



By **SHELLEY WHITE**

Joe Orofiamma knows the business of cleaning products inside and out. It's an industry he's been in since the age of 18 when he joined the family business, working as a production manager alongside his father Onorio.

"He taught me everything from shipping and batching to working on the bank for money, and everything in between" Orofiamma said.

Now, with 19 years of expertise and a young, energetic team behind him, Orofiamma's helping to take his company – RoyalPak – to the next level of growth and Canada-wide expansion.

RoyalPak is a full-service company based in Etobicoke, Ont. The company manufactures and packages cleaning products for

the retail, janitorial, industrial and automotive markets. RoyalPak boasts a 17,000-sq. foot facility, which includes a state-of-the-art laboratory, three filling lines, tank farms and in-house silk-screening capabilities. RoyalPak offers over 600 product formulations, from all-purpose cleaners to deodorizers and engine degreasers.

Orofiamma founded RoyalPak "from scratch" in 1997 with his father and his brother Paul after the elder Orofiamma sold his company, Proline Chemical Pack-



aging.

"We started RoyalPak in 1997 in an 8000 sq. foot building with nothing in it,"

RoyalPak

Turns Past Success Into Future Growth



Orofiamma said. For the first four years, he was a jack-of-all-trades.

“I was doing sales during the day and we were going back to the plant that night and making product,” he said. “We went into it with the attitude that we’re going to make what everybody needs, stay under the radar, stay away from the big boys and handle all the small guys.”

One of RoyalPak’s notable features was the fact that they offered private label products at a low minimum.

“If you had an ‘XYZ’ company and you wanted ‘XYZ’ on the label, we did that,” he said. “The advantage I had was that I was offering a private label for any quantity, so no one could touch me.”

Customers also appreciate that with RoyalPak, custom work is never a problem, Orofiamma said.

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“ We e have many different bottles, we silkscreen in-house so we paint the bottles with their names, our mini-mums are low and we’re very, very flexible,” he said. “So, in reality, if someone wanted something tomorrow, we could do it.”

The private-label products turned into a huge selling point for RoyalPak and helped gain many of the clients they still have today.

“We believed that our small batches would turn into big batches, and that’s

what happened,” he said. “A lot of guys grew with us and they’re still growing with us.”

Because of success and growth in 2003, Orofiamma hired Marnie Johnston to handle all the purchasing, inventory and customer service. According to Orofiamma, “(Johnston) is as valuable as they come and has been essential to our success.”

Continued On Page 54

RoyalPak has now expanded its market place to include contract packaging for retail stores, and manufactures a complete line of environmentally-friendly “EcoLogo” products. Orofiamma said RoyalPak’s wide array of 600 formulations are second to none.

With this combination of top-notch products and personal service, Orofiamma has grown the company into a one-stop shop for customers.

“I take care of my customers with quality and economy of product, and with superior customer service,” he said. “We don’t want someone looking somewhere else. We want to do everything for them.”

In fact, customer service is so important to RoyalPak, they don’t even have voice mail. Orofiamma said “we answer every call that comes in.”

In May 2012, RoyalPak’s energy level increased significantly when Toronto entrepreneur Bill Hennessey made a capital investment in the company. Because of Hennessey’s experience building businesses and his understanding of strategy execution, the partnership with Orofiamma was a natural fit. The company now had a clear intent of growing the business to become a national player.

Hennessey was attracted to RoyalPak because it was a stable business with a significant customer base. He saw it had the potential for growth with sufficient reinvestment and a renewed push.

According to Hennessey, since the management change, RoyalPak has started doing work on behalf of the largest distributors in the country.

“We’ve got sophisticated investors backing us,” he said. “And, we want to become one of the largest manufacturers of cleaning products in Canada.”

Hennessey sits on the Canadian Sanitation Supply Association (CSSA) Board of Advisors, which he said has been great for meeting other major industry players and gaining valuable industry experience.

“(The CSSA) has been great,” Hennessey said. “I’ve been surprised by how receptive they’ve been to the young guy. (Executive Director) Mike Nosko came and met me shortly after the transaction, and treated me like I had been in the industry for years.”

