



SAFETY FIRST:

A Conversation with
**R.B. JERGENS
CONTRACTORS**



Since we pride ourselves on our communication with our customers, we thought it might be a good idea to give them a voice. So, we asked the folks at O'Brien Communications Group (OCG) to talk with some of them. This is a transcript of a conversation OCG had with Rhonda Rhoades and Bill Jergens from R. B. Jergens Contractors

OCG: How long have you or your company been a customer of D9?

RHONDA: About two-and-a-half years.

OCG: What was the company's motivation for doing that?

BILL: We've been in business since 1987. We initially ran our whole computer system on a pretty tight budget. And everything seemed to be fine. But when another contracting company in the area had a cyber breach, that was a grave concern. We knew if that happened to us, that'd be a real big problem. That company went through multiple IT companies to get their network restored. They had no insurance. And it took months for them to get through it. But out of all those IT companies, D9 was the last one standing. That's the primary reason we hired D9.

OCG: You hadn't had any issues up to that point. So, you were just looking ahead and thinking whatever it is those other guys went through, you weren't in a big hurry to go through that.

BILL: Right. We'd begun getting the equipment to make a network transition. And sometime in September of 2019, we had significant computer shutdown problems on a Thursday. They continued into Friday. Eric [Brown, CEO of D9] happened to be doing some work in my home, and I said, "Eric, I know we aren't supposed to make our network transition for another couple of months, but what can we do to get it going right away?" He said, "I'll have people there tonight." And he had three or four guys there Friday night and all-day Saturday and Sunday.

RHONDA: By Monday morning, we were up and running with a new system. They brought hardware from their office to get us through until we got the permanent parts. It couldn't have worked out any smoother.

OCG: We tell our clients we can't afford, and they can't afford, to have us be naïve. It sounds like the things they tell us about themselves — meaning their responsiveness, their personal service, their reliability, and their ability to earn the trust of their clients — are true. Is that fair to say?

BILL: It's very true. I always stay on the careful side of folks whose expectations are too high. You don't want to lay it out there like everything can be done overnight. This IT stuff takes time, especially with the shortages of material.

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OCG: Would you say the way D9 has positioned itself is just about right, they haven't made any promises they couldn't fulfill?

BILL: With us they did not, but we're a pretty easy-going group of people. We're very understanding because we're contractors. We deal with difficult people because they don't understand the job they actually hired us for. They carefully explained — and we understood — what they were going to do.

OCG: What has your relationship with D9 been like since that first weekend?

BILL: It couldn't be any better. Anything we ask for, they get it for us.

OCG: Do you talk with Eric or some of the other folks at D9?

BILL: Either or. No matter who we talk to, Eric gets involved. Sometimes Sarv [Pabla, CISO/CTO at D9] gets involved, too. We have some IT people on staff, but I do know there's never been a D9 bill we questioned.

RHONDA: They don't talk to you like normal IT people. If we ask them a question, they don't make us feel stupid because we don't know. They explain it in a way to make us understand and help us.

OCG: It's a credit to your organization as well as to D9 that your IT people work so well with D9 and vice versa. In companies that already have an IT department, there can be all kinds of friction. It sounds like everybody's doing almost everything pretty much right.

BILL: Yes. If they make a good, solid suggestion without being wasteful, then we spend the money. So, there's not much struggle with trying to get things done right with us.

OCG: The D9 Dudes — as we call them — aren't hard sellers. What would you say to companies that might dismiss them after one conversation because they seem so nonchalant?

BILL: I wouldn't call them nonchalant. From day one, Eric told us the importance of getting things right. They scanned our system and gave us a full report. The report gave us our weaknesses, our strengths, and what we needed to improve. Our IT department was pretty strong, but they didn't understand how complicated cybersecurity can be. And the insurance companies are really tough on cybersecurity insurance right now.

RHONDA: We had Eric sit in on our insurance meetings for cyber to make sure we got things done when they needed to be done so we'd qualify for a favorable premium. They gave him the dates, and D9 took care of it.

OCG: Eric seems like somebody who'd tell you what you need to hear, rather than what you want to hear. You just have to love a straight shooter like that.

BILL: Yeah. We're pretty darn happy with Eric and D9 as a whole.