

## Kilmarnock Enterprise credits strength of staff for exceptional growth

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In the category of the top 500 fastest growing companies in Canada, Kilmarnock Enterprise is 451, which Isabelle Graveline, president and CEO, said comes down to yet another number: 70, the number of employees the Smiths Falls company currently employs.

"We recognize the strength of our company is really our people," Graveline said. "We want to be an employer of choice for people."

They do this by ensuring each new hire aligns with their core values of trust, responsibility, integrity and professionalism. Once that fit is confirmed, Kilmarnock Enterprise works to keep their quality staff by offering continued opportunity for career growth and advancement.

Graveline said each employee in their industrial service company has their own development plan for professional growth. This focus on human capital has paid off in increased sales as employees build on their relationships with clients.

"Kilmarnock Enterprise is honored to be on the PROFIT 500 ranking," says Graveline. "This achievement reflects the strength of our customer service and the dedication of our employees."

Their website ([www.kilmarnock.ca](http://www.kilmarnock.ca)) states every employee has training in WHMIS, Fork-truck, Scissor Lift, Fall Arrest, and Lock-out Procedures. The 2015 PROFIT 500 nod recognizes the company's impressive 82 per cent growth since 2010. Their 2014 revenue range is listed on PROFIT500.com as being between \$10 to \$19.9 million CAD.

"The PROFIT 500 represents the highest tier of entrepreneurialism in Canada," says James Cowan, editor-in-chief of PROFIT and Canadian Business. "They should be lauded for the positive economic contributions they've made to their communities – and the entire country. They are examples of what can be accomplished with innovation, discipline and determination." This growth didn't happen overnight or even over the last five years.

Graveline said it is the result of a very successful implementation of an evolving strategic plan, which they have been working on since incorporating in 1996.

"It's been a fun ride," the company owner said.

She calculates that Kilmarnock Enterprise has seen 1,500 per cent growth since 1996 through their efforts of diversifying their client base and moving into new areas such as project management. This work was well underway when the Hershey chocolate plant (a former client) announced its plans to close the Smiths Falls plant in 2007. In 2001, the service company moved to its current home (a 40,000 square foot facility) on Hershey Drive and opened a satellite facility in Trenton, Ont., (20,000 square feet).

"Those two moves really opened up a lot more opportunity for us," Graveline said.

Specifically, the additional space allowed Kilmarnock Enterprise to offer in-house manufacturing services to its clients. The growth has been so strong and consistent over the years that it has necessitated a complete re-imagining of the company's internal structure to include middle management, a full-time health and safety manager, full-time quality management system manager, a Chief Financial Officer, and a full-time human resources (known as people development) staff member.

"It's been a journey," Graveline said.

The path forward doesn't look as though it will relent in any way with plans to keep the focus on employee development as a means to grow sales into the foreseeable future.

"We have a very definitive strategic plan going forward and it's based on our people," Graveline said.

Their aim will be to ensure each employee is given regular feedback on their performance in addition to offering opportunities to grow and better themselves professionally.

This is the second time PROFIT 500 have recognized Kilmarnock Enterprise. Last year they were among the top 500 fastest growing companies. Also in 2014, Graveline was honoured by Chatelaine as the 36th of W1000 Canadian Top Female Entrepreneurs.

Kilmarnock Enterprise provides multi-trade services to manufacturers east of the Greater Toronto Area. Their expertise lies in design and engineering, project management, custom machining and fabrications, mill righting, process and power piping, installations of new equipment, commissioning and decommissioning of manufacturing plants, and preventative maintenance.

