

# BUILDING A BUSINESS ON INSPECTION.

INSPECTION EQUIPMENT FIELD TEST



NAME: BEN SMITH  
TITLE: OWNER, DRAIN CLEANER  
COMPANY: MARVEL SEWER AND DRAIN

**50%**  
CUSTOMER SAVINGS  
COMPARED TO DIGS

**4**  
NUMBER OF JOBS BEN CAN  
WORK ON PER DAY

Eight years ago, Ben Smith was a bartender tiring of the nightlife and the long hours. Now, he owns his own drain cleaning business and is planning a prosperous future.

Marvel Sewer and Drain in the Twin Cities suburb of Fridley, Minn., is still just Ben in the field and his wife, Emily, in the office, but the business is thriving.

Ben started his own sewer and drain cleaning business in the summer of 2016, after seven years of subbing for other companies. "It's exciting and it's definitely nerve-racking to be on my own," he said.

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His specialty is repairing sewer lines without digging up yards. He uses RIDGID® inspection equipment to identify the intrusion or hole in the line and then inserts a bladder wrapped in a fiberglass lining to cover the hole. He inflates the bladder so the fiberglass adheres to the interior of the pipe, sealing the hole. When he deflates and removes the bladder, the pipe is fixed.

"It's wonderful. I make good money doing it and I save my customers about half the cost of digs," Ben says.

However, the point repairs would be impossible without RIDGID to locate and identify the problem and make sure it's fixed. Ben uses the NaviTrack Scout® locator to

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find the pipe and the SeeSnake® MAX rM200 camera and CS6 monitor to see what's happening inside it. He also carries the microDrain™ system for indoor plumbing jobs.

"The easiest way to explain to someone what's wrong with their sewer is to show them," Ben said. "I can't do this job without a camera and the rM200 is the best camera I've ever used. It feels like RIDGID went inside my brain, saw what I wanted for a camera and produced it."

He specifically praised the camera's small size, powerful light and durability. He said he's been able to maneuver it through bends and junctions that stopped other cameras.

The diagnostic equipment allows him to work fast enough to visit three or four houses in a day, which is crucial for a business just getting off the ground.

"I like going into people's homes and solving problems that are really serious for them. It makes me feel good."

Now building their future together, Emily and Ben laugh about Ben's initial reluctance to get into the business. When he was single and tending bar, he worried that it would be hard to meet women if he became a sewer cleaner. But when he saw Emily in a local bar one night he gave her his sewer and drain business card to connect, and now they're married, starting a business and raising two young children.

He sees a future for the business that includes five drain cleaners in the field, one or two people in the office and himself pitching in where needed. He's not listening to those who warn him he'd be better off hiring contractors than employees.

"I think it would be super cool if I could help other young guys start a family and provide a good living and be a good boss," he said. "It's a long road, but I think we can do it."

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