Hennessey said that his involvement



with the Board has also played a role in communicating to the industry at large that RoyalPak is ready to make some aggressive moves.

“Word is getting out that RoyalPak is in growth mode and we’re more than prepared to take on larger contracts,” he said.

In addition to setting up the company to take on larger accounts, Hennessey expects the majority of RoyalPak’s growth to come from acquisition.

Additionally, Hennessey feels that “there are a lot of baby boomers running businesses that don’t have succession plans, and I want to be their solution to that.”

“A lot of owners in our industry are 60-plus and for whatever reason, their kids aren’t interested in taking over their businesses,” he said. “The lack of young blood in the industry has forced these aging owners to put succession planning decisions on the back burner. We can now offer those owners a retirement solution and we’re flexible on the terms. Some want to exit yesterday, some want to be phased out over five years.”

A graduate of the Richard Ivey School of Business, Hennessey sits on the Ivey Alumni Advisory Board, which includes members primarily from large Canadian companies including banks and private equity firms.

“The relationships I have made at Ivey are a huge asset when it comes to financing our growth,” he said. “My fellow alumni know what RoyalPak is up to, and the idea of investment in a stable baby-boomer-driven industry like ours excites them.”

Hennessey is also hiring industry ex-

perts and injecting young blood into the company. One of these young executive is plant manager John Kotacka, who comes from KIK, a huge industry player.

Kotacka said he joined the RoyalPak team because he recognized that the company is on the cusp of major growth. While it values its smaller customers, he said that it also has the ability to serve the bigger players.

“We’re able to bring on-time delivery, so we’re not carrying the inventory, (the customer is) not carrying the inventory and we can get a turnaround usually within three- to five- business days of whatever the order is,” Kotacka said. “That’s what makes us unique.”

While RoyalPak is able to turn around 50 or 100 cases for a customer, Kotacka said “when we get to the bigger ones, we can turn it on and say, ‘Now you’ve ordered 10,000 cases, and this is how we’re going to accomplish it.’”

Three or four months down the line, we could be looking at a whole new face for RoyalPak, he said.

Hiring Kotacka has allowed Orofiamma to forget about production and focus all of his energy on what he does best – selling. This has allowed Hennessey to expend his energy on strategy and getting RoyalPak to the next level.

While the company’s new blood is a boon to RoyalPak’s growth strategy, Hennessey said that having a veteran such as Orofiamma on the team, ensures clients can feel confident about what they are getting.

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RoyalPak Turns Past Success Into Future Growth

Continued From Page 54

“(Orofiamma) is as trustworthy as they come,” he said. “He’s hard-working, he understands what customers need and how to manage those relationships. And, most importantly, he’s a lot of fun to be around.”

“(Hennessey) and I get along great,” Orofiamma said. “Our skill sets complement each other very well.”

Twenty-eight-year-old Hennessey was chosen by *Profit Magazine* as one of Canada’s **Top 20 Entrepreneurs** under the age of 30, and recently won one of eight North American Business Excellence Awards.

“Because (Hennessey) started in the trenches as the sole employee at his other business, and my brother and I did the same with RoyalPak, we share a special bond and we don’t ever forget what it took both of us to get here,” Orofiamma said.

RoyalPak will be exhibiting for the first time in five years at this year’s Can Clean trade show being held Apr. 30 to May 1 at the International Centre, Hall 5, in Mississauga, Ont. (Booth 236).

“It feels great to be going back to the

(Can Clean) show,” Orofiamma said. “We’re excited to see all the industry players and update them on our progress.”

Like his colleagues, Orofiamma thinks the next few months are going to produce big results.

“We started with all the small guys who couldn’t get manufacturers to make their small batches, and built up the business into one account which buys 600,000 bottles a year from us,” Orofiamma said.

“Now, with our new approach, we’re able to walk in to the bigger guys from day one, and tell them what we’re all about.

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We weren’t able to do that before.”

But have all these changes affected the way RoyalPak does business? According to Orofiamma, “our goal is to service some of the larger companies, but we’re never going to forget about the small guys who have built the foundation of our business.”

For more information, please contact RoyalPak at (416) 746-4226 or visit the company’s web site at www.royalpak.com

Continued From Page 61

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