

Setting Itself Apart – New England Producer Proves Strategic Marketing Works

Doug O'Neill, NRMCA Senior Director, Local Paving

Pervious Concrete is a product that has had proven success throughout North America. We can point to cold weather markets and hot weather markets that have shown it as an effective solution to stormwater management issues. But we can also point to areas where pervious has had a difficult time taking hold. Where freeze thaw concern is greatest and where acceptance of concrete is limited, pervious concrete has had the hardest time gaining traction.

New England happens to be one of those areas of the country where pervious concrete has been met with skepticism. The region might have a stronger resistance to change or the fact that 99+% of the pavements are asphalt might mean it's not the most "concrete friendly" area of the country. So how did a small ready mixed concrete producer based in historic Cape Cod, Massachusetts convince its neighbors that pervious concrete can work in the extreme environment of a New England winter?

The concept of strategic marketing and product positioning are terms that more and more ready mixed concrete producers are becoming familiar. NRMCA Producer member Cape Cod Ready Mix has effectively used strategic marketing and product positioning to help it become one of the region's leading producers of pervious concrete, transforming a marketplace which was neither concrete friendly nor readily accepting of new technologies.

Over the past two and a half years, the team at CCRM of General Manager Peter Joy (*Seen below at far left, supervising a pervious concrete contractor training session.*) and Sales Manager Peter Zoni (*Shown below at right with Cape Cod's trademarked "Perk-Crete" logo.*) have dedicated their efforts to creating a market for pervious concrete by educating local municipalities and contractors, by positioning themselves and their products apart from their competition with the creation of a branded pervious mix design, and by getting involved

in their community. Zoni shared their approach on how they have spearheaded the development of the pervious market.

"When we realized the opportunities pervious concrete presented, we decided to trademark our mix," he said. "It didn't cost much, but by having our 'Perk-Crete' trademarked it elevated our standing in the design community and has given us a leg up on our competitors."

Now, surrounding municipalities are using "Perk-Crete or Equal" as the terminology in their specifications, Zoni added. This proprietary mix along with the trademarked name gives Cape Cod a distinct advantage over their competitors.

Educating pervious concrete contractors was another key ingredient to successful market transformation. As the chairman of the Massachusetts Concrete & Aggregate Producers Association (MaCAPA), Joy was instrumental in bringing the NRMCA's Pervious Concrete Contractor Certification course to the Massachusetts and Rhode Island marketplace. The commitment Cape Cod had to the pervious market reached another level with its purchase of roller screed placement equipment. By renting the equipment, it opened up opportunities for interested contractors who wouldn't otherwise bid a job because of the investment necessary for proper placement tools, again setting itself apart from their competition.

The team at CCRM set out to communicate to local municipalities the fact that they could offer a solution to their stormwater issues. Working with them directly with test placements and donated material, the team at CCRM was able to prove to the many town leaders that pervious technology can work in New England. "We reached out to all the municipalities in the region and offered them pervious concrete to test out," Zoni said. For example, Cape Cod donated material for a year-round greenhouse in the town of Orleans which now serves as an



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agricultural and horticultural learning laboratory for students throughout Cape Cod. These same students, teachers and community members now have access to this laboratory and can see first-hand how pervious concrete works and how it can solve many water-related concerns.

It also advertised its new trademarked solution to stormwater management in the business section of the local newspapers, attended state municipal association events, participated in town meetings, helped educate town officials who in turn helped spread the word that pervious concrete works and that Cape Cod was the go-to company. Thanks to a combination of being involved and following up, Zoni was able to influence the town of Orleans into specifying pervious concrete for all sidewalks and crosswalks within the town's cultural district. Several other neighboring towns have now included pervious concrete for things like boat ramp parking areas, and municipal golf course cart paths. And a great deal of effort went into developing the website (www.capecodreadymix.com) which serves as another way to educate the community and promote the company as the industry leader in Southeastern Massachusetts.

Never short for words, Zoni clearly stated the reasons for the success of the promotion effort: "It's all about getting off our butts and talking to people, communicating the benefits of what we make and defining our place in the developing sustainability movement," he said.

In less than three years the team at Cape Cod has successfully converted skeptics into believers and has elevated itself into the region's leading expert of pervious technology. The combination of strategic marketing, a committed management team and true professionals in the field are the key ingredients for success for any ready mixed concrete producer. ■

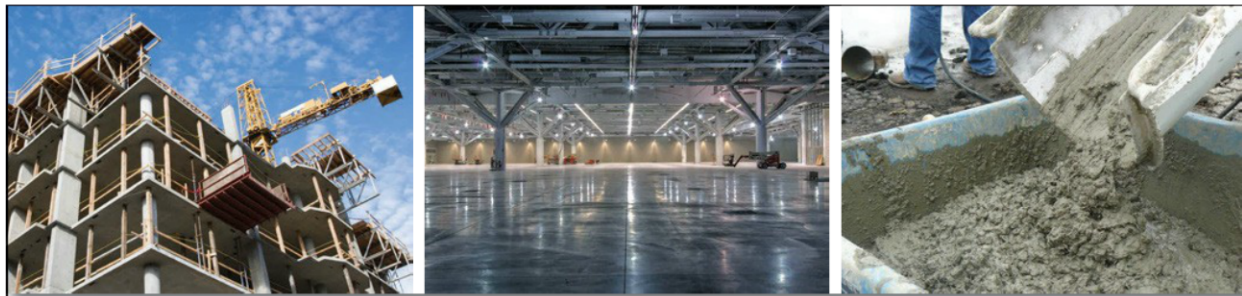


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