



Restoration firm J & M Keystone says all jobs are urgent and require utmost care.

J&M: 'It's All About Caring'

A fire or flood can be devastating to a property manager or homeowner, but J & M Keystone Inc. uses its high-quality customer service to ensure the restoration process is as painless as possible.

By STACI DAVIDSON

When I awoke on Aug. 18, I was greeted by the news that an overnight fire at the San Diego Civic Theatre had done extensive damage," said Joyce Vogel, account executive at Barney & Barney Insurance, in a letter to J & M Keystone Inc. "Since I am the insurance broker for the theatre, I knew that I had my work cut out for me that day.

"When I arrived at the scene, I found that your company was already there and was busy pulling water out of the theater and the orchestra pit. Although your services had

been engaged by the city of San Diego, I received compliments about your company from both the producers of the 'Little Women' show that was in residence, as well as from my client.

"This was a job that required speed as well as effectiveness and the dedication that your staff showed to the task was wonderful. Based on my observations and the feedback from the Civic Theatre,

I would not hesitate to recommend the services of J & M Keystone Inc. to anyone needing a restoration contractor."

Barry Garson, vice president of business development, explains that all of J & M Keystone's jobs are urgent matters and require the utmost care, and its work on the Civic Theatre was no different. The theater had a fire in its rafters, which set off the sprinklers. There was water and soot everywhere, Garson says, and the theater's company was preparing to start a national tour of its 'Little Women' production, which was scheduled to begin five days after the fire took place. To get the theater back on track, J & M Keystone extracted 20,000 gallons of water, cleaned out the smoke and cleaned the upholstery.

"The theater was ready for the show less than a week after the fire," Garson says. "We used a lot of innovative techniques to clean it up; for example, we cut slats in the wood floor and used a push-pull technique to remove all of the moisture underneath the stage floor. This is just one of the high-profile jobs we've worked on."

J & M Keystone also works on small jobs, he notes. As a full-service restoration contractor serving Southern Califor-

J & M Keystone Inc.

www.jmkeystone.com

Sales: Approx. \$10 million

HQ: Spring Valley, Calif.

Employees: 100

Services: Restoration

Barry Garson, vice president of business development:

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nia, he explains, the company's trained professionals are experienced in reconstruction, repair and rebuilding of private, commercial and industrial sites of any size. The firm's services include a one-hour emergency water damage response, sewage extraction, mold remediation, carpet cleaning, power washing, smoke damage and construction.

Additionally, the company is equipped to handle all types of property damage, including floods, roof leaks, fire, smoke, mold and mildew, and vandalism.

The company's goal, Garson notes, is to offer the best service possible. This, he says, requires a high level of professionalism from every aspect of the organization. The marketing department approaches projects as a team, the production department is trained regularly in-house and field workers wear uniforms and maintain a clean appearance.

"The average technician has been with our company for at least nine years," Garson says. "There is little turnover, so that helps with our service.

"In terms of problem solving, we have a full-time customer-service representa-

tive who calls clients within 24 hours of the job starting to check that things are going smoothly," he adds. "This allows us to solve problems upfront and is unique in the industry – customer service isn't always made a priority in the restoration business, but we make it a priority."

Communication also is important in maintaining a high level of service, the company believes. Things get complicated Garson explains, because each job has an average of three to five different customers, including the tenant, property manager, property owner and the insurance adjusters.

To manage all of these parties effectively, he says, communication is key. "We try to hire people who are truly team players and are caring," Garson says. "They also have to be efficient in doing their job and be able to communicate and take copious notes. There are so many layers on each job, and we need people who can handle the communication to manage every layer."

As J & M Keystone grows, it plans to maintain a high level of customer service. The firm wants to add new service pro-

grams to enhance customers' experience. The company has begun to set up more protocols for customers, in case of an emergency.

Garson notes clients see the ripple effect of what a flood or fire can cost, so they want to be proactive in case it ever happens to them.

This is only one example of the company's new customer service efforts, Garson says. He stresses that J & M Keystone is focused on continuous improvement to ensure its service remains high.

"Our goal is to always be satisfying customers' needs – we are in it for the relationship," he says. "We don't advertise in the yellow pages – we rely on repeat business and referrals – they are the foundation of our success. Creating protocols for clients shows them what to expect because service is in the details.

"It's all about caring," he continues. "When clients call us, it's never a good time for them and we do all we can to work them through a tough time. It requires a lot of listening, helping them move forward and making their lives easier. That is what J&M is all about." ■

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