

Feel the Joy

How does Homestead Road, a leading house buyer in Minneapolis, keep growing? The answer: by providing a joyful and hassle-free customer experience.

HOMESTEAD ROAD

#1070

2018 INC. 5000 RANKING

30

MILLION DOLLARS

PROJECTED 2018 AVENUE REVENUE

20-30

NUMBER OF HOMES BOUGHT AND SOLD EACH MONTH

35

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

MOVING AWAY FROM your family home is always emotional. Too often, it is also stressful or even painful. Andrey Sokurec and Alex Delendik designed a solution. Their business, Homestead Road, buys homes in need of repair “as is,” so owners don’t have to deal with renovating.

Homestead Road buys and sells 20 to 30 homes a month. Ninety percent of its clientele are older homeowners who can no longer age in place or relatives tasked with selling the home for them.

Sokurec credits the company’s tenfold increase in annual revenue to its emphasis on delivering an exceptional customer experience. “Homes hold decades of memories for the families who lived there, and we want to be sure people’s last memories of their houses are some of their best,” he explains. To make selling as pain-free as possible, Sokurec allows customers to leave whatever they want behind—“even dishes in the sink,” he says. His team handles cleaning and donates as much as possible to the Salvation Army.

After the purchase, Homestead Road renovates and sells the home. Sokurec approaches the whole process with empathy. He understands that sellers care about the home’s future, and he uses tender touches to make the experience as pleasant as possible. At closing, the Homestead Road team gives sellers a watercolor picture of the house, personalized with their best memories.

Sokurec works hard to distinguish his business from house-flipping companies, which often carry negative connotations. He takes pride in his home renovations, and if he thinks a prospective customer would be better off working with a real estate agent, he tells them. In 2016, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Minnesota and North Dakota recognized Sokurec’s efforts by naming Homestead Road a finalist for the BBB Torch Awards for Ethics.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

Sokurec emigrated from Belarus in 2005, because he believed the U.S. was the best place to pursue an entrepreneurial dream. While working as a manual



laborer, he devoured business books and training courses. He credits Zappos’s Culture Camp for inspiring his emphasis on the customer experience. Since then, he has gleaned ideas from his employees and other businesses in an effort to deliver not just “wow,” but “super-wow” service.

He also praises business experts Dan Sullivan, Jack Canfield, and Harvey Mackay. Their books and courses helped him to build a bigger and better business and taught him the importance of taking at least 150 vacation days—“free days,” where you are not allowed to think about business.

In three years, Sokurec plans to open five new locations across the country. In 10 years, he wants Homestead Road to be a household name. He is grateful to live in a country where this sort of growth is possible. “The American dream is alive and well. It is a shame to live in America and complain about anything at all,” Sokurec says. For him, that dream was to build a great business with exceptional service. For many others, it is to own a home. No matter how big it gets, Homestead Road is committed to honoring those homes and the people who loved them. ■