



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

# KEN'S ENGRAVING LTD.

**K**EN CAUL established his company in 1987 and made a bit of history at the same time. As far as can be determined, Ken was the first person with a severe intellectual disability to receive funding through Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador. Crashing this barrier was an event that has influenced persons with disabilities around the world.

After spending 10 years in an institution, Ken demonstrated a burning desire towards self-determination. This was where the connection was made to set up a business.

When the labor/management committee of Abitibi-Consolidated paper mill in Stephenville, Newfoundland, presented an opportunity, Ken was quick to take advantage. He established a business to clean and refurbish nuts and bolts, which are critical to the refiners at the mill. Before Ken took on the refurbishing, the mill sent these materials to scrap.

Starting the business cost only about \$2000. The problem was, there were not enough nuts and bolts to refurbish to maintain a viable business that could be diversified and stable over the long term.

The revenue from the Abitibi-Consolidated contract covers the overhead of Ken's business and allowed him to expand in an entirely new direction. NOTIONS (Ken's Engraving Ltd.) is a storefront operation that Ken opened to offer customers professional engraving services for industrial signage, plaques and badges. He also carries a line of giftware. NOTIONS has been a major undertaking - Ken has invested \$45,000 to purchase the computer assisted engraving equipment.

The business relationship between Ken and the newly named Department of Development and Rural Renewal is an extremely important breakthrough. Access to services, funding and loan programs is not something that is often



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available to persons with disabilities.

Growing a business isn't always easy. Ken found it took longer to develop his market than originally planned, due, in part, to the lack of a comprehensive marketing plan.

There could have been better identification of opportunities, strategies and time frames. Due to the availability of services from ACOA, Department of Development and Rural Development, Human Re-

program supports Ken at work. Ken employs 3 or 4 people on a seasonal basis. In time, Ken will hire more staff, thereby, increasing his independence.

Ken's disability prevents him from communicating through traditional speech. His support comes from family and friends, community agencies and all levels of governments. A concept known as supported-decision making is detailed in the by-laws of

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sources Development Canada, the Long Range Business Development Centre and the innovative Cormack Development Centre, Ken has been able to evolve his business and has retired most of the loan he used to buy the engraving machine.

The encouragement and support of staff from the provincial Department of Human Resources and Employment, and Human Resources Development Canada have been crucial to the success of this enterprise. An individual provided through the Employability Assistance

Ken's corporation. The by-laws bind Ken's directors to supporting Ken in a way that respects his will, trust, ownership and self-determination. Ken is the president of the company and exercises 100% of the voting shares.

Ken's accomplishments have caught the attention of many people, including the editors of Canadian Living magazine and CBC Newsworld. He was also featured in an international documentary film ("Business as Usual") about entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Ken Caul

## WHERE TO REACH KEN CAUL

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