While making his way in the construction industry, Roy dropped off a business card at Cole's hardwood lumber company. The elder Rentschler did some work on Cole's old Victorian home, and it didn't take Cole long to see Roy Rentschler had serious skills. So, the two stuck a deal to start IDI.

As much as Jeremy Rentschler loves talking about his roots and IDI's heritage, he's even more focused on the company's present and future. The company has the technology, processes and people in place to grow the company in a big way, he says.

"IDI is way ahead of the curve with our technology and proud of it," Rentschler imparts. "Fact is, we have some of the most advanced equipment in the industry today with our eye on tomorrow. The real good news is that because we spend millions and millions of dollars on equipment, our customers don't need to. This saves capital and labor to boost bottom lines.

"Better yet, we have advanced quality processes to go along with all our technology," he adds. "We're talking from order input and tracking to outgoing inspections and on-time deliveries. Every step of the way is fine-tuned to help assure optimum results."



Jeremy Rentschler, Roy's son and CEO of Indiana Dimension, Inc. (left), is credited for helping steer the company through troubled times and massively expanding the firm's customer base. He was named the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association's Person of the Year, which was presented by Casey Bell (right), president of the KCMA, last fall.

On the production side, the company is pivoting its focus to "more valuable products," Rentschler explains, with an emphasis on cabinet doors and less so on door parts.

"We've made a lot of investments in the last few years without adding any debt," Rentschler stresses. "Obviously, we're increasing production. We have a plan in place for growth – to increase annual sales to \$50 million. To do that, we need to make 10,000 cabinet doors a day. We're halfway there. I have a lot of confidence in the plan and team we have put together here." ■

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