



*Architectural concrete. Design by Doug Wada,
ASLA Construction by Tropical Patios, Inc.*

TROPICAL PATIOS, INC.

Faith and trust—the stepping stones of success

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSSAT

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
HARLINGEN, TX

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
BRICK-PAVING FOR
COMMERCIAL AND
RESIDENTIAL PATIOS,
WALKWAYS, COURT-
YARDS, ETC.

ANNUAL SALES:
\$1.7 MILLION

**SALES GROWTH IN
PAST YEAR:**
\$250,000

EMPLOYEES:
26

JONATHAN KIDD, PRESIDENT OF TROPICAL Patios, Inc. (TPI) is still a kid at heart. We all dream about being able to make a living doing something that we love to do, but this dream is not always easy or even possible to achieve. Yet for 27 years, Kidd has been building a successful business from the joy of doing the “work” that he happily describes as “playing in people’s yards.”

Nearly three decades ago, Kidd left his original job as an eighth grade math and English teacher to find a new career path and a way to work outdoors doing something that he loved. He explains, “Being inside a classroom was very confining, and on the beautiful days, I just wanted to be outside. This work that I do now is something that I’ve always viewed as a hobby—it’s just something that I like.”

Divine intervention seemed to give Kidd the answer. After completing a large patio project for a friend, people began to notice the high quality and beauty of the work that he put into his “hobby.” Kidd recalls, “I was looking for direction and a way to make my house payments. I was starting to fret and worry about the rest of my life—so I prayed, seeking guidance from God. Then the phone rang—a friend of the people that I built the big patio for was on the other end. He wanted a patio like theirs, but on a much smaller scale. I thought, ‘Hey this is it!’”

That all happened right before Thanksgiving, 1982, and the rest, as they say, is history. Since then, TPI has become the area’s most successful brick-paving specialist and Kidd and his staff still

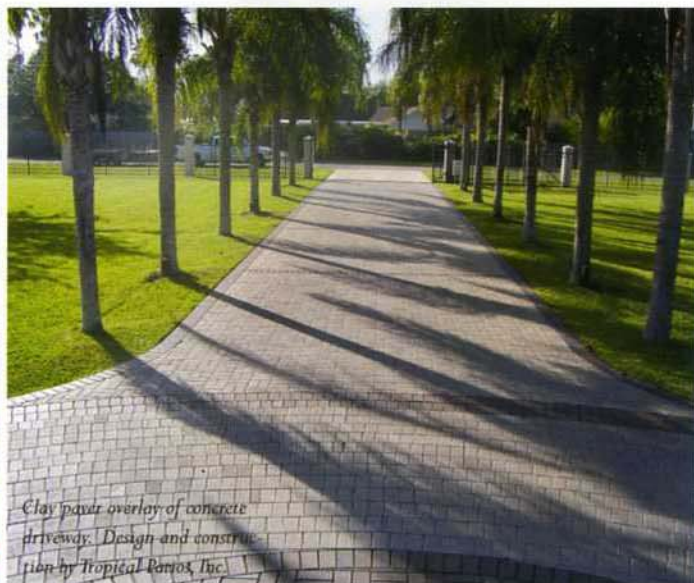
celebrate the company’s beginning that same day each year.

TPI provides patio design work, layout, and construction of hardscape. This includes utilizing different materials like brick (the most common), stonework, and architectural concrete for both commercial and residential clients. Kidd adds, “Our projects are not always necessarily patios—they also include walkways, courtyards, pool decks, etc.”

Customer feedback speaks volumes when it comes to TPI’s products and services. Kidd explains, “Something else that I’ve discovered in our work that makes me very pleased is hearing people say things like, ‘This is much nicer than we expected.’ We still get those comments because we are still exceeding expectations.”



Brick-paver steps. Design and construction by Tropical Patios, Inc.



Clay paver overlay of concrete driveway. Design and construction by Tropical Patios, Inc.

Kidd admits that TPI's services may cost more than its competitors, but that has not stopped the company from growing and excelling with a constant flow of projects. "We live on the border of Mexico and there's a lot of very cheap labor here. People can easily get things done for half of what we charge, but we're still the busiest guys in town."

He owes his company's success to a simple formula of trust, honesty, good work, and building a strong team that believes in his personal philosophy for life and business. "We try to do our very best and instill that same attitude in the people we have working for us. I think that is part of the reason for our success—the people working for me love what they are doing as much as I do."

Kidd also says that taking responsibility for your work and treating others the way you would like to be treated are equally important. "If there are troubles with the work, we don't make excuses. If we're wrong and there's a problem, we'll provide a solution and make

it right. Also, we really do treat people well and I always put myself in the customer's position when I'm building something for someone."

TPI's competitive edge seems like it should be an obvious and automatic constant for any business, but that is not necessarily the case. Says Kidd, "We do what we say we are going to do—in the business culture where I live, that is special because it doesn't always happen. Down here people will say, 'We'll be there tomorrow,' and they're not—they just say what you want to hear. If we tell someone something, we actually follow through."

Despite all of his success with patios and brick-paving, the teacher in Kidd remains alive and well. "The part about teaching that was really thrilling for me was seeing some kid learn something—the same kind of attitude exists here at Tropical Patios. It matters to me that I have a forum and a place where people can improve themselves—that's very important to me." ABQ

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