

HEAVY-DUTY

AIR COMPRESSORS: DEVAIR, INC.

COMPRESSED AIR BEST PRACTICES™ INTERVIEWED BOGDAN MARKIEL (CEO) AND GARTH GREENOUGH (PRESIDENT) OF DEVAIR, INC.

Good morning. How is business in Canada?

Things are holding steady in Canada. Our heavy-duty piston air compressor business is holding up. The rotary screw air compressor products we have launched over the past six years are providing exciting new growth in the United States and Canada. The rotary screw product launches have gone so well, that even though our traditional compressor business is steady, rotary screws make up two-thirds of our shipping backlog!



A Devair HDI Series reciprocating air compressor ready for shipment.

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Describe Devair's manufacturing capabilities.

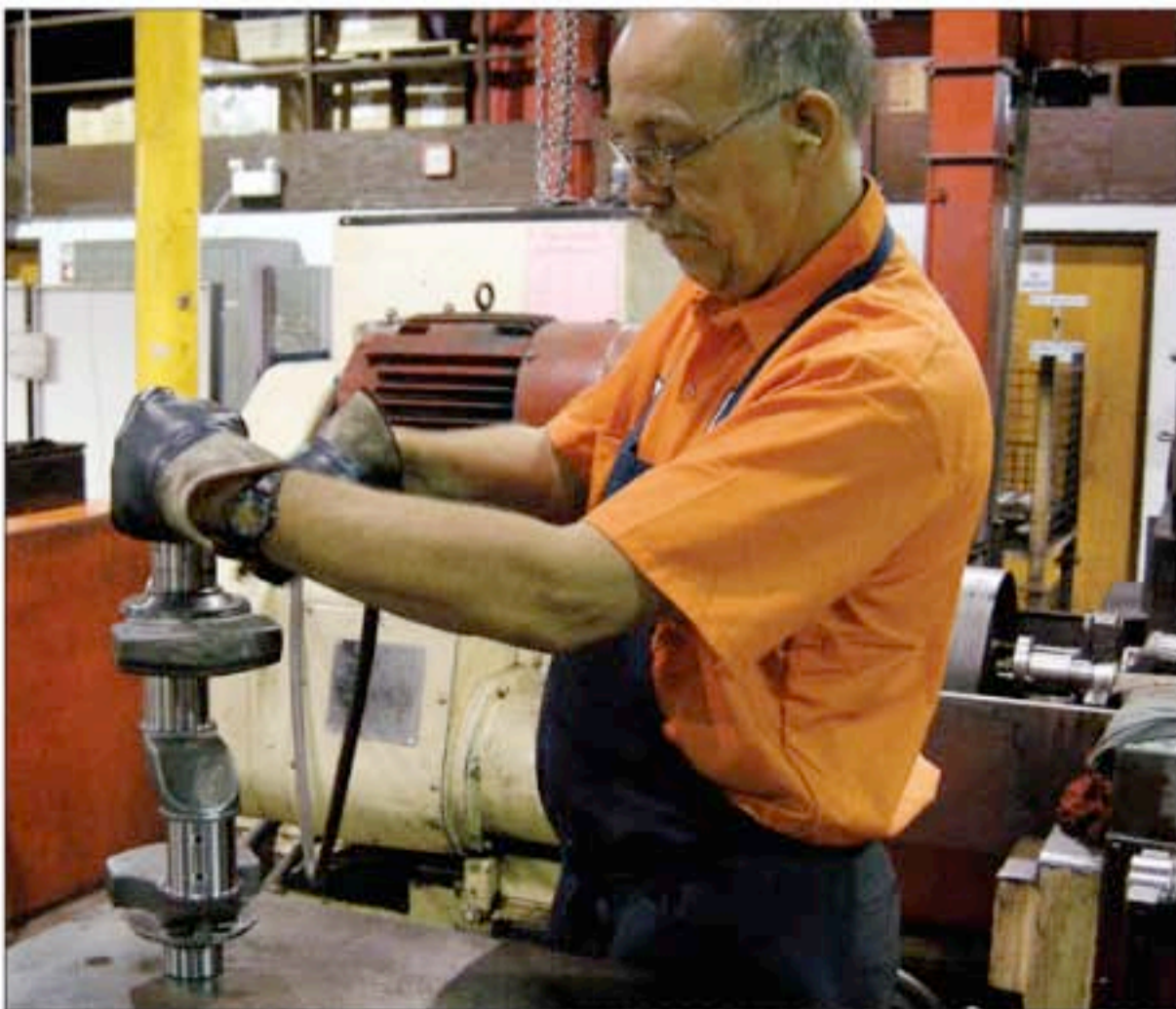
We have a 45,000-square-foot facility with 40 employees based here in Barrie, Ontario. The employees range in seniority from six months to 45 years of service. Seventy-five percent (75%) of our employees in the machine shop are veterans with more than 20 years of service. This is the core of our company and compressor technology. In this cell, we machine components for our piston and rotary screw compressor product lines. For the piston compressors, we machine the crankcases, cylinder heads, connecting rods, cylinders and valves, to name some major items.

