



CANUSA

Auto Parts Centre in central London

All the Right Tools!



For many years, CANUSA, established in 1981, operated as an undercar exhaust distributor specializing in selling exhaust systems/components to specialty muffler installers in Ontario and the Midwestern United States. The first location was in St. Thomas (50,000 sq. ft. facility) and in 1989 they moved into their current 88,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Dorchester, Ontario.

Time passed and CANUSA felt they should become a full line distributor as their specialty customers were expanding into other product groups (brakes, oil changes). “We also decided to get into the parts stores business in key markets like London,” states Steve Drake, Vice President. “The first ‘Bob Jones Auto Supply’ opened in central London in 1983; another in the east sector in ‘85 and another in the west in ‘87. Bob Jones, CANUSA Chairman, former owner of Battery Supply and Silverline Motor Products, now works tightly with me and his son, Ivor, who is President.”

Expansion plus

“A big store expansion began with CANUSA opening more corporate and associate stores. Today our Auto Parts Centres (APC) store count is 34. APC is a banner program for our Associates that is personalized with their own business name. Approximately 150 employees work for the CANUSA team.

“In the late ‘90s, the company developed an ‘integrated distribution network’ we feel is unique in the industry. We deliver twice within a 24-hour period—once during the afternoon and once overnight. This way, the customer receives merchandise

before 8 a.m. It’s done within a 240 km radius of our main Dorchester warehouse. We also have twice a day delivery in the GTA from our 40,000 sq. ft. Mississauga warehouse which opened in 2002. This integrated distribution network provides great service for our stores and customers. Today the market demands availability, and combined with the best kind of service, we deliver that.

“The company started out selling ‘value based’ products, but today we sell ‘premium brand’ products. The market demands this because of vehicle complexity and the repair time. We go to market with a very attractive program—service, availability, premium brands, great training and technology. We have an I-Series mainframe with proprietary software called Customer Connects so customers/installers can link into our system to order parts. Our website has been upgraded; we believe our future success will be tied to our ability to link our customers electronically.”

Enter Uni-Select

CANUSA has been a member of Uni-Select since the mid ‘90s and have a very good relationship with them; they are the larg-

est Ontario-based member. “We like the Uni-Select program because it’s menu driven. You utilize the programs needed for your business—you don’t have to take them all and they’re very user friendly. Uni-Select has excellent product coverage, training, strong distribution, a great warehouse operation with the right lines and they work with us to help grow our busi-



Ivor Jones, President

ness. Uni-Select has also done well with National Accounts programs...which gives us the ability to sell to people like Midas.

“I believe Uni’s main strength is their capacity to stock merchandise that’s readily available to us. They give us a very competitive deal and as a large warehouse distributor, we found Uni-Select the best partner to be aligned with. They let you be a true entrepreneur and think for yourself.”

Luke Ramsay,
CANUSA Sales
Manager



Steve Wolfe, APC Stores Operations Manager



Inside the main warehouse in Dorchester.



Big on racing

CANUSA's big in racing! "We have two late-model race cars and a Motorsports Division—which gives great brand exposure to our Auto Parts Centres. Racing is part of what CANUSA is—thousands see our promotion through it."

The company tries to be user-friendly. They have a very large counterstaff and 'dedicated specialists' (i.e. imports) within it. The staff is quite happy to look up or interchange

the core program—hands-on. With rapid changes in technology and vehicles, I believe training is a key success factor for our installer customers. We also focus on staff training—we have 'Lunch and

technology available at a cost effective price to our customers. We're trying our utmost to help our customers with the ever pressing Right to Repair issue.



The Motorsports Division of CANUSA Racing.

"Technicians need knowledge, software and tools to get ahead in business. They need to 'spruce up' their image, make their shops attractive/professional to the consumer and provide the OE style service car dealers do if they're going to survive. Make it easy and a pleasure for the customer."

Performance on the rise

CANUSA is finding performance parts to be significant. "We're now selling great performance brands; it's becoming a huge growth market," continues Drake. "A vehicle today is a reflection of the owner and people like to dress them up. Performance parts are a 'want' item; for example, people are prepared to spend money for an exhaust with a rumble and that looks great!



VP Steve Drake at his desk.



Three generations of CANUSA's Jones family (l-r) John (Ivor's son), Bob, Chairman and Ivor, President.

a part number. They're very customer focused and try hard to provide additional services. CANUSA also has dedicated field sales representatives to support the marketplace.

Training

"Training goes along with technology today, and we provide technician training through various programs, including Internet-based On Demand modules and

Learn' sessions regularly with suppliers who educate us about products and how they work—key selling tools. We help our customers and staff to become fully integrated with each other, not just in terms of computer links, but helping to develop tools that sell parts. We also have Flash computer technology, so we can reset electronic control modules...if our customers don't have this technology, we take the unit, 'flash it' and make the OE

"So that's the next frontier for us—performance parts. With today's shifting market, cars being better made, consolidation and wear factors, we have to look at other avenues to grow our business and generate sales."

It seems CANUSA has all the right tools to progress in business plus help their customers grow and prosper. **CASP**