

# ROOFING CONTRACTOR

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## Smart Growth

By [Chris King](#)

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Christian Madsen is the President of Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing Inc. in Sacramento, Calif. He's also the current president of the Western States Roofing Contractors Association (WSRCA). Roofing Contractor caught up with Madsen to get his insights on the roofing industry, and he shared his plans for leading his company and the association into the future.



Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing handles all types of commercial roofing projects, service and maintenance, as well as vehicular and pedestrian decks, balconies, and above-grade and below-grade waterproofing.

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Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing is owned by Christian Madsen and his sister, Rosemary Reynolds. Christian and Rosemary are the children of Peter Madsen, who founded the firm almost 24 years ago. It employs about 70 people and focuses almost exclusively on commercial projects.

The name of the company was changed from Madsen Roofing to Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing Inc. in September 2010 to reflect the company's diversification into commercial projects such as vehicular and pedestrian decks and balconies and above-grade and below-grade waterproofing.



## The Company

Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing Inc. is a second-generation family-owned business. “My father established the company in 1987, and I have worked here since it was created,” Madsen said. “I have worked in every imaginable position in the roofing industry, from an apprentice laborer to a journeyman and on up through foreman and superintendent. I then began estimating jobs and moved into a managerial position as my father headed toward a well-earned retirement.”

As the president of Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing, Madsen notes his focus is more on strategy, long-term planning and administration. “But I have taken care to stay close to the field - the day-to-day business of getting work done,” he said. “I believe that my experience coming up through the ranks, and my determination to stay connected to production, provide the company with a unique ability to ensure that its growth does not come at the expense of quality and customer service.”

Madsen makes sure that the focus on quality and customer service extends to the entire team, from estimating and project management to field production and supervision. “Our goal is to increase our revenues. But we insist on smart growth. Quality projects, quality customers and quality work. Not maximum sales regardless of actual outcome. We don’t chase dollars.”



Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing Inc. is a second-generation family-owned business that specializes in commercial work.

Like many second-generation roofing contractors, Madsen got into the field early. “I first started working in the industry at 13,” he said. “I began working in the yard off-loading equipment and material, loading and cleaning equipment, and general light maintenance. They’d give me a load sheet and I’d just load it up and get it ready. In 1987, I joined my father Peter in creating Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing in Sacramento, California. I’ve basically done it all. Roofing and waterproofing has been my entire working career.”

## The Association

Madsen’s diverse background also helped prepare him to become the president of the WSRCA. Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing has been a member of the association since 2001, and Madsen credits WSRCA with helping his employees stay on top of technical training.

“Membership in the association has been a tremendous benefit to the company,” he said. “We have used the results of the technical studies conducted by and the papers published by the Association directly in our estimating and production. Our estimators are better educated on the appropriate applications for, and inherent limitations of, the wide variety of available roofing systems.”



For more than 20 years, Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing has been providing quality commercial roofing - both re-roofing and new construction - as well as repair and maintenance.

“WSRCA provides valuable educational opportunities, wide-ranging technical resources and contact with industry leaders throughout the West,” he continued. “No other organization can provide its unique combination of benefits.”

But Madsen says the association’s most valuable assets are its members. “Beyond the actual technical roofing information, the contacts I have personally made through participation in WSRCA have been invaluable,” he said. “There are few other organizations where I could meet more experienced, dynamic industry leaders. I have relied on my WSRCA colleagues for opinions and advice on any number of issues, from production concerns to advice and suggestions regarding administrative issues.”

His past experiences on WSRCA’s board of directors also helped him set his priorities as the association’s president. “I had served on the board of directors for several years and saw the kind of work that went into being an effective president,” he said. “Both Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing and I have benefitted greatly from those efforts. So, I felt like it was my time to shoulder the load and build on the legacy of some truly excellent past presidents.”



## The Industry

When asked about his top concerns about the roofing industry, he replied, “Professionalism would top the list.”

He explains it this way: “There are some really excellent roofing companies out there, led by outstanding owners who focus on quality workmanship and good estimating practices. My concern is focused on that group of contractors who do not deliver good, honest value to their customers, who are irresponsible in their bidding practices and who fail to invest in and treat their employees fairly. Unfortunately, a few bad apples can do much damage to the reputation of the industry as a whole.”

The bidding process is a key concern for Madsen. “Closely related to enhanced professionalism, I believe that we as a community of contractors should strive to bid work reasonably,” he said. “Of course I acknowledge that there is competition in the industry. This is healthy and is the basis for the success of the American economic system. But we should as a group avoid figuratively slitting our own throats. The rush to the bottom that I sometimes see comes at a great cost in quality and, ultimately, to the prosperity of companies that get baited into that race.”

According to Madsen, a reasonable approach to bidding would benefit everyone. “In order for the industry to prosper, we must insist on fair value for good workmanship, with reasonable contract terms and conditions,” he said. “I know it is hard for any one company to feel like it is the first to hold the line, but our success as an industry depends on a concerted effort by everyone.”



A worker from Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing prepares the deck for a re-roofing project.

Madsen believes that associations like WSRCA can help everyone raise the bar. “One of WSRCA’s goals is to make its members better contractors,” he said. “No company is so well operated that improvement isn’t possible. That is where the WSCRA can be of great assistance - making the average good, the good better and the better the best. Everyone benefits from the improved reputation a better educated industry brings.”

As WSRCA president, Madsen is looking to bring those benefits to even more contractors. “I really want to expand WSRCA’s reach,” he said. “The more contractors who actively participate in the association, the better educated the roofing industry will be. Better educated contractors are more profitable, do better work and enhance the reputation of the industry as a whole. We have plans for an outstanding Western Roofing Expo 2011 in Reno, Nevada, this coming June. My main focus is to show existing and potential members the tremendous benefits a WSRCA membership brings.”

The 37th annual WSRCA Convention and Trade Show will be held June 5-8 at the Peppermill Resort in Reno, Nev. For more information about the show, call 800-725-0333, e-mail [info@wsra.com](mailto:info@wsra.com) or visit [www.wsra.com](http://www.wsra.com). For more information about Madsen Roofing & Waterproofing, visit [www.madsenroof.com](http://www.madsenroof.com).

## **Join Christian Madsen at Best of Success**

Christian Madsen will be a featured speaker at Roofing Contractor’s Best of Success conference in Clearwater Beach, Fla., Sept 26-27. For more information about the event, see pages 38-39 and visit [www.bestofsuccessconference.com](http://www.bestofsuccessconference.com).

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