



AIME Success Story: Campbell Monument Company, Belleville, Ontario

Company Profile:

Manufacturer of stone monuments for cemeteries, gardens and public features

- **Country of Ownership:** Canada
- **Year Established:** 1909 (Employee owned)
- **Exporting:** Yes
- **Primary Business Activity:** Manufacturer
- **Total Sales (\$CDN):** \$1-\$5 million
- **Number of Employees:** 28
- **Products and Services:** Monuments, cutstone & stone products, plate making & related services, signs and advertising specialties

Background:

Campbell Monument Company is celebrating its 100th year in business. Founded in 1909 by John Campbell in Trenton, Ontario, the company relocated to Belleville in 1930. In 1984, third generation owner William Campbell gave each of the employees a share of the company and made each of them directors. Since then Campbell Monument has been an employee owned company. The company has grown to six locations in Ontario and maintains the same commitment to quality and craftsmanship today that was the foundation of its business a century ago.

Campbell serves the upper end of the headstone and monument market with a team of fine artists and designers that have made the company an award winning, industry leader in outstanding design and implementation. People come to Campbell for their pride of craftsmanship and their ability to create a monument that is a “personal reflection of life”.

Like many manufacturers in Ontario the monument business is facing significant competition from offshore suppliers. China, India and Africa are all shipping quality product to Canada at costs that are cheaper than Canadian made product. In order to fight this competitive threat, Campbell Monument needs to continue to offer leading edge product design and quality through ongoing training and education of their employees. While this is a long-term process in this industry, management continues to look for opportunities to provide employees with skills upgrades that will stave off competition and help preserve this 100-year old company.

Yves Landry Foundation Introduces AIME

The Yves Landry Foundation (YLF) launched the AIME initiative (Achieving Innovation and Manufacturing Excellence) in the fall of 2008. AIME was developed by YLF and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development & Trade to support all manufacturers in Ontario, especially small companies like Campbell Monument who were faced with having to cut any training that might help them develop innovations to offset competitive threats.

James Smith of Campbell Monument heard about the AIME initiative through Loyalist College in Belleville. Upon inquiring into the funding program he discovered that the company qualified for four specific training

programs; an extensive company-wide series of workshops provided by their key supplier in the Eastern Townships, a restoration workshop, a sculpting design seminar with the American Institute of Commemorative Art and a safety training program. The company received \$24,000 grant from YLF and undertook the company-wide series of workshops in early April. The balance of the programs will be completed later in the year.

Preserving the Brand

In the words of James Smith, “The most profound benefit we received from the training so far has been the visible lift in employee morale. We tend to work a lot in isolation and for the staff to be exposed to a bigger group of people made them feel like they were part of a larger industry. We had a chance to interact with some of the industry’s premier stone carvers and we still have ongoing conversations with them and are bringing our experience to bear based on the learning from those workshops. After the training we immediately implemented a new order tracking system and sand blasting process as well as purchasing some new tools.

Ours is a slow moving industry and most of what we are implementing from this training will have long-term benefits. However the improved morale in the company is driving a more innovative approach in various areas of our business.

We have already noticed an increase in our market share and improvement in our sales. Year-to-date we are ahead of budget and the rest of the year tends to be our strongest period. The training we have had through the AIME program is helping the company preserve its brand through design and quality improvements and allowed us to defend ourselves against the offshore imports.”

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