

Driven by Innovation

Miller Technology Inc. North Bay, Ontario

North Bay-based Miller Technology Inc. makes some of the world's best customized vehicles for the underground mining industry.

Like Formula One drivers, the drivers of Miller Technology vehicles are looking for two main features: performance and reliability. The difference is where they're driving: not on a racetrack, but hundreds-of-metres below the Earth's surface in underground mines. What's similar is the company's focus on drivers' needs and the creation of customized vehicles that are the best in the world at what they do.

"We make custom utility vehicles for the underground mining industry that do everything but move the rock," says Kent Miller, the Operations Manager for one of Miller Technology's two North Bay, Ontario-based plants.

Founded in 1979 by Ron Miller, Kent's father, the company has grown from a garage-based start-up to a global supplier of customized underground mining vehicles.

Unlike the family car which is purchased from a lot in a one-size fits all fashion, the specifications for underground mining vehicles are highly individualized. Vehicle requirements vary based



Vehicle requirements vary based on the type of ore, mine design and mining processes involved. These requirements are further complicated by the fact that the physical conditions underground, especially moisture levels, are different than for surface vehicles.

on the type of ore, mine design and mining processes involved. These requirements are further complicated by the fact that the physical conditions underground, especially moisture levels, are different than for surface vehicles. The underground mining industry is also increasingly mechanized, leading to a demand for customized vehicles that can perform tasks ranging from shotcreting (spraying cement) to explosives loading.

In an industry undergoing major technological change, Miller Technology's market edge has been

constant innovation, an approach that has succeeded with longstanding support from NRC's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP). This federal initiative works closely with all kinds of small and medium-sized enterprises, helping them grow their businesses, increase their competitiveness, and enhance their impact in the marketplace.

"The mining industry is changing all the time," says Kent Miller. "It's our innovative designs

irap-pari.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca
1-877-994-4727

that have enabled us to reach and stay at the top of the industry. IRAP has been involved with us from the start and this R&D and networking support has allowed us to undertake cutting-edge design projects in which there were no guarantees of success.”

One NRC-IRAP supported R&D project was the development of the company's unique Powershift transmission. This competitive feature of Miller Trucks means the vehicle operator doesn't have to use a clutch, making it easier to drive and reducing clutch-related failure. “One of our goals is to maximize the vehicle's availability and at the same time minimize our clients' cost-per-hour to operate it,” says Miller.

The company's team of sales representatives works one-on-one with clients to determine their exact needs. This rapport with industry is matched by Miller Technology's R&D ability to take their customers' needs from concept to a commercial product using Miller's own design and manufacturing facilities.

It's a focus on meeting clients' needs through innovative designs that has resulted in a one-person operation growing into a family-owned company (with Kent's brother Chad as general manager of mining, and both of them involved shareholders) that is a significant local employer with 38 staff and over \$9 million-a-year in sales. While Canada is the company's major market, Miller Technology vehicles, built to ISO 9001:2000 standards, are at work around the globe, including in the United States, Tanzania, Chile, Russia and Peru.

Contact:

Chad Miller
General Manager, Mining
Miller Technology Inc.

www.millertechnology.com

IRAP has been involved with us from the start and this R&D and networking support has allowed us to undertake cutting-edge design projects in which there were no guarantees of success.

**Kent Miller
Operations Manager
Miller Technology Inc.**

SMEs are the most dynamic sector of the Canadian economy.

NRC-IRAP is working to keep it that way.

