

IN PROFILE

Taylor Associates: **Third Generation Family Business Keeps on Growing**

Family business enterprises are a cornerstone of the Canadian economy.

Built on the expertise and talent of their founders and successors, a “key challenge lies in leveraging what the company does well by determining what’s been winning the battles, and then, finding innovative ideas for future growth,” says Allen Taylor, President and CEO of L.E. Taylor Associates.

Privately-owned Taylor Associates manufactures and distributes pipe, cable and conduit support products from and around the world. Metal stamping, punching, forming, drilling, and assembly operations are combined with office, warehouse and distribution operations in Hamilton, Burlington, and Vancouver.

Founded in 1964, Taylor’s father, L. Eric Taylor, was a skilled machinist, who, until the project was mothballed, managed the machine shop department at the ill-fated AVRO Arrow jet fighter production facility in Malton.

Knowing his talents, Eric’s uncle, Wilson Collins, owner of Collins Never-Fail Products, a metal fabricating operation in Hamilton, offered him a position in his business. The family company manufactured a variety of products that found their way into Canadian homes, including garbage and watering cans for General Housewares, the company that later became Canadian Tire.

“Following the death of Uncle Wilson, and the realization that the business was in financial difficulty, my father developed the core philosophy that our company still adheres to today,” says Taylor. “He pared down the operation, sold redundant equipment, and focused on a few profitable products in a turn around effort that worked.”

Today, as a third generation family business, Taylor Associates still benefits from the production philosophy and business approach that saved it in the early sixties: make it simple and add value to commoditized products – always,” says Taylor.

Problem Solvers

In 1986, Taylor joined the family business after earning a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Windsor.

“My father taught me, right from day one, that the first question to ask a potential client is: ‘what are the top three products that you are sourcing that give you the biggest headaches?’” remembers Taylor. This philosophy still drives our company; the value you create for clients is in solving problems, as opposed to merely providing a product.”

A second facet that characterizes Taylor Associates’ approach to customer service is “speed,” says Taylor. “We are fast to respond to quotations. We pride ourselves on speedy delivery and fulfillment rates, rush deliveries, turning around product quickly on the production floor, and, on the fabrication side, we are skilled in complex product set ups and short production runs.”



Alan Taylor

Taylor Associates **Snapshot**

- Metal fabrication company founded in 1964
- Third generation enterprise
- Warehouse and distribution operations in Hamilton, Burlington, and Vancouver.
- Special interest in family enterprises, the challenges and opportunities



Feltmate Delibato Heagle

L A W Y E E R S

InProfile showcases clients of Feltmate Delibato Heagle, focussing on their business acumen and providing insight into their growth and success.

The company's organizational structure is fairly flat. Across the company employees are empowered to take ownership of a problem, to solve it quickly and efficiently to the satisfaction of their customer, internal or external.

Solving problems, speed, exceptional customer service, all explain why Taylor Associates succeeds – and has built an enviable reputation — in a competitive sector characterized by a number of large scale national and multi-national competitors.

“One of the reasons we have so many long-term and repeat customers is that we have been able to prove, time and again, which is hard to do in a commodity business, that the cost of doing business with us is much lower than our competitors,” says Taylor.

Taylor Associates' annual sales are in the \$20 million range, and “in Canada, we are fortunate to have earned, by a significant margin, the largest share of products that we manufacture or distribute,” says Taylor, with justifiable pride.

Leverage What You Do Well

A reflective and articulate man, Allen Taylor gives a lot of thought as to the necessary ingredients for creating, building and sustaining family enterprises.

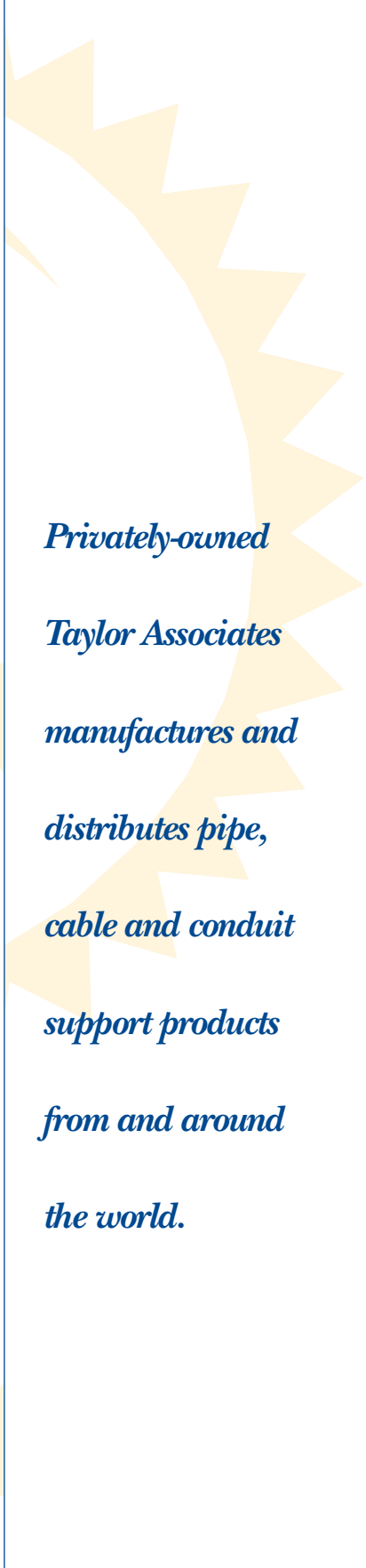
He applies these to his own company, and as the newly appointed national Chair of CAFE —Canadian Association of Family Enterprise — he aims to bring together and assist other family and multi-generational companies.

An “insatiably curious” person, Taylor wants and needs to understand how businesses work, what makes them succeed, how they can overcome challenges and thrive.

He prides himself on his ability to delegate at Taylor Associates; relying often on the expertise of vice-president and general manager Gary Day, a “talented, detailed-oriented person, whose skills complement my own,” says Taylor.

In addition to extensive community volunteer work, Taylor spends time diversifying the family holdings that, much of the time, allow him to transfer knowledge and expertise back to the core company. He has brought his expertise, through active shareholder involvement and long-term “smart money” investment, to companies in areas as diverse as software development and biodegradable plastics.

Taylor is always busy, always building his toolbox of skills. Married to Lesley Stewart from CH Morning Live, and a father of three, Taylor ensures that he has time for his family. A voracious reader, these days he is learning all he can about social media and natural capitalism.



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Taylor Associates
manufactures and
distributes pipe,
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