

# THE BLUE BOOK

## Building & Construction

# NETWORK®

## A ROCK-SOLID PERSPECTIVE

### D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc. digs deep to keep company culture team-centric

👤 Erica Bender

In the precision-driven world of foundation drilling and earth shoring, well-rounded experience, technical expertise and proper equipment mean everything. Pair these advantages with the team-oriented mentality found at D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc., and you have a winning combination of reasons to partner on projects with this Southern California-based drilling contractor.

“We make the impossible possible” is the motto of the Pomona-headquartered firm established in 1979 by Dale Scheffler, the company’s President. His staff of about 50 includes seasoned professionals specializing in geotechnical, structural and civil engineering as well as field construction and landscape architecture. Built on a foundation of providing rock-solid service, the company has earned a reputation for delivering cost-effective solutions to deep drilling challenges and working within areas of limited access.

“We take pride in our ability to provide value engineering solutions, which save our clients money, and have an extensive inventory of cutting-edge tools, equipment and machinery to enhance safety and efficiency on projects,” Dale says. “This reputation has created a demand for our company’s services across the western United States, with projects extending from California, Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico to Washington in the Pacific Northwest and also Hawaii.”

### A Solid Client Base

Averaging over 150 completed projects each year, D.J. Scheffler & Nye has the engineering expertise and real-world experience to design and perform jobs involving deep foundations, micropiles, underpinning, earth shoring, tiebacks and rock anchors, retaining walls and slope repair. The company specializes in both residential and nonresidential construction and works with clients in the public and private sectors.

According to Dale, the D.J. Scheffler & Nye name is synonymous with deep foundation work in the regions where the company operates. “When we speak with prospective customers, I get excited when I hear that not just one, but two or three people have recommended us to work on their projects. It’s a great feeling knowing that our current customers think so highly of us,” he says.



The management team of D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc. (left to right): Mark Nye, Cindy Scheffler and Dale Scheffler.



On the Park Avenue Bridge Replacement Project in Newport Beach, California, crews constructed bridge piers and abutments in difficult drilling conditions.

## Innovative to the Core

At D.J. Scheffler & Nye, the leadership's vision includes a focus on staying innovative and continually advancing production techniques, methods and processes. The company is able to achieve this by employing cutting-edge equipment, such as a highly efficient rock drilling tool known as a down hole hammer (DHH) or down-the-hole (DTH) hammer. "Very few contractors have the capability of drilling larger than 12-inch-diameter shafts in hard rock conditions, but it's easy work for D.J. Scheffler & Nye," Dale says. His team also specializes in continuous flight auger (CFA) drilling. In 2001, Dale—one of the industry's leading CFA pioneers at the time—brought this technique to the West Coast for building secant pile shoring systems. The approach is used to build cofferdam-like basements and is ideal for construction within high water-table areas such as coastal environments. "As opposed to conventional dewatering systems, the CFA secant pile wall technology allows us to build below the water table more cost-effectively, and it vastly reduces the risk of damage to nearby properties and homes," Dale explains. "These services are in high demand in areas such as Newport Beach and Del Mar, where we frequently operate."

## What a Leader Values Most

The company has evolved greatly over the years, riding out multiple economic downturns and various other challenges by employing smart business practices and ensuring that both clients and employees are taken care of fairly and equitably.

In Dale's mind, his team's loyalty and dedication are more valuable than any award, accolade or asset. "If I didn't have my employees, I couldn't make it in this business. I don't think of the company as being mine, I think of it as being ours," he says.

This isn't hollow rhetoric on Dale's part. In fact, he went so far as to make his longest-standing employee and right-hand man, Mark Nye, a Co-Owner in 2016.

"Mark joined me in 1986 as a drill operator. He was 19 years old at the time, and quickly proved himself to be reliable, trustworthy and diligent in taking care of our clients' needs," he shares. Over the years, Mark worked through the ranks as an Operator, Foreman, Superintendent and Project Manager—and along the way demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities as well as a team-oriented mentality. After becoming a partial owner of the business, Mark continued managing the company's field operations, project management and estimating activities. "Mark has been instrumental in developing long-term relationships with clients and vendors," Dale adds.

Another indispensable team member is Cindy, Dale's wife, who handles all administrative tasks. "It is a relief to have someone I can trust to handle the administrative duties and human resources responsibilities," Dale says.

## Experienced & Safety-Conscious

The majority of employees at D.J. Scheffler & Nye have been with the company for over 20 years, and those working in the field have been exposed to a host of complex drilling challenges. On-the-job problem-solving is crucial to overcoming obstacles in this line of work—but that's the appeal for the staff at D.J. Scheffler & Nye.

"Employees like to work for us because what we do is different every day. There's never a dull moment and it's challenging, so they have to rely on their ingenuity to come up with creative solutions to get jobs done," Dale says. "When you're dealing with below-ground construction, you don't always know what to expect until you've experienced it. And we have a lot of experience."

This valuable knowledge gives the company a competitive edge by enhancing its ability to mitigate a variety of construction hurdles, and also boosts safety because employees possess a deeper understanding of the industry's inherent risks.

"The men are familiar with the work and they are all used to working with each other, so they're less likely to get injured on the job. Also, when we bring new people onto the team, the others watch out for them and train them to be as safety conscious as they are," Dale says.

D.J. Scheffler & Nye has taken an uncompromising stance on safety. "Safety is not only a duty but one of our core values. We have gone to great lengths to ensure the safety of our employees while still providing a high-quality end result on all of our projects," Dale affirms.

The business boasts an exemplary safety record, which is supported by a current Experience Modification Rate (EMR) of 0.68. The company is also certified through Gold Shovel Standard, a nationally recognized safety program developed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) in 2014 to prevent life-threatening damage to buried infrastructure. Gold Shovel Standard-certified contractors are qualified to work on PG&E projects—and D.J. Scheffler & Nye is among those entrusted time and again with PG&E's business.

Also, in 2008, the firm received a safety recognition award from State Compensation Insurance Fund, California's largest provider of workers' compensation insurance. This honor is given to recognize companies for having above-average safety programs and a low occurrence of safety issues.

## **A Caring Company Culture**

Retaining top talent in an industry facing skilled worker shortages is no easy task. The success of this now 40-year-old operation keeps staff members working year-round in what is typically a seasonal industry, plus the company offers competitive pay, another attractive perk. But most importantly, Dale says, the inviting company culture is what hooks employees for the long term.

"Our staff is like one big family—we pitch in to help out each other," he shares. "If someone's sick, another person will step up to fill the spot. Our employees know we're here to help them and that they will always have a job with us, so long as they uphold our company's standards."

He adds, "I'm also focused on educating my team. My priority these days isn't to get more jobs—it's on quality. We're the first ones on a project, so it's important for us to get in and out fast. But we can't sacrifice quality in the process. Our goal is to hire for life—and we invest a lot of time and effort into training our staff so that they'll be motivated to stay and provide the top-notch quality service our clients have come to expect from us."