



President Julie Anne Smedley and Chairman and CEO Gary Scholl lead POI Business Interiors, Canada's largest Steelcase distributor and one of its top-10 North American distributors.

Quality experience

Brian Salgado Canada-based POI Business Interiors says it sets itself apart from the competition with the quality of its work force.

The biggest challenge POI Business Interiors faces these days is finding talented people to help grow the business in the competitive employment market in Canada.

This could be particularly troublesome for a company like POI, which, according to Chairman and CEO Gary Scholl, sets itself apart from the competition with the quality of its work force. "We distinguish ourselves through the quality experience our employees

provide to our clients," he says.

The Canadian market is noticing, as well, as POI, one of the largest contract furniture service providers in Canada, was named one of the country's 50-best-managed companies for four consecutive years by Deloitte, CIBC, the *National Post* and Queens University. It is judged on several criteria by a panel of academic and business leaders.

"Now our process is to recruit through our best customers, not

their people, but their outstanding suppliers' people," Scholl says.

In 2000, POI was the only Canadian distributor to be awarded Steelcase's Exemplary Performance Award, based on its ongoing ability to provide exemplary service levels to Steelcase and POI's mutual clients.

Those characteristics are still practiced by POI today, according to Scholl.

"In our business, we all need to find ways to differentiate ourselves," Scholl adds. "Our competitors all say they do the same things, but in reality they don't. We reinvest internally to have the best processes in place to look after our customers and maintain our quality service levels."

Scholl's father, Maxwell, founded POI in 1958, and one of the company's first innovations in the office furniture industry was to provide customers with planning and speci-

fication services to improve their office environment. In 1968, the company says it initiated the design of facilities using intelligent programming, space planning and imaginative furniture applications.

Today, POI is Canada's largest Steelcase distributor and one of its top-10 North American distributors. POI also distributes products from a number of other innovative manufacturers. It offers numerous complementary services, as well. The company has headquarters in Toronto and currently has offices in Barrie and London, Ontario, with additional locations to be announced in the near future. "POI's workplace facilities group utilizes today's advancing tech-

nology and its furniture-planning expertise to create high-performance workspaces from any systems furniture product," the company says.

POI claims to have one of the largest inventories and databases of used office furniture in Canada. This enables it to offer clients buy back, trade in, used purchase and rental options.

For renewal of existing furniture, POI offers repair and cleaning, refurbishment and refinishing on an as-needed basis, the company says. Wood veneers, paints and laminates can be polished and refinished as required. Upholstered products such as chairs and panels can be steam-cleaned and stain protected on-site. ■

POI BUSINESS INTERIORS INC.

POI is an office and healthcare environment company providing architectural, furniture and technology products and related services. It focuses on enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of its clients' space resulting in improved business results.



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