

## ISFA Fabricator Profile Q2 2017: Indeko



Indeko is a world-class business based in Jalisco, Mexico, in the Guadalajara area that specializes in the fabrication of solid surface, quartz and granite. Over the course of the 15-year history of the business, founder and owner Rodrigo Velázquez has learned just what it takes to rise to the top of the industry.

### **From the Ground Up**

The story of Indeko is one in which much effort over time paid off.

When he was in high school, Velázquez started working in the kitchen remodeling industry, where he proved his construction skills. He did so well, that in 2002, at the age of 17, DuPont offered him certification to fabricate Corian® solid surface. That was when he founded Indeko.

However, similar to many other early fabricators, Velázquez had little money to get the business going, so he started working out of his parents' garage. As things started to grow, he bought a few tools and hired one employee to help him with the solid surface fabrication, transportation to the jobsite and installation. At this point, he was only selling solid surface and only for residential application, mostly countertops.

Over time, Indeko grew enough to rent a warehouse, buy more tools and hire more employees. And, because of the good reputation that came along with the advancement of the business, the company was invited to do a few commercial projects, such as a small hospital project and some fast food locations. Breaking into the commercial market gave the company a chance to expand sales, which then led to bringing on new products, such as quartz surfacing and granite.

“We have been growing up since then, and we are proud to say that Indeko has participated on big projects like three of the biggest football stadiums in Mexico — Chivas, Azteca, Monterrey; hotels like Hard Rock, Marriott, Ibis, Finest, Holiday Inn, Crown Plaza, Staybridge and Hyatt Palace; franchises such as Cheesecake Factory, Domino's Pizza, Starbucks, Burger King, BBVA Bancomer, and apartments towers all over Mexico,” said Velázquez. “Right now we are fabricating for a hotel from Karim Rachid Design called ‘Temptation Cancun.’”

### **Standing Strong**

Now Indeko has 50 employees at four locations: Mexico City, Guadalajara, Cancun and Monterrey. The company provides service all around Mexico and has set a goal of being truly international by 2020. However, the company has already started on that path with its first successful export for the Cole Haan shoes stores.

In addition to solid surface, quartz surfacing and granite, the company has expanded into other natural stones, Dekton and Neolith compact sintered surfaces. The majority of the work done by the company (more than 40 percent) is solid surface, with it going through more than 175 sheets per month, but also fabricates more than 120 slabs of engineered stone (about 30 percent of the work) each month. Granite makes up almost 20 percent of the material used each month, around 90 slabs, and the remaining 10 percent (more than 50 slabs) are done in some other natural stone or one of the compact sintered surfaces the company handles. “In the residential sector, quartz and natural stone seem to be most popular,” said Velázquez. “But in the commercial area, solid surface does best because of the benefits of the product. More people are also asking about green products, and products like Lapitec and Dekton are starting to get noticed for their newer advantages.”

However, he also admits that working with multiple products can make for a more difficult business model. “The business is more complex by working with multiple products than specializing on one product, but I have found more benefits than disadvantages as long as you have certified fabricators and management specialized on each of the products,” said Velázquez. “I also think that having a variety of options allows your business to offer an integral solution for your clients.”

The main facility has around 7,250 sq. ft. of space (2,200 sq. meters), running four lines of production. While Indeko has CNC machines, thermoforming equipment and a bridge saw, much of the work is still done using manual equipment, making it even more important that the crew is made up of highly skilled craftsmen and not just laborers.

The company has come a long way from its roots in residential countertops to a point where the majority of the work is in the commercial sector, with 65 percent straight commercial work, 30 percent being apartment structures, and the remaining being residential and other work. It gets to market in a variety of ways, such as through builders, kitchen & bath outlets, architects, designers, direct sales and just about every channel it can. “We work with everyone,” said Velázquez. “We have valuable salespeople in each of the markets that help generate the business, and we do good business with all of the various markets.”

Indeko is also working on being a socially responsible company. “We collect rainwater and recycle the water we used when polishing stone,” explained Velázquez. “Around 20 percent of the scrap we generate is recycled for a different line of products, and now thanks to an idea we heard at the ISFA annual meeting, we have solar panels to generate energy.”

Additionally, as part of being socially responsible the company donates a percentage of all sales to MAYAMA, a foundation that works with poor children and their families to better their lives.

### **The Philosophy behind the Company**

Indeko's mission is to improve the appearance of spaces based on integral solutions that both make the customers happy and improve their quality of life. "Our best feature as a company is professionalism," said Velázquez. "It's important that Indeko is certified for the fabrication of solid surface and quartz, and we also offer a punctuality guarantee."

That focus on skilled and diverse work along with the ability to oversee large projects in several different areas is a formula that works well for the company. However, Velázquez certainly gives a lot of credit to the human side of the equation, explaining that teamwork and a skilled and dedicated staff is one of the best assets of the company and that, "every single member of our company helps us every day to deliver our work successfully."

"Indeko is different than other companies because we are always looking out for the best interest of the client," explained Velázquez. "We always work to create win-win situations and that is our attitude in all of our dealings. You have to make sure you are doing the job well and giving the clients what they need so the company can receive its win too." The philosophy set by Velázquez and followed by the company even earned him an award for "Best Entrepreneur" in the state of Jalisco in 2015.

When asked what advice he would give to other fabricators, Velázquez responded with a simple, yet profound statement, "Worry about teamwork and being honest regarding each action you take along the way."

There's little doubt that formula has worked well for Indeko, and it will lead them to even bigger and better things.

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