



45 YEARS AND STILL GROWING!



Walter Guderian was a teenager when he and his family arrived in Waterloo Region as immigrants from Germany. After working for Otis Elevator for 10 years, Guderian founded Delta Elevator in Kitchener, which is celebrating 45 years of business in Southern Ontario.

Today, President and CEO, Andrew Friedel, manages Delta's daily operations along the same values of integrity,

service and quality that Guderian imbedded into the company's professional culture years ago. It is an approach that dates back to Guderian's apprenticeship days, explains Friedel, and is something customers appreciate still today.

When Delta Elevator started in 1967 it was a one-man maintenance business that Guderian ran from his home. Forty-five years later it is a full service organization with over 100 employees including engineers doing research and design, and skilled workers in the on-site manufacturing facility.

"We are a Canadian company that still designs and manufactures its own product instead of sourcing it from other places in the world," says Friedel. Elevators are built and assembled in pieces. When companies order the components they need from overseas, they aren't able to respond to unanticipated adjustments that might need to be made during the construction phase.

"By manufacturing our products in-house, Delta is able to provide builders with customizable solutions on the spot," he says, "and we only make what we need when we are ready to install it. If something changes in the design of a building or during construction we are able to respond and make



adjustments on the fly rather than having to say that the product is in a container somewhere on the way here and that it's too late to make changes."

In recent years, Delta Elevator has broadened its operations and entered markets in Toronto and Peterborough where the company has established branch offices. Head office and main operations, however, have always been in Kitchener with all intents that they will remain there. Since 2000, administration, manufacturing, repair, and the main parts depot have been located in the 53,000 square foot facility the company owns at 509 Mill Street in Kitchener.

"We have had opportunity to move to other places, but we want to be part of this community," says Friedel. As a community member, Delta has made contributions to various local charities over the years including the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, and Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW). They have also supported the community by recruiting locally and growing from within.



"Trades people are in demand and because of the demographics in Canada it looks like there is going to be quite a shortage," says Friedel. Elevators are not a simple product, he adds, so Delta invests heavily in developing its own trades people, as often as possible choosing to groom their elevator mechanics through the apprenticeship program to ensure that they share the same values and

have the necessary technical capabilities. Delta also has a strong connection to the Canadian Elevator Contractors Association (CECA) an industry organization made up of elevator companies from across the country. Guderian, a past president, was

one of CECA's founding members in 1973. "It was very important to him personally to see this organization develop and become an effective part of what we do as an industry," says Friedel.

Members of CECA work together as a group to promote the elevator industry in Canada. They do that in part by providing the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA), an arms-length organization that approves and inspects every commercial and multi-residential elevator in Ontario, with suggestions about the things that should be considered in terms of improving elevator safety.

Consequently, Ontario is one of the most regulated jurisdictions in Canada when it comes to elevator safety. The result is that the province has one of the best safety records in the country, which according to Friedel means that riding an elevator in Ontario "is one of the safest ways for people to move."

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