

Retrofitting for changing times

Core values are firm's lifeblood

Joe Johnson Equipment Inc.
jjei.com
Location Innisfil, Ont.
Sector Equipment distribution
Market North and South America

In the last decade, Joe Johnson Equipment, a distributor of infrastructure maintenance equipment, has grown from seven employees in one location in Ontario to 230 in 12 branches across Canada, the United States and, more recently, Chile. It has also increased its revenues from just under \$1-million to more than \$100-million and growing. And it went from being a small business serving municipalities in Ontario to becoming the largest distributor of its kind in Canada and one of the largest in the United States. All this growth started when the company's president and CEO, Joseph Johnson, took an analytical look at his customers and suppliers and realized change was in the air — big change.

At the time, 90% of the company's clients were municipalities that provided services to their own ratepayers directly and owned their own infrastructure maintenance equipment. But with tightening municipal tax revenues and budgets, Mr. Johnson realized municipalities would increasingly be looking to contract out the work in order to reduce costs. "We saw that and we reacted to it and came up with our own financing arm of the company, a rental division, a strong used equipment division, so we would



JOE JOHNSON EQUIPMENT INC. PHOTOGRAPH

The Joe Johnson Equipment Inc. executive team, from left: Jeff Johnson, vice-president; Ted Hui COO; Jason Hannah, vice-president of sales; and Joe Johnson, CEO.

have as many tools in our toolbox for our customers to give them as many options as possible to help them meet their requirements," Mr. Johnson says. "We wanted to be able to always answer yes, we can do that for our customers."

Talk of consolidation in the sector that was traditionally

dominated by mom-and-pop companies was also in the air. "We decided to execute on a consolidation strategy and become the consolidators rather than the consolidated," Mr. Johnson says, something that also positioned the company to better service private-sector clients.

Today, Joe Johnson Equipment's client mix is 60% private-sector and 40% municipal. Just as Mr. Johnson foresaw: "Our private-sector clients are all the large private service companies that are doing the work for the municipalities today." *Alexandra Lopez-Pacheco, Financial Post*

KUBRA
kubra.com
Location Mississauga, Ont.
Sector Technology and business services
Market North America

KUBRA provides customer-interaction management solutions to some of the largest utility, insurance, financial services, health care and communications companies in North America.

In business since 1992, currently with six locations across North America, KUBRA's portfolio of integrated multi-channel outsource solutions include document printing and mailing, e-billing and self-service, document management and payment solutions.

"In addition to our financial and various other strategic goals, we pride ourselves on focusing on two main priorities," says Rick Watkin, CEO. "These are the retention and extraordinary high level of satisfaction from all our clients, and recruiting and retaining an engaged culture for our employees that adheres to our core values of teamwork, tenacity, versatility, integrity and creativity."

Mr. Watkin says that the core values represent "the lifeblood of our business, and form the framework that inspires our people to achieve our vision." In addition, he firmly believes that "when these priorities are well executed and culturally embraced, then all other strategies and objectives are optimized to the fullest potential."

Among the charitable organization KUBRA supports is the Kids' Health Links Foundation, a charity which, through the use of technology, helps young hospital patients stay connected to their family, friends and school. *Bev Cline, Financial Post*

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