

# 3PL Americas™

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# Work Benches for the 3PL Industry from a Sustainability Leader

**I F YOU'RE LIKE** most third-party-logistics providers, you've undoubtedly started implementing, or at least thinking about, measures to lessen the impacts of your operations on the environment. You might be reducing the use of energy or water in your distribution center or taking steps to improve the fuel efficiency of your transportation fleet. You may not, however, have extended your green thinking to include the workstation furniture in your facilities. Like a clothing manufacturer tracking its supply chain to ensure that none of its suppliers make use of child labor, a sustainability-focused 3PL provider should be aware of the environmental impacts of its suppliers' activities.

Calstone Inc., a Canadian furniture manufacturer that supplies the

North American market, is a company that has incorporated green concepts throughout its operations and facility. According to Calstone owner and president Jim Ecclestone, doing so has been "lots of fun." He says that "keeping their thinking hats on has been more than interesting for the management team, and it hasn't been overly expensive to integrate green initiatives."

For family-owned Calstone, the path to its current status as a leader in sustainable manufacturing began in 2006, when York University asked the company to take back 50 workstations it had installed in 1987. The university was replacing the furniture with new Calstone pieces as part of a renovation. Because the work stations were fabricated mainly from steel, the company de-

ecided to recycle the components for use in other furniture. In doing so, it was able to reutilize 70 percent of the material in the original work stations. And so began the company's remanufacturing program.



*Jim Ecclestone*

Initially embarrassed to admit to the reuse of material, Ecclestone soon realized that the company was onto something good. York University was certainly pleased with the decision. Shifting their thinking, Ecclestone and his management team – daughters Jamie and Laura, and son Matt – saw distinct opportunities in remanufacturing, to both differentiate the company's offering and significantly reduce its impact on the environment, something the company had been interested in for some time. At a time when the manufacturing sector in Ontario was hurting, says Ecclestone, the company found a good – and inspiring – way to deal with the challenge. Calstone's current Zero Percent to Landfill policy grew from this experience.

Ecclestone notes that it's hard

## Calstone Products for the Warehousing Industry

Calstone produces a complete line of modular pack bench furniture, including, for example, work benches, packing stations, carton stands, shipping and manifest workstations, over-the-conveyor workstations, heavy-duty workstations, cutter systems and roll storage stands. As well as being ergonomically correct, the furniture is certified as a low-emitting product through the Greenguard Indoor Air Quality Program. This certification allows customers to gain points toward their own LEED certification.

The company's products are distributed in the U.S. through Dehnco Equipment and in Canada through Redirack Storage Systems.

The product line includes more than 200 components that can be put together to suit a customer's specific needs and workspace. Customers include large retailers such as Target and J.C. Penney, and numerous 3PL providers. Standard orders are shipped within days, custom orders within three to four weeks.



work to manufacture nowadays, compared with in the past. Like third-party-logistics providers, manufacturers face increasing customer expectations and stiff competition. Improving efficiencies is critical. And environmental responsibility is as important for furniture manufacturers responding to RFPs as it is for 3PLs. Calstone addresses these needs

in all of its processes and product plans, as well as in its manufacturing facility.

### ■ A Model Green Manufacturer

In addition to its remanufacturing program, through which every component – wood, steel and laminate – of the old furniture it takes back is recycled or reused, Calstone has implemented all kinds of green initiatives. Fabric used in its furniture is made with fibre suitable for perpetual recycling. The factory boasts a living wall that helps to cleanse the air and skylights to provide natural lighting. It features a 2,000-gallon tank that collects rainwater to be used to flush toilets. The water also cools the spot welding equipment, after which the warmed water is used to heat the air in the plant. Thanks to the simple heat-exchange system, made from a car radiator and a couple of fans, the company has substantially reduced its need for natural gas.



For its efforts, Calstone has been recognized with several awards. The company now provides tours of its plant, even for competitors. As Ecclestone notes, this is a way that he and his company can help the manufacturing sector as it continues to struggle in North America. Some reinvention might benefit them, as it has Calstone.

*This article was written by Kim Biggar, a staff writer with 3PL Americas.*



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