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2020 Ones to Watch: Daniel Charest, Project Executive at J. Calnan & Associates, Inc.

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Daniel Charest
J. Calnan & Associates, Inc.

Who or what inspires you? My Family! My wife Lisa, son Cameron (11) and daughter Hailey (7) personally drive me and give me the motivation to deliver my level best each day. I want to show my children what it means to be hardworking, how to have perseverance, how to problem solve and work through conflicts. Through the “Stay At Home” order set in place in Massachusetts in March, I am proud that they can see me work and how I interact with my peers and clients. My family is my rock and the backbone of what I do, is for them!

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry? Listen. Listening is probably the single most valuable element of learning in this industry. Early in my career, I can recall many people finding my personality reserved and quiet, but I was listening and generally observing the process and developing my own style. Through listening and not reacting quickly, you can observe all sides of a conversation and be able to make a positive contribution to the conversation. If there is a conflict in a conversation, listening, before reacting, can often diffuse a tense situation because you can make a true effort in solving the problem, rather than speaking from emotion.

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game-changer” in the advancement of your career? The most influential project in the advancement of my career was the 800 Federal/Schneider Electric project between the years of 2011 and 2013. At that point in my career, I was recently made senior project manager and this project was the most challenging I had seen, thus far. This project offered me all the elements I had been searching for in my career to date: Opportunity to lead a large team, working for both the developer/landlord and the tenant and a complex LEED design, taking work out of the ground and also fully renovating an existing facility. Aside from the project itself this was also the point in my career where I began to really lay the groundwork for JC&A’s technology program; specifically working with PlanGrid (an Autodesk company) at it’s infancy. PlanGrid is now a staple to JC&A’s technological success in the market. Since this project, I have had the great fortune to lead many more complex projects for JC&A including the Hilton Garden Inn in Marlborough, Bioverativ in Waltham and currently redeveloping the 50 Otis site in Westborough.

What led you to your current profession? As a child, I was always fascinated by construction. Through my teenage years, I had great opportunities to work closely with my relatives and others, becoming exposed to various trades including carpentry, concrete supplying, landscaping, earthwork and building materials. The time I spent in high school, working at our local hardware store and lumber yard provided me with knowledge of what the construction of a building entails. With this information, I was energized for more. With that excitement for construction, I enrolled in the construction management program at Wentworth Institute of Technology. With nearly twenty years of the construction industry behind me, I can appreciate the adage from a former professor, “there are never two days the same in this business.” I truly enjoy that every day is a new challenge and that keeps this business exciting.