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advantage

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EARTH-CONSCIOUS FABRICATION

Landfills are that much smaller after a series of initiatives allows office-furniture manufacturer Calstone Inc. to recycle or reuse all of its products **BY KELLY HAYES**

Companies everywhere are incorporating sustainable policies and programs to meet customer demand, to reduce power costs, or to simply help improve the environment. But Jim Ecclestone, owner and CEO of Calstone Inc., an Ontario-based manufacturer of office and mail-room furniture and packaging work stations, has become a role model in sustainable manufacturing. He

believes the manufacturing industry—as well as companies in all industries—can do a lot more when it comes to earth-friendly business operations.

Calstone, founded in 1985, is raising the bar for all Canadian manufacturing companies by implementing a number of sustainable initiatives, including a zero-percent-to-landfill policy: the company's promise that none of

its products will go to waste, and all materials will be either reused, remanufactured, or recycled in some way. "About 70 percent of the products that are returned to us under our Remanufacturing Program can be reused and remanufactured," Ecclestone says. "The remaining parts are all recycled."

The zero-percent-to-landfill policy began in 2006, when one of the company's customers requested they pick up an old product they had no use for. "We of course accommodated the customer and brought the product back to our facility," Ecclestone says. "I had my team dismantle the parts and separate them for inspection. The metal legs and back panels were sanded down, and welds were inspected and repaired where necessary and then hung on the paint line to fill an order. This was the beginning of our program."

This program, along with several other green initiatives, seems to be catching on like wildfire among Calstone's suppliers and customers. "Our laminate-top suppliers take back our used tops and either rework them to sell as new, or grind them down and sell them to the farming industry for bedding for animals," Ecclestone says. "And our fabric suppliers [have] a green program where they sell us eco-friendly fabrics for our tackboards and privacy panels."

COMPANY STATS

LOCATION
SCARBOROUGH, ON

FOUNDED
1985

SPECIALTY
SUSTAINABLE OFFICE-
FURNITURE MANUFACTURING

POLICY
0% TO LANDFILL



Jim Ecclestone, owner and CEO, has made Calstone's commitment to sustainability imperative.

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The A-Series furniture line is manufactured for CORCAN, which is sold to the federal government.

This green commitment has resulted in a better educated staff and new business based solely on Calstone's green reputation. "We recently began working with Pitney Bowes Mailing, North America, to supply them with our furniture solutions," Ecclestone says. "Our environmental practices helped us to build that relationship."

In addition to its zero-percent-to-landfill policy, Calstone is working towards zero emissions from its manufacturing facility and 100 percent renewable energy for its complete operation. The company also gives tours of its facility, which features a number of skylights, LED bulbs for lighting, and a 2,000-gallon water tank used for cooling spot-welding equipment, flushing toilets, and collecting rainwater from the roof.

While Calstone's sustainable practices and programs may look impressive, any company can take small measures to go green. "All of the sustainable practices that we have implemented throughout our operation have been fairly easy to execute," Ecclestone says. "We like to be creative and think outside the box on these projects."

Thankfully, Ecclestone enjoys sharing

his ideas and best practices with others. "The manufacturing industry has been hit hard through this recession, and I believe it is very important that we share ideas as we move forward," Ecclestone says. "I show [other companies] ways to change to a more environmentally friendly operation by 'low-hanging fruit' methods."

In addition to mentoring others on sustainability, Calstone is currently launching the Remanufacturing Program with Pitney Bowes Mailing and Dehaco Equipment, sourcing out recycling companies to pick up old products throughout the United States that are being replaced with new products from Pitney Bowes and Dehaco. "We not only want to provide our customers with a program that guarantees that our products will not end up in a landfill site, but to make sure that the products we are replacing are taken care of properly as well," Ecclestone says.

Moving forward, the company continues to extend its green efforts, and plans to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to green manufacturing. As Ecclestone says, "Our concept is to continue to be a leader in the industry with our green practices." _a