

A modern office interior with large windows, exposed ductwork, and a long white desk. Two wire mesh chairs are in the foreground. The background shows a city view through the windows and a lounge area with white armchairs.

DRECHSEL BUSINESS INTERIORS

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Smart office solutions



Drechsel Business Interiors offers products with value in mind—to both the consumer and the environment.

DRECHSEL BUSINESS INTERIORS, the Toronto-based office furniture supplier, began in 1991 and is a leading distributor of Knoll, an international provider of workplace furnishings. Drechsel Business Interiors offers a premium, high quality product line.

This month, Fred Drechsel, CEO and namesake of Drechsel Business Interiors, spoke with *The Canadian Business Journal* about his history in the office furniture industry and how he has

taken that knowledge in building Drechsel Business Interiors.

Quality products

To say that the office furniture market is competitive would be an understatement. Dominated across the map by big box stores like Grand & Toy, Office Depot, and a host of other big box retailers, Drechsel Business Interiors represents the opposite of the spectrum and with this has established a niche in the office furniture market. Drechsel Business Interiors offers unique, value-driven products, not “cookie cutter” furniture, as described by Drechsel.

Congratulations Drechsel Business Interiors

This profile is a great testament to your success in the industry.

Scotiabank wishes you, your partners and customers many more years of success and thank you for making us part of your business.

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Drechsel Business Interiors has specialized in distributing its product to the corporate buyer.

“When we sell to a client we try to sell a total package matching their budget and culture; what their image should be,” Drechsel said. “That culture penetrates all the way through to their employees, the philosophy, the type of business they’re in. We try to understand and analyze the client. Box stores don’t have the qualified people to analyze what the client needs; box stores are all price point driven.”

Office furniture supplied by Drechsel Business Interiors can also be customized for any client. As Drechsel summarized, “It’s designed, but it also

has to all work together and be functional. We want to be more than just a distributor of products.”

Economic times

Recently celebrating 20 years in business, Drechsel Business Interiors hasn’t looked back. The company has grown to more than 60 employees and has emerged as a full service furniture dealership, including everything from purchasing, installing, and servicing the product, to providing a total package for the client.

Through the recession, a range of big projects kept the company busy, and volume increases in the past year saw Drechsel Business



Interiors report about \$30 million in sales, up more than 25 per cent from the previous year. While the actual office furniture sector is not growing much, and appears to be quite constant, Drechsel Business Interiors is happy to report plenty of business growth.

Green initiatives

Drechsel, a native of Germany, noted his curiosity with the North American, throwaway style society.

"When I came to Canada, I couldn't understand why people would trade in their car after three years," Drechsel said. "[Furniture], the same, is not built that well because the

companies need business three or four years down the road, so the stuff falls apart, you throw it away, and you replace it.

"That was a little appalling to me, so my logical and my thinking is that we should really try to save the environment and help as much as possible. Manufacturing is already something where you use a lot of resources, and those resources, whether you build something good quality or not as good, are the same—the same steel, the same fabric, the same wood, the same labour, so why not have something that is sustainable? We figure that sustainable thinking is important."



Further, Drechsel Business Interiors also strives for its clients to reuse, or update, existing furniture with new fabrics, tops, or surfaces, and then blend this refinished furniture with newer selections, something Drechsel feels is “a good green story.”

“We use up as much as we can from their existing furniture and refinish it, blending it with new so it doesn’t get thrown into a landfill,” Drechsel said. “When you look at the big box stores, the products are not that great quality-wise, and it is more like a throwaway approach, five years later the veil falls off the chair and they throw it out. We try to sell quality so you don’t have that continuous turnover.”

This environmental sustainability approach has been a strength for Drechsel Business Interiors in recent years, and has been engaged by big-name clients like PricewaterhouseCoopers and Adidas.

“We feel that’s just good business in our environment, watching the environmental issues which are becoming bigger and bigger every year. That’s a new trend that we’re following and promoting,” Drechsel concluded. “Our strength is selling an upgraded environment, blending wood into the environment. We can do 500 offices and the quality and consistency throughout every office is the same.” **CBJ**



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