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**WELCOME TO BRADEN ROOFING NEWS™ VOLUME VIII, ANOTHER BRIEF BIOGRAPHY**

Welcome to BRN VIII. As always, we appreciate your interest in Braden Roofing, THE ONE WITH THE GREAT REPUTATION™. It is our sincere hope that these news articles continue to educate the general public about roofing products and installation. Our long-term goal is to make the roofing trade into a more respected institution for generations to come.

The last BRN was a brief biography of how I, Braden Castaner, got started in the roofing business. This BRN is about what happened after I first started the business, and what Braden Roofing is really about and what we stand for.

When I first started the business in 1995, I was already an expert roofer...

...but, boy, I sure didn't have a clue about business. My entrance into the business world brings to mind a great quote from a great business writer, Michael Gerber.

“Most people who start businesses are NOT entrepreneurs. They are technicians who have just had an entrepreneurial seizure!”

Guilty.

Braden Roofing was not the organized, professional company which you see today. I had no great crews, great equipment, field representatives, no credit line, no office staff, and no personal experience in running an organization.

I had my truck, my trailer, my tool belt, and my own butt. As such, I wore many, many hats. I was the salesman, the crew chief, the crew, the cleanup guy, the secretary, the accountant, and everything else.

When making presentations to customers, sales techniques really weren't an issue (although it should be stated that sales professionals are hard working and skilled specialists in a tough trade and they do deserve respect).

Customers seemed to like that I was this young (25 years old), dumb, naïve, but earnest kid who just wanted to work hard and get paid fairly.

Despite the fact that I was typically working by myself, the big midtown reroof jobs still got done quickly and without weather exposure damage in the meanwhile. I would work from daylight to dark, stopping only for lunch. After dark came the paperwork! It just never stopped, but I didn't care. I just wanted to keep on working and building my company. Amazingly enough, I got the work done on time. Man, I sure slept well on the weekends. There were times when I was so tired that I would sleep for 12 or 13 hours straight, then wake up just long enough to eat, take a brief walk, and then wash up before crashing out again for another 8 or 9 hours. Hard work had never scared me but this was kind of ridiculous.

Little by little, I began to realize that I could have a stronger company and a better future if I hired on other workers and organized my company.

By the late 90's, there was a seismic shift occurring in the roofing business. More and more of the workers in the roofing business were... how shall I say this? ...not entirely fluent in the English language. Spanish speaking workers began to dominate the labor force in the roofing trade.

NOTE! Let me state this for the record! I have all the respect in the world for ANYONE who just wants to work hard, improve themselves, and self-sacrifice for the benefit of their future and their family. Ethnicity has never been an issue from my point of view. If someone wants to bust their butt and work, more power to 'em!

I also noticed that many of the English-speaking American-born workers in the roofing trade were... how shall I say this? ...not entirely motivated to work hard and do quality work. If there is one kind of person I can't stand, it's a no working lazy #\*\*%\$\*\*\*#\*\*\*!!!

This created a troubling conundrum. At that point in my life, I was not bilingual. My knowledge of Spanish was not even rudimentary. Still, the concept of managing labor when I couldn't even speak their language seemed problematic, at best. Some Hispanic roofing crews had one English speaker, but I would still be at the mercy of needing someone else to translate my instructions.

Given my resolve to do the best darn work and be the best in the roofing business, there was really only one option.

I would learn to speak Spanish!

In the summer of 2001, I attended my first class. Another class came the following semester, but that was really all I had time to attend. From then on, I had to do my studying with tutorial CD's inside my pickup truck. I used the Plimseur series, although people tell me that Rosetta Stone is quite good, also.

By about 2005, the tutorial CD's were getting too easy. I wasn't really learning anything new from them, so I then decided to take the plunge into listening to actual stories in Spanish. I began to listen to audiolibros (audiobooks in Spanish).

I can joke that Harry Potter taught me Spanish. There is ironic truth in this statement. Harry Potter stories have been among my favorite audiolibros. I have had the privilege of being able to listen to many great works of literature as a job perk. Some of the many stories I have had the pleasure of listening to in Spanish include...

“El Conde de Monte Cristo” (The Count of Monte Cristo)

“La Isla de Tesoro” (Treasure Island)

“Los Miserables” (Les Miserables)

...and many others.

To this day, I still try to listen to at least one hour of Spanish every day. I am proud to have made myself fluently bilingual.

I get the best roof workers, turn them into the best crews, the men who work for me stay with me longer, and they just plain do better work when they are on the job. What this means to my customers is that they can count on a top quality and professionally run job from start to finish.

NOTE! The men who work for Braden Roofing, like most people in the roofing trade these days, are of Hispanic heritage. We have at least one English speaker on the job so you can communicate with someone. If worst comes to worst, you can always call my cell phone, (816) 516-1834, for a translation.

NOTE! We are sometimes asked if we hire illegal immigrants. No, we do not. We absolutely follow the laws of the land. However, we are not forgery experts and we are not a Federal Law Enforcement agency. We strictly follow federal best practices guidelines. Personally, it is not an easy thing when a sincere and hard working person asks you for work and you have to tell them no. Hopefully someday our “wise” elected officials in Washington D.C. will have a workable resolution to this issue (add cynical comment here...).

NOTE! In any case, at Braden Roofing, we take pride in doing the best quality work possible and conducting ourselves as gentlemen. I frequently remind my men that “somos caballeros” (we are gentlemen). At the end of the day, we may be dirty, sweaty, and hot, but we are still gentlemen.

Today, Braden Roofing is a completely different kind of company than when I was a young and dumb 25-year-old out knocking on doors to get business. We have a great office staff, field representatives, large fully equipped crews, smart repair specialists, and an organized system for every darn thing we do. Our little company has grown from a small one-man operation into a strong, organized, and above all professional team. What has not changed is that we still aspire to perform the best work in the best possible way, and at a fair price.

We look forward to being your roofing company for years to come.