

Client Profile

Learn how real businesses achieved success in their industries through innovative strategies such as expansion into new markets, new and differentiated product and service offerings, enhancing operations and cash flow management.

Engineering a new future for Cambridge

Local company redesigns the Cambridge skyline

Since starting his company almost four years ago, Brian Collier has never had to chase business. His experience and expertise has drawn clients almost from the beginning.

One reason is his diverse background in civil engineering and building architecture. Another is how he has set his company apart: Built by Engineers Construction Inc. in Cambridge, Ontario, is a one-stop shop, able to take clients from concept to completion, even helping them with real estate, from purchasing land to finding suitable tenants.

Collier graduated from Memorial University in St. John's having studied engineering. He immediately started amassing experience, working with, among others, a design-build contractor for eight years.

He then ventured with partners to start a construction company that would design and build over \$35 million worth of commercial and industrial buildings. Finally, he set out on his own. "Clients found me based on previous relationships because I had been in the area for 15 years," Collier says. "People liked the design of our product."

Built by Engineers Construction started with two field people and one office administrator. The company has now grown to 22 people – architects, engineers, office staff, heavy equipment operators and skilled craftspeople. Its sales went from \$3.4 million the first year to \$13.1 million last year, doubling its growth two years in a row.

Collier's company, which operates out of a 6,000-square-foot office in the centre of Cambridge, does conventional and pre-engineered building construction, renovations and retrofits, among other offerings. Collier himself has designations in five areas of building code expertise, from plumbing to structural design. "We take the job from empty lot to here's the key," says Collier. "It's a rare thing to have all of that under one roof."

At the moment, Collier says his company is right where he wants it. "We're not turning away work but we're trying to focus on in-house efficiencies before we take the next step to grow," he explains. "I managed to reduce overhead by \$400,000 last year to this year. I'm just trying to find that sweet spot."



Brian Collier (right), founder of Built by Engineers Construction Inc., and his team, including Roy Case (left), are currently working on a 13,000 square-foot state-of-the-art veterinary clinic in Cambridge.
Jon Nicholls Photography



Collier and his team are currently working on a 13,000-square-foot state-of-the-art veterinary clinic, the Animal Hospital of Cambridge, as well as a job for an industrial client, Armour Alloys, which processes and distributes stainless and aluminum sheet and coil. “You get a wide variety of people coming through the door,” he says. “Just about any business that you can think of exists in this area. The variety of what’s happening in Cambridge with manufacturing is stunning.” And as thousands of cars drive past his buildings every day, they have become a major source of advertising for him.

“There is a lot of developing industry in this area, and many of the commercial properties are at an age where owners are looking to modernize their buildings. Our projects have given us a lot of exposure in those areas,” he says, noting that commercial designs account for 70 per cent of the business he does. Only four years in the commercial market, he adds, “and the designs have taken off.” Of his success, Collier says, “we’ve got a lot of experience. Honesty is a huge part of it, and when you combine that with creativity, the jobs come together quite nicely.”

CIBC Tips – How to Stand Out

Offer something unique: One sure way to set yourself apart from your competition is to offer something unique. This does not always have to mean a product or service that doesn’t already exist. It could mean taking a combination of products or services and offering them as a consolidated package, the way no other organization does today. Being different makes you irreplaceable, which leads to greater loyalty.

Focus on your clients: Customers are the most valuable part of a business and if you focus on putting them first, they will ensure your success. Building relationships with your clients will help you better understand their needs and expectations, helping you stay ahead of the competition. When a customer feels valued, they will be more open to interacting with you and sharing insights about them.

Be an expert: Having the right knowledge and being perceived as an expert in your industry will give you a unique level of trust with your clients. Not only will clients be more likely to purchase from you, you will be able to attract the best employees, who can bring you additional experience and expertise.

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