



## Specialty themed items big business for this second-generation family company

Julie Holmes was a young engineer in 2013 and at the time, she couldn't even imagine returning to her hometown to join the family business.

Funny how things change.

Today, Holmes is vice president of Apopka-based JK2 Construction & Scenic, a 30-year-old construction and scenic design contractor.

JK2's handiwork can be found in the Orlando-area theme parks, including Dumbledore's iconic desk and chair that was recreated by the firm for Universal Orlando Resort's The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

In fact, JK2's client list includes a who's who of well-known companies: Universal Orlando, the Walt Disney World Resort, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Balfour Beatty Construction and Northrop Grumman Corp. (NYSE: NOC)

This firm now boasts a new office and manufacturing space — and projected revenue of more than \$19 million — so it has big designs for Central Florida.

Here's what Holmes shared:

**How would you describe JK2 Construction & Scenic?** We have two divisions. The construction division is a commercial general contracting, design/build and construction management company; and the scenic division specializes in architectural millwork, custom props and fabricates specialty-themed items.

**How did you get into this business?** I'm a registered professional engineer and I was presented the opportunity to join the family business in 2013 as a retirement strategy for my father. Never in a million years did I think I would be back in my hometown, working with family. But I knew I would have regrets if I didn't explore the opportunity.

**What were your key accomplishments in the past 12 months?** In March, JK2 moved into a new office and manufacturing space, doubling our previous footprint. New equipment and talented hires have allowed the division to increase production capacity and streamline workflow.

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**Your most difficult challenge in the last year?** Managing the processes and procedures to accompany our expansive growth. In order to get ahead, you have to make time and pull yourself away from the daily fire drills to work on the business.

**Your most impressive business statistic?** JK2's revenue has grown by more than 1,000 percent since 2013.

**What are some of the newest technologies you're working with?** We work with unique products all the time. But what gets us most excited is the creativity involved in building custom projects that combine several different types of materials. Learning how each material can be combined, assembled, and mixed-and-matched is the best part of the creative design process to bring a concept to reality.

**What do you like best about your job?** I love the creativity. Even if you think you have worked on the most amazing project, the next one usually knocks it out of the ball park and raises the bar to a new normal.