



Soggy basement? Water infiltration? Foundation issues?
Who do you call?

BY DI LORETTA DI VITA

Rarely is the basement a home's most wondrous room, but for Pietro Di Benedetto, founder and president of SOUS-SOLS EXPERTS—a trusted water management business serving Greater Montreal—it's the mainstay of any property.

A follower of inspirational speakers, Di Benedetto is himself a polished public speaker who waxes enthusiastic over French drains, pumps, foundation membrane (he uses only the top-grade type), cement, concrete and masonry. As he describes the interplay between these elements, making sure to put it in layperson terms, it becomes apparent that—quite simply stated—he really knows his stuff.

He points out that there are two categories to his business: the first being water management—responding to, say, a foundation or water drainage problem, either inside or outside. The second is primarily related to concrete work. “It’s a logical combination,” Di Benedetto explains. “Water management and concrete are intertwined. For instance, replacing a drain may involve demolishing concrete slabs, which then have to be rebuilt.”

Some fifteen years ago, Di Benedetto—formerly a stockbroker, a marketing manager for a major Canadian chocolate producer, and Commercial Officer at the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Toronto—had an existential reckoning causing him to hang up his corporate duds and take a job with a major US construction company specializing in water management. “On the job, I’d often remember my late father, a master mason and the hardest working man I’ve ever known, talking to me about slopes and protecting the

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bricks from water, and I’d think, ‘Ah, he was right; it’s all about the water!’”

In a classic example of snatch-the-pebble-from-the-master’s-hand progression, Di Benedetto became so proficient at diagnosing and resolving water infiltration issues that he considered running his own business. “I thought: I’ll do this—only better than them.”

And that’s what he has been doing for the last ten years.

An effective entrepreneur, by a mix of natural predisposition and accumulated experience, the 59-year-old self-described “owner/operator” attributes his zeal to lineage. He credits his parents (who immigrated to Canada in 1957 from the tiny Italian town of Salle, in Abruzzo) with setting a lasting example of the work ethic and values by which he navigates his business today.

Di Benedetto’s transition from a white-collar career to the world of renovation was an unexpected leap which startled him—and also his mother.

“When I graduated from university, if someone would’ve told me that at 50 I’d start a construction business, I wouldn’t have believed it,” says Di Benedetto, who holds an economics degree from Concordia University.

“My father had already passed by the time I started the business. My mother couldn’t believe that after all my university schooling, I’d choose to work in construction as he did,” he says.

But when Di Benedetto’s business flourished, she was delighted that her son was following in his father’s footsteps. “The most touching compliment my

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mother ever paid me was when I once visited her after a very long day, still in my work clothes, and she remarked that I was my father reborn!” he recalls.

Passionate about reinvention and creating opportunity, Di Benedetto could be the poster person for entrepreneurship as he carries his business forward with the unflinching conviction of a customer-focused crusader.

“I started this business in protest for all of the homeowners who were let down by the contractors from hell who created more problems than they fixed,” he says. “How can you treat customers like that—leaving them to their own devices?”

On the same empathetic plane, Di Benedetto keeps things real by creating a trust-based relationship with his customers from the get-go.

“I put myself in my customers’ shoes. Many homeowners can only take DIY to a certain point before realizing they need an expert to prevent or resolve issues. The problem is they don’t know who to call—who to trust. I want to help people protect their biggest investment—their homes.”

“I don’t bamboozle customers with misleading, tricky fine print,” he continues. “Regardless of what they think needs to be done, my analysis is always based on sound technical information. I will tell them if they don’t need something, and I will tell them what they do need.”

Methodical and precise, Di Benedetto relies on a time-tested process. “I start with an analysis, meeting with the customer for two to three hours, assessing the property from all sides, before presenting a proposal. I show before-and-after pictures and samples of material. I explain to customers how their homes are built, how the foundation differs from the footing, how we manage or redirect the water around and/or in the home in order to protect it from water damage. I’ll explain the ‘why’ behind the solution. This way the solution makes sense to them and they maintain a feeling of control.”

“I’m not an armchair quarterback,” he says about his dynamic on-site involvement. “We’re dealing with very complicated issues that need to be resolved one specific way. There is no grey zone when it comes to rectifying a foundation or water issue; it requires expertise, experience, targeted problem-solving, top-notch material and state-of-the-art tools and machinery.”

And that’s exactly what he provides.

“The best guarantee I can give my customers is one they won’t ever have to use! In ten years, I haven’t had a single comeback,” Di Benedetto says, offering the ultimate proof of his integrity and competence.

And with a success rate like that, there’s no question about who you should call.

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