



Family-Owned Business Has Grown Beyond Expectations

The Nelson family recently built office and warehouse space – a move that put the management team and employees of Nelco Commercial Maintenance under one roof. Pictured are Doug, Tammy and Kenneth Nelson.

When **Doug Nelson** started a pressure-washing business in 2000, he knew it would take a grueling schedule to succeed. He would work until 3 a.m., sleep until 8 a.m. and spend the day drumming up business and submitting quotes.

Today, Nelco Commercial Maintenance offers a wide range of services including pressure washing; parking lot maintenance, such as seal coating and striping; and lawn maintenance.

The company's industrial, commercial and residential customers are mostly located in Mobile and Baldwin counties, with occasional projects along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, north to Jackson, Ala., and the Florida Panhandle.

Nelco is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

After spending years working in sales for a floor coatings company, Nelson decided to take a chance on running his own business. His contacts, background and training from his former employer helped him know who to call and how to market his new company, Doug says.

It paid off. Nelco now employs Doug's son, **Kenneth Nelson**, as vice president of operations, and his wife, **Tammy Nelson**, as vice president of administration. Year-round, the company has 10 permanent employees and typically hires four more for the summer.

"We truly are a family-owned business. We get to work together every day, and we really get to know the people that work for us, as well as their families," Doug says.

The company's first account was pressure-washing trucks for Barber's Dairy. Its current client list includes hospitals, apartments, shopping centers, office buildings, the Arthur R. Outlaw Mobile Convention Center and the Alabama Cruise Terminal.

The turning point for Nelco came in 2005, when Kenneth, who had worked at the business part-time, took over operations and logistics, freeing his dad to call on customers and bid projects.

A few years earlier, Doug's wife Tammy had joined the company full-time to handle payroll, taxes and insurance. Her attention to detail, Doug says, is the reason Nelco wins projects with extensive submission processes.

Another milestone came a year and a half ago, when the company built warehouse and

office space. Previously, the Nelsons worked from their home, and the employees worked out of the company's former warehouse.

The company's growth continues to exceed Doug's expectations. More than six times, sales have reached a milestone that he wasn't sure was possible. In 13 of its 14 years, the company experienced double-digit increases.

"You have to put the customer first, and those rewards will come back to you," he says.

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