We have two distinct assembly areas in the facility. One area is assembling piston compressor heads (pumps) and the other is assembling finished product. One of the strengths of our people is their flexibility — we do a lot of cross training and as a result, people are skilled at operating in different cells. This flexibility has allowed Devair to train our people on how to assemble many different products.

Other work cells include our electronic control panel assembly and a paint shop for the receiver tanks.

Can you share some of Devair's history and culture with us?

The roots of Devair go back to the early 1900s when we were a part of the DeVilbiss Company of Toledo. DeVilbiss formed an industrial air compressor division and moved it, in 1954, to Barrie, Ontario. This is why



Seventy-five percent of the employees in the machine shop are skilled veterans with more than 20 years of experience.

we have so many veteran employees with decades of expertise. Devair, Inc. was formed in 1998 as a stand-alone business and we are the two majority shareholders.

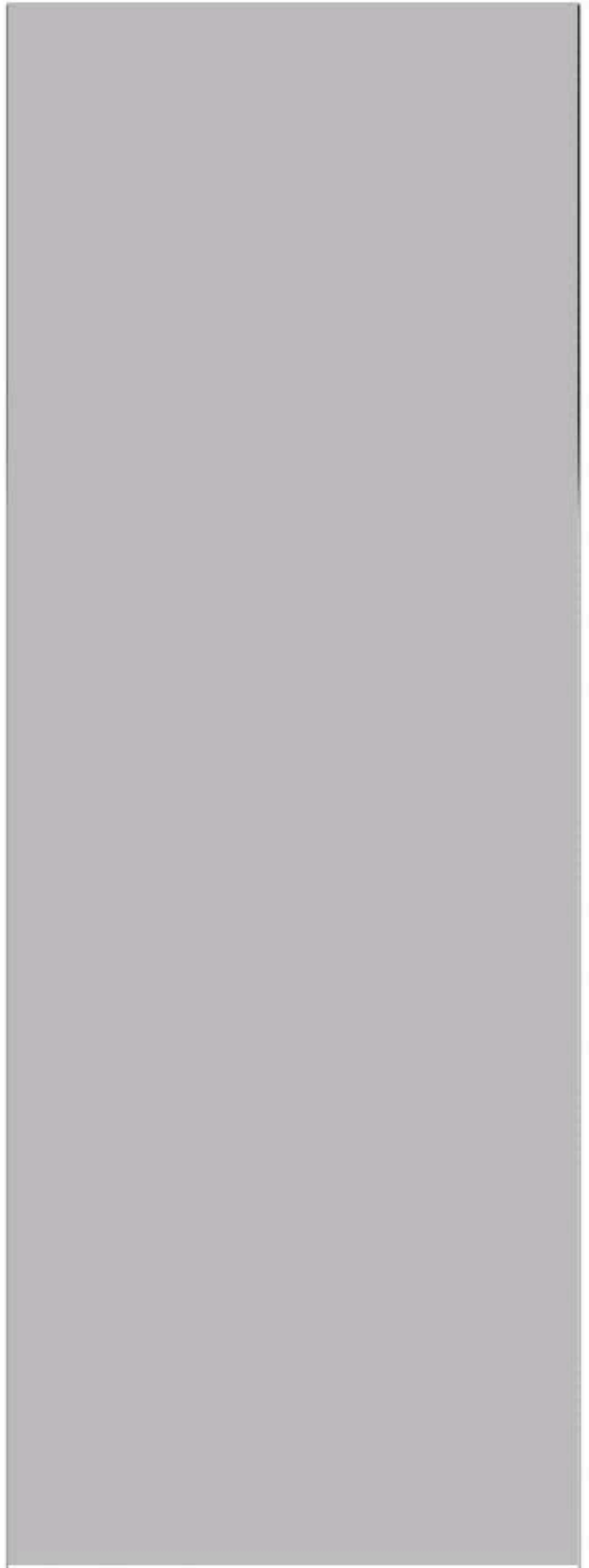
Our main focus is on building rugged, reliable, heavy-duty air compressors. Our heavy-duty industrial (HDI Series) pressure lubricated air compressor has been our flagship product line for many years. Devair's tradition is imbedded in using durable materials for the pumps (like best quality American-made grey iron) and precision-machined components produced by our veteran workforce. Our culture is all about supplying reliable, heavy-duty, high-quality products to our customers.

