

Lightolier Canada



Taking Advantage of a Niche Strategy to Win a North American Mandate

The Genlyte Group is one of the premier independent lighting fixture and controls companies in North America. With facilities in the United States, Canada and Mexico, Genlyte designs, manufactures, and markets lighting equipment for the residential, commercial, and industrial markets. Genlyte's diversified product lines include some of the most widely accepted and well-established brands throughout the industry. Because of its many popular brands, which collectively enjoy over two hundred years of success, Genlyte is well recognized within the industry for technical leadership and lighting innovation.

Montreal houses Canlyte, Genlyte's Canadian head office, as well as Lightolier, a subsidiary of the Canadian company with a 140,000 square foot manufacturing facility. The Lightolier name is the most recognized brand in the industry and focuses on interior lighting in the residential and commercial markets. Lightolier's key product lines include: decorative, downlighting, track, controls and fluorescent.

The Lightolier Montreal facility, in operation since 1965, specializes in the manufacturing and assembly of residential and commercial lighting fixtures for the Canadian and U.S. marketplace. In 1993, Lightolier introduced over 400 new products, primarily focused on energy conservation, including its new Calculite PowerSpec downlights and Lyteflood compact fluorescent lights.

In early 1993, Lightolier Canada secured a North American mandate for Calculite H.I.D., an energy efficient ballasted product offering, which includes both surface and recessed fixtures for the North American commercial market.

The management of Canlyte was able to sell the Montreal-based facility internally to its parent company due, in large part, to its efficiency and ability to manage highly-complex "short" production runs. Mr. Michael Farrell, former Vice President Administration for Canlyte (recently appointed President, Keene-Widelite) explains, "Calculite H.I.D. was an area where we saw potential for significant growth. The product line is very technically complex and at the time of the pitch, did not represent significant production for the larger U.S. facilities. For us, the volumes seemed interesting. Our goal is to do a major re-design on this product offering in an effort to reduce costs."

Mr. Farrell adds, "Given the complexity of the product and the total volumes they were selling in the U.S., knowing that the Calculite H.I.D. was not a big part of their product offering in dollar sales, and the complexity it caused within their facilities, we saw a tremendous opportunity to win the mandate and service the entire North American market."

Mr. Farrell continues, "The technical competency of a Canadian subsidiary is a very important concern when your parent is in the U.S. They ultimately make the final decisions and influence what will happen to your subsidiary in the future. At Genlyte, decisions are not made on a nationalistic basis. Our