

IN PROFILE

Seals Unlimited: Built on Excellence

As soon as you walk in the door of Mississauga-based Seals Unlimited, you know that this family-owned enterprise is built around a culture of “excellence.”

Printed, framed quotations about excellence from leaders of yesterday, including Winston Churchill and Benjamin Franklin, line the walls. As an example: “Excellence: We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act...but a habit” (Aristotle).

Founded in 1971, Seals Unlimited buys, sells and manufactures seals and gaskets, providing value-added engineered solutions to its clients.

Operating out of 10,000 square feet of office space and warehouse, its client base is primarily in the sectors of nuclear power generation, military applications, aerospace, steel mills and water purification (in the industrial/commercial/industrial).

Achievement, leadership, along with the commitment to be the best in all its sectors, are all aspects of excellence, says company president Rob Hamilton. This attitude underscores the company’s activities in regard to its customers, suppliers and employees.

Central to the company’s strategy for success “is to continually build our company’s quality assurance accreditation program to differentiate us, as well as retain, and further expand, our client base,” he says. “Quality assurance is critical to our customers’ success.”

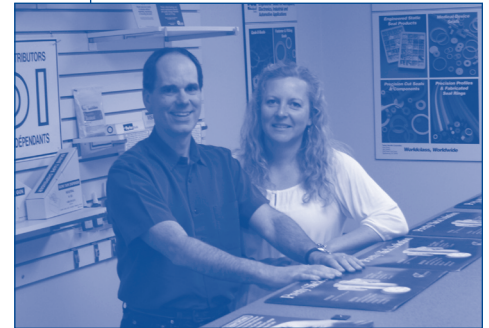
Multiple quality assurance accreditations

Hamilton has been with the company since he graduated with a Bachelor of Economics from McMaster University in 1981. “I started here right out of university, figuring I would stay for a couple of years,” he recalls.

But as he moved through the ranks “learning every aspect of the business,” eventually becoming Operations Manager, Hamilton immersed himself in what he came to regard as his life’s work.

In 2009 Hamilton and his wife Sybille, who joined the company full-time that year, bought the company when the owners retired. It was not an auspicious time in terms of the global economy. When the Hamiltons bought the company, the economy was thriving. When the deal closed, the economy had gone into recession.

Yet Hamilton, as a veteran in the sector, knew how to keep the company thriving, even expanding. Together, the Hamiltons furthered their already aggressive strategy of “attaining the highest levels of accreditation” wherever possible within the sectors they service and support.



Seals Unlimited staff, Rob and Sybille Hamilton

Snapshot: Seals Unlimited

- Family-owned, entrepreneurial company based in Mississauga.
- Buys, sells and manufactures seals and gaskets, providing value-added engineered solutions to its clients.
- Adheres to an aggressive strategy of “attaining the highest levels of accreditation” wherever possible within the sectors they service and support.
- Client base is primarily in sectors of nuclear power generation, military applications, aerospace, steel mills and water purification (industrial/commercial/industrial).
- North American client base, strategically expanding into Europe, South America and Asia.
- Provides ongoing support to local charitable organizations, institutions and sports associations.



Feltmate Delibato Heagle

L A W Y E R S

InProfile showcases clients of Feltmate Delibato Heagle, focussing on their business acumen and providing insight into their growth and success.

As example, they have maintained registration to ISO 9001:2008, attained certification to CSA Z299.2 and have been CANPAC audited to this rigorous standard and most recently, are registered with Canada's Controlled Goods Program. On the horizon are ISO 14001 and OSHAS 18001 registration.

By adhering to their passion for excellence, Seals Unlimited navigated the company through the choppy waters of the downturn, along with enjoying positive new client growth and almost total client retention. Today, the company is well positioned for continuous growth in the medium-long term.

Client-focused solutions

Going forward, the Hamiltons are determined to build on their international scope. While most clients are in Canada and the United States, the number of customers in Europe, South America and Asia is growing.

A significant portion of expansion is based on referrals. In part, this is due to the "hands-on, client-focused" nature of the company. A number of the 15 employees have been with the company for decades; they and Hamilton have built longstanding relationships with clients.

In addition, the Hamiltons and their employees have forged solid relationships within their community, providing ongoing support to local charitable organizations, institutions and sports associations.

Asked what advice they would impart to entrepreneurs, the Hamiltons do not hesitate at all.

"Ask lots of questions about your clients' needs," they say. "You need to understand the current and future applications of the equipment you provide and support — and how that can positively impact your client's bottom line."

After all, say the Hamiltons, referring to one of the framed quotations, "It's a funny thing about life: if you refuse to accept anything but the very best, you very often get it." (William Somerset Maugham).



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Suite 200, 3600 Billings Court, Burlington, ON L7N 3N6
Telephone: 905.639.8881 • Fax: 905.639.8017 • Toll Free: 1.800.636.6927

Suite 301, 2010 Winston Park Drive, Oakville, ON L6H 5R7
Telephone: 905.829.3200 • Fax: 905.829.3277 • Toll Free: 1.800.636.6927