



## 'Dallas is on fire': \$90M cabinet and countertop firm takes advantage of hot market

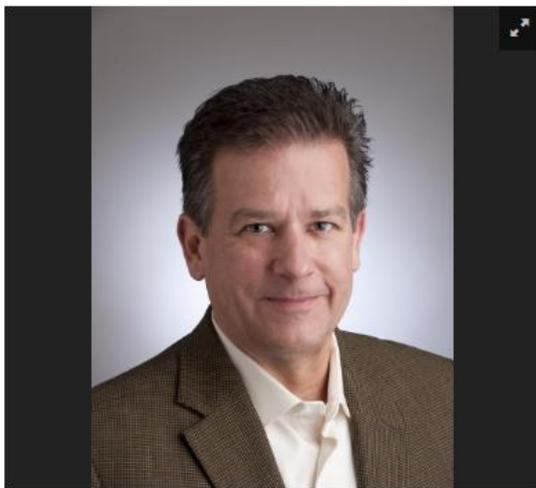
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**Evan Hoopfer**

Republic Elite is a Texas company. The cabinet and countertop firm's market share in the state is 30 percent — over 50 percent in North Texas — and they actually make their cabinets about two hours east of Dallas in Marshall, Texas.

"We don't believe we could provide the service levels we do with imported product, and we continually have to pick up the pieces from companies who try and fail," said **Duane Pekar**, president and CEO of Republic Elite, on why his company manufactures in Texas and not a cheaper option like China. "We order our cabinets to be delivered seven days from now. It's a very flexible production line. That allows us to be fast and on-time."



*Duane Pekar, president and CEO of Republic Elite*

Almost all of Republic Elite's 450 employees are in Texas with about 50 in its Dallas headquarters. The firm is constantly keeping up with interior design trends and searching quarries in Africa, Mexico and Brazil for stones that'll be cut into the latest countertops.

As baby boomers downsize and millennials take longer to buy a home, the high-end apartment scene has taken off, especially in Dallas. Last year, Republic Elite posted \$90 million in revenue, up 20 percent. Pekar said the company expects the same 20-percent growth rate this year.

To discuss his company's future and the Dallas market, Pekar sat down with the *Dallas Business Journal*.

### **You have a heavy presence in Texas. How are the large markets performing?**

There's been a lot of shift out of Houston recently. A lot of units are going to come online in Houston this year and then it's going to be pretty slow over a few years as far as new development. Austin is picking up, San Antonio is picking up, but Dallas is on fire. It's incredible.

### **What obstacles do you anticipate in growing your business?**

Costs are going up all the time in construction. The cost to build a multi-family unit is up 30 percent than what it was five years ago. By the time we quote a job, that's not going to get installed for 12 months. Our customers count on that price we gave them 12 months ago. We can't go in and change the price of that unit. We're developing a continuous improvement culture so that we can manage costs and not have a lot of inflation. That's probably the No. 1 thing.

### **What do you think the company will look like in 10 years?**

I would anticipate having an office and a showroom in each of our major markets. So, maybe one in Florida, Atlanta and Charlotte. My guess is we'll probably be doing more than cabinets and countertops. We might be into flooring and tile. We have to evaluate those things, so adjacent acquisitions I would anticipate.

*Evan Hoopfer is the Dallas Business Journal's digital reporter.*