



## Facility and Construction Management for Retail Stores and Restaurants providing HVAC and Construction Management, Handyman and Electrical Plumbing Services



**Michael Kurland**  
President and CEO  
Branded Group

**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Kurland, would you tell us the focus at Branded Group?*

**Mr. Kurland:** Branded Group is taking facilities and construction management to a new level by focusing on being better in all aspects of facilities and construction management for retailers and restaurateurs.

**CEOCFO:** *Would you tell us some of the services you are providing today and where you see opportunities to make some inroads?*

**Mr. Kurland:** We provide all major trades from HVAC management and construction management to handyman services as well as electrical and plumbing. We have an opportunity to be better in the vendor management, vetting our vendors to ensure they have the proper licenses, insurance on file, etc. Our customers know that when they come to us they are getting great service from vendors who have already been through our highly selective vetting process.

**CEOCFO:** *Would companies come Branded at all different points?*

**Mr. Kurland:** We are a management company; therefore customers come to us for our ability to manage the process. Some of our clients work with us because they have a void in handy-man services or need additional help with electrical. We do offer our customers on demand retail and restaurant maintenance, construction management, special project implementation, and focused consultation services.

**CEOCFO:** *Are many companies using someone to manage these various services or is it something that many people have not thought of as an area that can be managed?*

**Mr. Kurland:** It is definitely a niche industry. We offer our clients the ability of buying power. Since, for example, we may have multiple retailers needing electrical work in one city rather than one retailer needing an electrician every other month, we can negotiate with our vetted vendors and provide prompt service. Also, Branded Group makes the invoicing process seamless for customers. The customer pays one invoice rather than paying invoices to multiple electricians across the country.

**CEOCFO:** *Would you be working with individual retailers? What is your range of clients?*

**Mr. Kurland:** Our clients range from small-box retailers or restaurants with ten to fifteen locations to big-box retailers with four thousand locations nationwide.

**CEOCFO:** *How are companies finding Branded Group?*

**Mr. Kurland:** We are fortunate to receive the majority of work through customer referrals. Our customers are certainly supportive of our growth.

**CEOCFO:** *How are you able to vet the various vendors that you are providing?*

**Mr. Kurland:** We have a highly selective vetting process. All vendors complete a questionnaire and need to be approved as a member of our service provider network before providing service to our customers.

**CEOCFO:** *Would the fact that a service provider chooses to work for you suggest they might be of a higher caliber compared to someone calling from an ad in the yellow pages?*

**Mr. Kurland:** As a result of our vetting process, I do feel that our vendors are of higher caliber than those that may be found through the yellow pages or from searching online.

**CEOCFO: Are there areas where it is more difficult to find service people?**

**Mr. Kurland:** At times there are challenges when it comes to finding vendors in certain geographic locations. It is easier to find vendors in New York City as opposed to Des Moines, Iowa for example because there are less vendors in the area.

**CEOCFO: How are you helping with new construction?**

**Mr. Kurland:** In regard to new construction, we do provide remodeling and project management of the remodeling process. For example, we go into the customer's retail store on a nightly basis to ensure the vendors are on schedule with the remodel. We also manage and complete large build-outs, which includes stripping everything down to studs and putting up new walls and flooring, and installing new electrical and plumbing.

**CEOCFO: Is project management an area where you see growth or where you would like to see growth?**

**Mr. Kurland:** Absolutely! We take pride in being able to offer special projects services to our clients. It is also a niche within a niche. There is the facilities management service that supports recurring repair and maintenance. Then there is construction management that supports the entire build-out. Where we really thrive is the intermediary management during which a customer needs multiple trades on site over several day.

**CEOCFO: How do you overcome some of the challenges of working with various groups of professionals who have their own ideas of how a project should go?**

**Mr. Kurland:** Our focus remains on superior customer service and always striving to be better, therefore we expect the same of our vendors. If a vendor issue does arise, then we deal with the issue effectively and efficiently in an effort not to compromise customer service.

**"We are successful because our clients trust us. No matter how big we get, our customers are always going to feel like they are our most important customer whether they have ten stores or four thousand stores."- Michael Kurland**

**CEOCFO: Do you work nationally?**

**Mr. Kurland:** Yes we do.

**CEOCFO: How do you account for regional differences?**

**Mr. Kurland:** The biggest differences in region are going to come with pricing and seasonal demands. Miami has air-conditioning issues year-round while Boston has heating issues more frequently. When it comes to union or code issues we definitely rely on our vendors or the retailers to know this prior information and, if they do not, we do the research by speaking to the proper point of contacts whether it is a mall or a municipality to ensure we have all our bases covered and ensure the project is up to code.

**CEOCFO: How is business?**

**Mr. Kurland:** Business is great. We are entering our third year of growth. We were fortunate to have increased our revenue 400% from year one to two, and we are on pace to increase our revenue another 100% in year three.

**CEOCFO: What has changed in your approach?**

**Mr. Kurland:** I have learned that to successfully grow a company you have to rely on your team. I also know that I have to invest in others who have expertise in areas that I may not so that I do not spend time failing at things that I do not know how to do. Lastly, I have learned to trust in my expertise and have faith in what I want to accomplish.

**CEOCFO: What has been the biggest surprise so far?**

**Mr. Kurland:** I would say the biggest surprise is how quickly we have grown. The first year was my business partner and I. We then hired two employees toward the end of the first year. We turned in a successful first year and we turned a small profit. Then the explosive growth of year two was the biggest surprise.

**CEOCFO: What is next?**

**Mr. Kurland:** We are always striving to be better in customer service, employee engagement, vendor management, and community commitment. As our customer roster grows so does our commitment to the community through our one-for-one program.

**CEOCFO: Would you give us information on that one-for-one program?**

**Mr. Kurland:** In the first two years, our team was focused on growing the company and building a business. Then we realized that we wanted the opportunity to give back to the community while moving the company forward. As a result, we

developed our one-for-one program, Service2. For every completed service call, we donate a minute of our time to a non-profit. This year we've partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Orange County.

**CEOCFO: *Are your clients recognizing that yet?***

**Mr. Kurland:** Yes! Our clients are recognizing our commitment to the community. When we announced our one-for-one program, I received great feedback! Our customers are excited by our unique commitment – they are donating to charity without having to do anything other than place a service call!

**CEOCFO: *Why use Branded Group?***

**Mr. Kurland:** We are successful because our clients trust us. No matter how big we get, our customers are always going to feel like they are our most important customer whether they have ten stores or four thousand stores.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

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