What are the benefits of buying a piston air compressor?

We supply both rotary screw and piston compressor technologies so we are in the position of showing a customer his options. Each factory/shop is unique and there is no standard answer to this question. Piston compressors are still a far better choice for some end users.

The cost of maintenance, of a high-quality piston compressor, is only 25% of the cost of maintaining a rotary screw air compressor. Devair piston compressors run at a very slow speed of only 590 rpm — so there is very little wear on the lubricant and the machines run very cool. There is no oil-separator filter element to change and pistons use standard mineral oil as a lubricant — which costs much less than the synthetic oils that rotary screw compressors use.

Most important is that customers remember to consider only heavy-duty, high-quality piston air compressors. There are many piston compressor designs out there that are not designed for industrial use. These designs have very short life cycles and produce low air volume.



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When should one buy a rotary screw compressor?

Again each customer will have unique circumstances and priorities. Rotary screw compressors can be more efficient than piston compressors in installations where air demand is pretty constant. A 24-hour operation, which is racking up 8,000+ hours, is ideal for capturing the energy efficiencies of rotary screw compressors. Recently we have added the DVS series of variable speed rotary compressors to address the needs of customers demanding flexible air volume supply and energy savings.

The sound attenuation possible with rotary screws is also desirable to some customers. We designed Devair rotary screw air compressor sound attenuation packages working together with Canada's National Research Council. The results have been very worthwhile as we have some models with 63 dba sound levels!

A tank-mounted rotary screw compressor with dryer package ready for shipment.

Rotary screw compressors are also delivered with PLC controls which allows end users the ability to monitor and manage the air compressor from a remote location.

What industries does Devair focus on?

Devair products are strong with most applications in medium to small industry. We work with a lot of body shops in automotive refinishing and also with automotive mechanical service. Our products are popular in woodworking shops, building materials and HVAC — to name a few more applications.


What's happening with the new waterborne regulations?

The demand for compressed air has been increased with waterborne regulations. Water-based paints require increased air flow to cure when compared with solvent based products, typically bodyshops invest in spraybooths equipped to reduce drying time of waterbased paint and add air guns to dry smaller refinished areas. Each air gun (one nozzle) uses 7 to 13 cfm of air, depending on the number of bays equipped with these guns demand for compressed air can increase significantly.

The compressed air must also be dry and clean. We recommend industrial refrigerated air dryers and coalescing filters to purify the air. Many body shops have used air treatment products with limited life cycles and the air quality has been mediocre at best. This is no longer acceptable with the waterborne paints.

How does Devair go to market?

We sell our products through a network of very loyal distributors. We don't sell direct. We see distributors as an integral partner in serving the end user. The distributor is whom the customer relies on for service and support. We offer service training for distributors on a regular basis and average one multi-day class every two months for service technicians.

Across Canada we have a very strong distributor network and good market saturation. In the U.S., we have areas, which are stronger than others and have area managers who are working to develop new distributors in the U.S. We also sell in France, Mexico, the Middle East, the Caribbean and many other countries. We have a lot of growth opportunities and we must prioritize them. Our priority right now is to further develop distributor partnerships in the U.S. 

Thank you, Devair, for your insights.

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