



NRG *Electric Ltd.*

Bright on Time



By: C. Ross Harrison

NRG ELECTRIC: A Family Tradition

For Steve Perizzolo, electrical work is not just a career; it's a family tradition. While Steve's company, NRG Electric, has been serving lower mainland B.C. and Vancouver for nearly 25 years, his family's roots in the business go back a bit further. "My father had his own company (P&F Electric Ltd.) Since 1986," Perizzolo explains: "I was pulled out of high school to help him on Fridays and Saturdays and I (initially) didn't want to become an electrician. I actually wanted to become a finishing carpenter, like a cabinet installer. But I didn't want to go through all that framing and carpentry school, and I definitely did not want to be a Plumber, so my choice was simple: become an electrician... In 1993 I graduated from BCIT, then in 1999 I started NRG Electric Ltd. I did this mainly because my father was also an electrical contractor and I decided to take on the same role but in a different avenue: doing custom designs, renovations, homes and out of town work."

However, Perizzolo tells us that shortly after starting NRG, he realized that there was actually a much greater volume of work within the city limits. Upon learning this, he decided to reduce his out-of-town work exclusively to high-end clients with unique custom builds. "In 2011 my father had a heart attack (fortunately he's still with us) and I decided to step in and take over his company. We went from a four-man crew to a forty-man crew over night and I went from a \$2 million revenue company to, at its height, what was an \$8 million revenue company. We're currently at \$3.5 million, so we're doing not too badly."



What's in a Name?

When asked about the origins of his company's name, Steve explains that it was the brainchild of an old friend who was in marketing. "She came up with the name N R G because I'm always smiling and I'm always full of energy. I can outwork most of my employees still to this day as I turn 50 this year: sixteen, or even seventeen-hour days? No problem. I sleep four hours and do it all again."

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Projects Big & Small

With some of the projects that NRG has taken on in recent times, it is easy to see how Perizzolo puts his legendary energy to use. An example of one such project was towers three and four of the Miramar Village condo complex in White Rock, B.C. Steve enthusiastically elaborates on that job: "It was one of our largest projects that we've taken on. They were twin towers, over 250 units. I had a very experienced team member and a longtime employee with us who was very good at what he did... The developer, Axiom (Bosa), was very happy with our work and we maintained our budget and maintained our timeframe and we did everything safely. The job was a big success."

Besides major jobs like Miramar Village, Perizzolo and his team have also tackled many smaller scale projects as well. "Since the Miramar job we've obviously slowed down and we've picked up some smaller jobs, some customs and a lot of service work just to keep the employees busy. Currently we've landed a couple of nice sized jobs where there are 174 units and 54 units and a couple of townhouse projects." Elaborating on how NRG's projects break down, Steve estimates that about 5% of all jobs are on single-family homes with the remainder being dedicated mostly to multi-family style high rises and commercial builds. Although he also adds that they have taken on a number of commercial tenant improvements projects, such as restaurants, libraries and dental offices.

A Shout Out to Developers, Suppliers and Partners

In the course of time NRG has worked with numerous big name developers such as Axiom (Bosa), Alaire Construction, Liberty Homes, Marcon, Molnar Group and Edge Construction just to name a few. Besides developers, NRG's success has also been strengthened by the companies, who serve as it suppliers and manufacturers, such as Gescan, Westburne, Nedco, Bartle & Gibson, and EECOL. Perizzolo also gives a special "shout out" to NexGen Technologies, a company that he has worked with for many years, who provide lighting controls, home automation, and home theatre, surround sound and security systems. ."

"We've been very close business associates for over 15 years now and they're very good to work with. They're straight shooters, they give me the best price and I pass that on to my customers. Finally, Steve Nemetz of Nemetz & Associates Consulting Engineers is my go-to guy for the majority of my engineering needs."



NRG Project:

Miramar Village

Condo Complex

The Smart Home Revolution

Not only has NRG been involved in large-scale and small-scale projects alike but their work has placed them on the cutting edge of new electrical technologies for both residential and commercial builds. Much of this takes the form of new smart home technology in which many formerly manual functions are automated. Steve describes one example of this smart tech, Control4 Lighting. "Some of it is wireless, on Wi-Fi and some of it is traditional. It's costly on the install but once the customer gets used to it and sees how beneficial the system is and that it can all be controlled by cell phone and that there's actually fewer devices on the wall, they see it is a nice feature to have. It can be programmed with preset scenes to control the lights, the air conditioning, and the heating. It all depends on the customer and how they want it to function. It is very versatile, and there are so many different options once you get into that Control 4 Feature."



"Let There Be Lights!"



Steve explains that when it comes to the actual custom design of the lighting systems they install, NRG does not actually build the fixtures themselves. Instead, they provide the fixture packages and recommendations; they are involved in every step of the set up and ordering. "We get a lot of info from the marketing team and the lighting designers as to what's trending and then there's also the personal preference of the owner and what I bring to the table from my own expertise. We like the pot lights, we like the LEDs and we like to light your house without having the light in your eyes."

Customer Service

In addition to working on large builds, NRG also performs service calls as part of its business. While these jobs are generally small and in person, Steve muses that he often has done many service troubleshooting jobs over the phone, helping the client by talking them through the process. While more complicated onsite jobs come at a cost, this explanation and training they provide over the phone is free of charge.

A Call for Perspective Employees

While the recent work slowdown caused by pandemic lockdowns created a labor shortage for NRG (as it did for many other businesses), as the industry starts reinvigorating itself Perizzolo says he is very interested in attracting new employees to grow his company. With this in mind, he explains NRG's philosophy on good employer/employee relations. "People come to me for who I am and what I can do for them. I treat my employees like family and we have a very close-knit structure. Building a new structure right now, trying to find new foremen, new lead hands and new leaders is very difficult. Once we find the right fit we'll continue to grow from there... We want people that we can trust and depend on, and vice versa; the employees have to see that in me as well. I want to be there for them; I want to provide for them; I want to maintain their livelihoods by keeping them working and putting food on the table." Though ensuring his workers a steady flow of income is top priority to Perizzolo, he adds that the human side of employer/employee relations is also of major importance to him. "It's not always about the money, I guarantee that. It's always good but there are more important things than money, such as how the boss treats you and how you treat the boss. Can you get along? Are you happy? Do you have friends at work? And, at the end of the day, would you have dinner and a beer with those people? All my guys can say 'yes' to that. We at NRG have had many trainees become successful electricians; some became contractors; all have been successful in their livelihoods and remain good friends."



The Future of NRG

When asked what he sees in NRG's future, Perizzolo lays down his vision. "I would love to see NRG grow to the point where we are a competitive force but also a respectable force. We want to be at a point where we're comfortable with our clients and our clients are comfortable with us. We were at the point where we had approximately 80-100 employees and a steady flow of work. Then Covid hit. We are on the rebound and will continue to work towards that level once again. Eventually, when I'm old enough, I'd like to hand it over to the next generation. Whether the next generation is my immediate family or an employee, who is a close friend or extended family, I wish to see a legacy of continued energy for our culture as an electrical contractor in Vancouver."

For information on NRG Electric Ltd., visit their website at <https://nrgelectric.ca/>

