

LEED COUNCIL FOCUSES ON A MEMBER: STUART DEAN

Stuart Dean
870 West Division Street, Unit F
Chicago, IL 60622
(312) 787-1800
www.stuartdean.com

Founder of Stuart Dean, Ed Degan was a born entrepreneur, and like many of his kind during those difficult times he got his education the hard way. He launched (and closed) half a dozen different businesses over a ten-year period. The business concepts ranged from miniature golf courses to radiator covers to concentrated orange juice.



In 1932, Ed met with a representative of the DuPont Corporation at the site of the construction of the Empire State Building . DuPont had recently developed the first clear synthetic lacquer coating. Shortly after this meeting Ed and his financial partner, Calvin Perry, formed the idea of creating a new company. This firm would specialize in field applying the new DuPont product on architectural metals (specifically brass) to prevent corrosion. They decided to name the company “Stuart Dean”, after their mother’s maiden names (Ed switching to the more “American” spelling - Stuart, and away from the original Irish spelling - Stewart). Shortly after the founding of the company Ed bought the balance of the business from Calvin Perry, becoming sole owner.

1932 was not a good year for business. One in four Americans was out of work. Ed worked relentlessly for most of the next seven years to stay afloat as the Great Depression dragged on. Day in and day out, he pounded the pavement of New York City , preaching the virtues of DuPont Synthetic coating to commercial office managers and chief engineers alike.

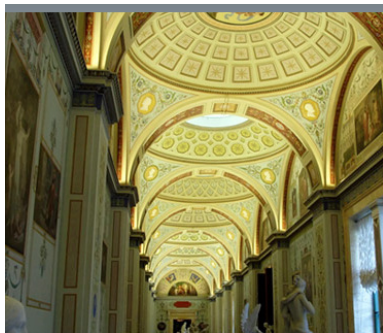
In 1937, during the Depression’s lowest point, Stuart Dean narrowly avoided bankruptcy. In 1939, however, things took a dramatic turn for the better from a most unexpected customer, the Soviet Union . The USSR constructed an enormous steel statue of the “New Soviet Man” for the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City . Cleaning and coating that statue was an enormously successful project. Stuart Dean was finally on firm financial ground.

In 1968, as the company continued to grow they opened up a facility in Chicago to provide restoration and maintenance services to customers. The company found a niche providing professional cleaning to architecture details in buildings- the shiny metals in revolving doors and elevators and marble lobbies. There was a need for their services in the city with the need to maintain and restore buildings, architecture, retail stores and institutions. Some of their customers include the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Art Institute, Chicago Symphony Hall and Chase Tower to name a few.



In 2007, Stuart Dean proudly celebrated its 75th Anniversary and currently has a 4th year generation CEO running the company. Over 70 technicians, supervisors, salespeople and managers that make up the Chicago location are all committed to ensuring the continuance of “Generations of Excellence”. General Manager of Midwest Division Robert Swenie, said, “Being in business for 75 years with the same family and owners is something to be said for our quality and satisfying customers. Stuart Dean has a good name and reputation.”

Although the company has been a success for the last 75 years, there have been some obstacles to overcome while the company was growing. One of the obstacles says Swenie, “Costs are growing everyday! People are getting raises and with inflation, it is getting harder to get more money for the work you perform.”



Swenie continued to say, “The location of the company on Goose Island is great because 80% of their business is located near downtown Chicago ; the location is convenient; and the company is located in an industrial area so the use of trucks isn’t an issue like it would be in a residential district. One thing that could be improved is the traffic flow on Goose Island . The expansion or replacement of the Division bridges that run over the river and canal would assist with alleviating the traffic problem.”

Stuart Dean has interacted with the LEED Council by attending Infrastructure Taskforce meetings on the construction of the Division bridges and has hired graduates from our ELIST (entry-level industrial skills training) program. He said the ELIST program has been a good source to get qualified people.