

Customer relationships key to growth

Ask Jason Spencer, Sales and Marketing Manager for Con Cast Pipe of his company's success, and he sums it up in one word: relationships. Building and maintaining relationships are at the very heart of what his company does. Since opening its doors in 1989, Con Cast Pipe has built a solid reputation for its commitment to service and their deep enthusiasm for growing alongside their customers.

The Guelph-based company's commitment to establishing long-term customer relationships has served them well. "Our success can be traced to our belief in doing what's best for our customers. We listen to their feedback and work closely with them at every stage to ensure we're meeting their project goals and schedules," Spencer said. With a sales, engineering, and site service staff that cover a large portion of the province, Con Cast Pipe is positioned to meet the needs of both existing and new clients. "We have five sales representatives that cover southern Ontario and a versatile engineering team that includes six project engineers that provide design and product support for our customer base. The team works alongside our two full-time dedicated technical service representatives to provide seamless product support," he added.

Spencer also credits Con Cast Pipe's superior quality standard for their achievements. "We combine our equipment with leading edge information and logistics systems to produce and deliver the highest quality product possible for our customers. Our modern manufacturing technologies and stringent quality standards ensure we supply durable and cost-effective products," Spencer explained. With a long-history of reliability and life-cycle cost that is considerably lower than other construction materials available, Spencer expects to see continued demand for their product. "Designers, contractors, and owners that specify precast concrete can expect a service life of 100 plus years from a product that gets stronger over time. Customers are asking for reinforced concrete products that are designed in accordance with the high industry quality standards and specifications, and we meet those demands."

With a 80,000 square foot drycast facility and 30,000 square foot wetcast facility to produce precast concrete products, Con Cast Pipe boasts the capacity to meet the needs of its customers. "Our drycast capabilities include pipe from 300 mm to 3000 mm diameter, 1200 mm to 3000 mm diameter maintenance holes, various catch basins, box units up to 3000 mm spans and elliptical pipe from 900 mm to 1950 mm equivalent. Whereas our wetcast capabilities include a variety of box sizes, specialty precast products, and valve chambers," Spencer went on to say. The Con Cast Pipe team pride themselves on their commitment to research and development when it comes to their product offerings. "Our guiding spirit of innovation has served us well. Working alongside our customers, we are continually looking to build on our comprehensive range of infrastructure products."

To better meet the needs of their growing customer base, Con Cast Pipe has made a concerted effort to maximize their product offering. "In addition to manufacturing our standard line of precast concrete products, we are also the licensed manufacturer of the CON/SPAN product for southwestern Ontario. The modular precast system allows for total set-in-place construction of bridges, culverts, underground structures and a wide range of other applications," Spencer said. The widely recognizable system for bridge replacement and new construction has grown immensely in popularity. "The precast arch units can be adapted for curved alignments to compliment the waterway, or designed in multiple span configurations for long distance crossings. The fact it can be configured in numerous ways to meet almost any project makes it a popular solution."

Con Cast Pipe is also associated with Sky Cast which offers the electrical industry with utility and distribution poles as well as a full line-up of decorative street lighting poles. These poles are produced in their Guelph, Ontario operation with a second operation located in Eloy, Arizona that services the southern United States. In both facilities, Sky Cast manufactures prestressed spun concrete poles that are manufactured to meet the various site requirements with varying pole shape styles and colour offerings.

To compliment their already full product line, Con Cast Pipe built an additional production facility located in Oakville, Ontario in 2002. “At this facility, we produce precast concrete sewer pipe and drainage products that compliment the full product line available in our inventory. As Canada’s newest concrete pipe and maintenance hole plant, Con Cast Pipe moves precast manufacturing light years ahead, Spencer went on to say. This new facility allows Con Cast Pipe to take their business to the next level. “We’re introducing the world’s most advanced robotics and automation to the industry. Through this emergent technology, mass production can now come with the highest of quality assurance; offering a consistency and quantity of product never before possible.”

Aside from their product offerings, Con Cast Pipe has also built a solid reputation having worked on several high-profile projects. “Through the years, our team has been afforded the opportunity to work alongside some of the best in the industry. Although it’s difficult to pinpoint one or two specific projects, we were excited to work on the Niagara Tunnel Project. As the supplier of reinforced concrete precast box units, we were selected to manufacture a design that would allow fast and simple assembly of the structures,” Spencer explained. The task of manufacturing the units was like nothing the company had done before. “The project introduced new possibilities for the application of precast concrete box technology. The locking joint design of the boxes is a first and something we are deeply proud of.”

Con Cast Pipe also played an instrumental role in the replacement and expansion of a recycling facility in Mississauga. “The design of the storm water services in the facility originally called for three unique tanks. Considering time constraints on the project, we had to work with our customer and project engineers to come up with an efficient and time-saving alternative. After much consideration, it was decided that the alternative would be to utilize our standard dry cast boxes and alter the originally specified sized tanks,” Spencer said. The company’s ability to shift gears is a testament to their quick thinking. “We understand how important it is to turn a project promptly when you are servicing the sewer and watermain industry. Our team moves quickly with a proven track record for completing projects and specialty items faster than anyone else.”

Like other companies servicing the industry, Con Cast Pipe is well aware of the challenges they face in the coming years. “There are a plethora of challenges we and the industry as a whole are sure to face in the coming years. Many are predicting a slower economy and an overall unstable market. This combined with excess capacity in the market and an increased number of competitive products will lead us to several changes,” Spencer said. In response to this, the company has made a concerted effort to evaluate how they do business. “We understand that the world has changed and we too must change with it. We will do our best to focus our efforts on the right market positioning, our distinct capabilities, and take advantage of what we do best, customer service.”

As for its future, Spencer and the Con Cast Pipe team are excited about new prospects. “We want to develop not only the best products, but also the best people. It’s our belief that total customer satisfaction comes from a total service approach. From competitive pricing and efficient

tendering to fully designed engineering solutions to pre-construction meetings and on-site support, we will continue to meet and exceed our customers' needs," Spencer concluded.

To learn more about Con Cast Pipe, log on to: www.concastpipe.com.

By: Stephen Murdoch