

SAFETY AT



ROMA BUILDING RESTORATION LTD. SHARES INSIGHTS FROM ITS COR CERTIFICATION JOURNEY

There is no higher priority than employee health and safety; and for many organizations, that focus can lead towards COR certification. Getting certified is a challenge, but it's one that the team at Roma Building Restoration Ltd. were proud to take on. Here to share their experience and insights from their journey are Marcello Battisti, President; Ricardo de Leon, Principal; and Curtis Alcide, Safety Manager.

Why did you decide to become COR certified?

Marcello: From the start, my brother Joe Battisti, our vice president, and I have made it our job to make sure everyone who works for the company comes home safely at the end of the day. For us, the decision to call up the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association (IHSA) and go after COR certification was more about taking what we were already doing to the next level.

Rick: It's also what our clients were expecting. We had already proven ourselves successful in tackling a large

THE COR

range of projects requiring a wide range of specialized skills, but more and more of our clients were looking for reassurances that they were working with partners who put the safety of their employees first. We were already doing that, but this was a way to show it.

After you decided to become COR certified, what next?

Curtis: The first step was to develop a health and safety program that was tailored specifically to our business, which is providing a broad range of building science, restoration, and renovation services. We already had a number of health and safety measures in place, but this was a more formalized process which required us to perform a gap analysis and align all our safety-related procedures, policies, assessments, and inspections to comply with the COR program.

Rick: It wasn't just about writing everything down in a binder and shelving it away, either. It was about proving to the IHSA and ourselves that we had the resources in

place to execute and monitor our plan, and that we were actively making health and safety part of our workplace culture.

Curtis: That's why we ran the program for a year to get everyone familiar with it. After that, we submitted our health and safety plan to the IHSA. They gave us a score, came back to perform an external audit, and later awarded us COR certification in December 2018.

How have you maintained that safety culture?

Marcello: It absolutely comes from the top and showing employees that this is something their company president, supervisors, and project managers believe in and practice themselves. It can't be something you do just to get a piece of paper; it has to be something you believe in. When employees see that this is being done to benefit them, that's when they'll really buy in.

Curtis: And that is the message our employees hear from me, from Marcello, from Rick, and everyone. That message of working safely is

always part of our company meetings, social events, or even our barbecues.

Rick: That said, you do need to have the checks and balances in place to manage that culture. You can't just say, "Here are our procedures, now follow them." You need to back that up with ongoing training, open feedback, and corrective actions so that all these things we're talking about become a habit over time.

At the end of the day, that's the goal: to keep communicating that message of health and safety, and to keep holding people accountable and teaching by example, so eventually it becomes second nature.

What challenges did you encounter when pursuing COR certification and strengthening that safety culture?

Curtis: Any organizational change is a challenge. We were asking our employees to do things that were a little more intensive and demanding than what they were used to, so it took

patience. For example, we introduced a mobile app that helps us keep track of inspections, compliance, and safety procedures, but that means a bit more work from our people out in the field. It also means holding them more accountability than before.

Rick: Having that app in place is great in terms of being able to record everything we do, analyze the numbers, see the trends, and be more accurate in our auditing. Again, though, making that mobile app part of the everyday job was something new for our team. That's why we took the time to do the training, answer questions, and keep an eye on things so we knew they were being used properly.

Curtis: Change is difficult, but that's why you need to keep the communication going and, again, lead by example.

What are your next steps?

Marcello: COR requires you re-evaluate your plans every season, so we're always looking at how we can better ourselves and our team and what new tools or procedures we can bring into the company to do that. Every year is a new challenge.

Curtis: We also want to continue being ambassadors for safety. When we work with other contractors, we want to try to pass some of those best practices along and share what we're doing. That's why we take any opportunity to go out to other companies, talk to them about safety and what we're doing. This isn't just about protecting our employees, it's making sure everyone on the project makes it home safe.



Marcello Battisti, Ricardo de Leon, and Curtis Alcide are with Roma Building Restoration Ltd., serving clients in Canada since 1981. For more, visit Roma-Restoration.ca.

