

Well-Equipped Firm

+ Oxford Builders Supplies sells and rents several types of construction equipment to contractors in Canada and strives to stay on top of industry trends. *By Kathryn Jones*

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Oxford Builders Supplies

www.oxfordbuilders.ca

Proj. 2008 revenues: \$18 million

Headquarters: London, Ontario

Specialty: Equipment

Employees: 25

> Oxford Builders Supplies is a full-service equipment and maintenance supplier that provides a broad range of new and used equipment to the Canadian construction industry. "Our equipment isn't your average rental equipment," Mike Demelo, vice president of equipment operations, asserts. "We have basically everything you can think of from carpet kickers, concrete vibrators and skid steer loaders up to tower cranes, mobile cranes and 120-

foot scissor lifts. Anything you would imagine to be on a construction site, that equipment can be found here."

Although the London, Ontario-based company considers itself "a mid- to larger-size operation" in the province, Demelo says, it has an immediate advantage over its competition as an equipment division of one of the largest construction companies in the country, EllisDon Corp. "Being an equipment division of EllisDon allows us to move equipment around as needed," he explains.

A Contractor's Best Friend

Founded in 1960, Oxford Builders Supplies operates out of three facilities in Kitchener and London, Ontario, and

Expanding its Reach

Oxford Builders Supplies sells and rents the following types of equipment:

- > Aerial equipment
- > Air tools and compressors
- > Compaction and excavation equipment
- > Concrete tools and pumps
- > Cranes, hoists and jacks
- > Electrical equipment
- > Forming materials
- > Generators
- > Material handling equipment
- > Heaters and fans
- > Power tools and hand tools
- > Pumps and accessories
- > Surveying equipment and radios
- > Skid steers and forklifts
- > Trailers, washcars and storage units
- > Welding equipment



Calgary, Alberta. Approximately 70 percent of its business consists of supplying equipment for EllisDon projects, and the other 30 percent entails renting equipment out to other contractors.

The company owns 1,400 pieces of equipment, not including bulk forming equipment, Demelo says. "All of our equipment is circulated quite a bit, so, a lot of aerial pieces such as scissor lifts and booms, and a lot of new tower cranes and mobile cranes, Bobcats and skid steer loaders," he notes. "We also store a lot of reusable equipment for our EllisDon superintendents from our own job sites."

Watching the Industry Evolve

The equipment industry is advancing rapidly, and Oxford Builders Supplies stays on top of new trends by supplying

the most cutting-edge equipment available, according to Demelo. "We make sure we're competitive in the market and always look at the newer equipment that comes out," he says.

The newest equipment available on the market is larger and faster than what has been seen before. "The equipment is evolving at a quick pace, especially when you talk about the cranes or lifting equipment," Demelo says. "You're seeing larger and larger [pieces]. A 60-footer used to be impressive; now they have a 135-foot lift. Every year, the crane manufacturers come out with a mobile or tower crane that can lift more and produce faster cycle times. As for the man/material type of equipment, you're seeing larger and quicker hoists to get guys and materials up better and faster."

Enjoying Continued Success

Due to present market conditions, more days of uncertainty lie ahead. "The housing market is softening a bit; but, if you look at it overall, the commercial and civil construction markets are strong and will continue to be fairly strong," Demelo says.

"And I think infrastructure – roads, bridges and subways, civil type of work – will continue to be strong. There really is no choice; contractors have to work in those areas."

Regardless of the state of the industry, there will always be a need for construction equipment and Oxford Builders Supplies' services will continue to be in demand, Demelo notes. "We have a lot of equipment in the areas in which we serve and we are continually expanding those areas," he states. ●



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