

# COLLARD GROUP RACE TO SUCCESS



WE LEARN HOW ROBERT COLLARD WENT FROM A SOLE TRADER TO THE HEAD OF ONE OF THE LARGEST PRIVATELY OWNED DEMOLITION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT FIRMS IN THE COUNTRY.

# RACE TO SUCCESS

PROJECT MANAGED BY: AMANDA JONES

**“I am a very competitive person from a very competitive family,” says Robert Collard, founder and CEO of the Collard Group. It is hard to argue with the assertion. Not only has he taken his business from working as a sole trader to one of the most successful companies in his sector, but he has done so while pursuing a successful motorsport career, winning countless races, including the British GT3 Championship in 2020.**

In both motorsports and business, you have to be very focused and very disciplined,” Collard says. “Success is all about preparation. If you can bring those values into a business and instil those values into a team of people, to give them passion, drive, ambition, you can make a success.”

For the Collard Group success looks like rapid, nationwide growth across the demolition, land remediation, earthworks and waste management sectors.

Collard began the business under the name RJC Services in 1994, and through organic growth and acquisitions, including the purchase of his father’s waste management business, that company grew into one of the largest and most influential privately-owned

demolition contractors in the UK, and waste management businesses in the south of England.

That growth has been made possible through a constant process of reinvestment in the Group’s infrastructure, plant, training and equipment.

“It is very hard when you are continually growing a company because you are always reinvesting,” Collard says. “You are never really comfortable, you are always on a knife edge.”

## ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Today the Collard Group offers a wide range of services, including the demolition of >>



>>  
**Robert Collard,**  
founder and CEO  
of the Collard Group.



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buildings, remediating sites for redevelopment, and collecting waste from commercial and demolition sites for clients commercial and domestic. Collard Group also uses the waste it collects, recycling it to make it useful again in the form of usable aggregates and ready-mix concrete. Across all these sectors, it is Collard's drive and dynamism that have pushed the company forward.

"It is just a matter of showing that anything is possible. People ask how I did it. The answer is that I am always one of the last people to leave the office at night even to this day," Collard says. "I just try to maximise everything we do to be one of the largest most successful waste and demolition companies in the UK. That is what I started out to be, and we are continuing with that journey."

Collard Group has achieved the necessary scale to handle complex, multifaceted, nationwide projects, yet remained small enough to move quickly and deliver a bespoke service with a personal touch.

"My first goal was that I wanted to get to £25 million turnover, then thought I would never get to £50 million," Collard recalls. "At the moment the target is £75 million, which we are looking at reaching in 2023. We are now setting the bar at £100 million. When we get there we will reflect on the next step."

The company remains constantly evolving to keep up with an industry that never stands still, exploiting the latest technology and skills. At its heart, however, Collard remains a family-run business led by people who are personally invested in the company, its work, and its impact on the world at large. >>





“We try and trade with integrity and offer value for money. We never overpromise and underdeliver, we go the other way,” Collard insists.

**APPROACHING ZERO-WASTE**

Collard came to the business without anything in the way of academic qualifications, but what he did bring to the table is a mechanical background that has been of particular use to a company aiming to reduce waste.

“It meant we could run slightly older equipment in the early days,” he says.

However, paradoxically, those same motivations now drive Collard to ensure he is always using the latest equipment on the market.

“Now we only buy the latest machinery for low-emissions and health and safety reasons,

but in the early days I was able to be adaptive enough to change direction if I needed to with equipment,” Collard says.

Today Collard’s fleet replacement policy ensures the firm is always running the latest vehicles with industry-leading safety standards and low emissions credentials, reducing the Group’s carbon footprint.

As well as finding ways to reduce its own environmental impact, Collard Group also supports its clients, championing its “recycling for the future” ethos for more than 20 years.

“Our waste management experts advise organisations on how to meet their regulatory obligations around sustainable waste management,” says Lee Phelan, Managing Director of Collard Group subsidiary

Collard Environmental. “We help them to bolster their environmental performance and achieve their carbon neutral targets.”

Since it was founded, Collard Group has become an end-to-end enabling partner for the construction industry, and offering that end-to-end capability means it is positioned to join those ends together and create a circular economy. Indeed, Collard Group diverts over a million tonnes of waste material away from landfill sites and into its nine recycling plants every year.

Collard Group’s comprehensive ability to collect, transport, and segregate waste, is underpinned by real-time tracking and detailed data analysis. That means Collard Group is able to demolish a building, take all the rubble from that demolition to its recycling centres, and then turn that rubble into its recycled, premium-grade aggregates and award-winning ready-mix concrete. Those products are then sold back to the construction industry to make new buildings.

“It’s this full-circle, sustainable operation that sets us apart from many of our competitors,” says James Chillery, Managing Director of Collard Group’s Collard Aggregates business.

The quality of these recycled aggregates is independently verified and supplied to Series 600 Highways Specification standard, as well as the bespoke requirements of its customers. It is this combination of quality, reliability and sustainability that has come together to make Collard Group’s winning formula. ☺



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