



Rolmaster Conveyors: Staying relevant for more than 67 years

BY SHAUNA PROCTOR



The story of Rolmaster Conveyors communicates the power of brand longevity, innovative and strategic management. It is about struggle, adaptation and perseverance. Most importantly, it is a story about people, community, and the development of long-term mutually beneficial relationships, the true lifeblood of any successful organization.

The advent of the conveyor, dating back to the mid-19th century, changed the face of mining, manufacturing and distribution forever. In 1946, Stratford-based machine shop Belgium Standard recognized the growing demand within this niche market, and Rolmaster Conveyors was born.

Over the following 47 years, Rolmaster became a national brand, surviving years of volatile economic fluctuations and succession of ownership.

A pivotal turning point occurred in 1993 when the shareholders of Cambridge Pro Fab invested in Rolmaster as a means of expanding its manufacturing product line. This acquisition was figure-headed by George Figueiredo, owner/operator of Cambridge Pro Fab (Est.1988).

The group appointed Adrian Ferreira as the new general manager in 1993. The 26-year-old investor and engineer maintained the right mix of energy, dedication, instinct and business savvy to build upon the long history by adapting to new technologies; strengthening the Rolmaster brand. To date, Rolmaster maintains strong working relationships with more than 2,200 supply chain partners — 450 of which are Cambridge-based companies.

Under Adrian's supervision, the company survived the 2002 and 2008 recessions by diversifying industries served, while still offering high-quality customized products, competitive pricing and lead times supported by outstanding

customer service. These cornerstones drive Rolmaster's business and its corporate culture today.

In 2010, Adrian assumed the role of president, and by this time a paradigm shift within the material handling industry was occurring. Years of economic volatility and increased global outsourcing lead to heavy industry consolidation and a much more standards- and price-focused operating environment. Rolmaster was able to modify strategic focus, placing more emphasis on the development of supplier relationships and expansion of operations achieved through the acquisition of Brampton conveyor company, Isseco.

The acquisition and merger allowed Rolmaster to double sales volumes and achieve economies of production and expertise, catapulting the brand on a national level.

In 2011, Rolmaster negotiated an exclusive Canadian distribution contract with key supplier LEWCO Inc., a relationship allowing Rolmaster to offer larger product depth and breadth and shorter lead times, without compromising the quality Rolmaster distribution partners have become accustomed to.

For 67 years, Rolmaster has managed to stay relevant and achieve success by taking advantage of brand longevity, industry diversification, acquisition, and the development of strong and lasting supply chain partnerships. This said, Rolmaster's core sustainable competitive advantage has always been, and will continue to be, the ability to offer unsurpassed customer service.

The company currently employs ten office and sales support staff with combined industry experience of 144 years. Of these ten employees, seven maintain between 15 and 27 years of service with Rolmaster and Isseco.

Supported by this talented team, Rolmaster offers professional solutions for a wide range of conveyance and material handling applications, custom project development, installation, and maintenance services.

For information regarding becoming a Rolmaster supply partner or to receive a free competitive quote, contact Adrian or Shauna at 519-740-3201 or e-mail info@rolmasterconveyors.ca.

First-time purchasers can mention this article and receive 10 per cent off their first order.

Meet the Rolmaster team at booth 681 during the PACKEX Trade Show, Toronto Congress Center; May 14–16, 2013.

