



**Frank Dedon, President**  
Abraxus Snow Removal and  
Salt

Cleveland, Ohio

YEAR FOUNDED: 1972

WINTER 2007-08 REVENUE:  
\$4.5 million

95% Commercial  
5% Government/municipal

**Ranking: No. 20**

## HOW I DID IT...

### One-Two Combination

Frank Dedon didn't appreciate the impact salt would have on his snow removal operations.

I opened Abraxus Salt in 2001-02 and I became a distributor for Cargill.

I put all of my eggs into one basket with the snow removal business. I put everything but my first born on the line. I put \$1.5 million into the salt storage dome, I got the contract and did a marketing campaign for the salt and snow removal combined. I wanted to get the attention of the snow removal contractors in the area and I wanted to get some more snow removal business going. I designed Abraxus Salt so that as Abraxus Snow, I would want to do business with them.

The first year I built the dome I went from doing \$770,000 in snow and we jumped to \$1.7 million. The salt did \$500,000 in its first year, and that was a mild winter.

What did it was putting all my efforts into the business and diversifying the business into something that has to do with snow removal, which is the salt. And then the advertising campaign helped bring everything together.

I honestly had no idea that I gave birth to a giant because, together, the business has grown by leaps and pounds. I did nearly \$5 million in snow removal and salt last year.

When you have growth that fast you'll have problems. The controls are much tighter now and the people I have in place are much better. I didn't realize how many hangers-on I had at the company until we made that growth and then I could finally see it.

The growth, at first, was overwhelming. You have to adjust your thinking. Reaching seven digits is an amazing accomplishment but you have to adjust how you approach the business after your reach that point. When you do that, you have to sit back and take a look at everything and relearn how you manage something like this because it comes with its own problems.

#### TOP CONTRACTOR TIP

"Along with that seven-digit figure comes a lot of seven-digit responsibilities. You break that \$1 million mark and then suddenly you realize that you've got to learn how to manage that level of snow removal if you expect to continue that momentum in the winters to come." — Frank Dedon