



Over One Hundred Years of evolution for Elliott Matsuura – the machine tool business story

The story of Elliott Matsuura Canada Inc. (Oakville, ON) contains elements of good novel: romance, drama, and a happy ending. It also helps tell the story of the evolution of the machine tool business both in Canada and globally.

Beginnings

Legend has it that one hundred years ago, in the summer of 1905, Hugo Frye, a German engineer vacationing in England, met and fell in love with a young lady named Beatrice Elliott. Hugo married Beatrice, moved to London and started an import business. Using his continental relations, he brought to the UK precision machine tools and accessories made in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

During World War I, to avoid restrictions imposed on a business owned by an “alien enemy national” (Hugo was still a German citizen), he transferred the ownership of the company to his wife, Beatrice – and changed the company name to the later famous, B. Elliott Group (BEG). After W.W.I. ended, Hugo, now an English citizen, expanded his business and started to manufacture machine tools under brand names which later became famous – Progress drills, Victoria milling machine, and many others.

During World War II, when imports of Nazi occupied Europe dried to a trickle, BEG continued to expand its manufacturing range of machine tools and in the immediate postwar years, aggressively acquired companies building metal manufacturing equipment. Names as Cardiff lathes, Butler boring mills, Russell foundries, Newall jig borers, Snow grinders - and many more – became part of the rapidly expanding B. Elliott Group. Distribution subsidiaries were opened in main British Commonwealth countries: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and, of course, Canada.

B. Elliott (Canada) Ltd. opened in 1950 in Port Hope, Ontario. After a slow start, its newly appointed president, the charismatic Erwin Fischer, moved the company to Toronto and rapidly expanded across Canada by purchasing established distribution companies (such as Miller Machinery in Toronto, Levine Machine Tools in Montreal, and International Equipment in Hamilton). In addition to machines manufactured by UK based sister group companies, Elliott Canada started to import and distribute machine tools made in East and West Germany, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. In 1973, Elliott was one of the first Canadian companies to sell NC machines, by offering East German made lathes retrofitted, at its Toronto plant, with Sperry Vickers UMAC controls.

In 1975, Elliott’s Special Machine Tool Group started to offer Canadian “designed & built” special equipment to companies like: Canadian pacific, International Harvester, Ontario Hydro, Canadian National and others. Business was good and steadily growing, as Elliott’s two divisions – distribution and manufacturing – were feeding off each other.

The Big “Hic-up”

In 1980 a potentially profitable project – the speculative purchase of large lots of used machines from East Germany – managed by one of the Canadian senior directors of the distribution division, became by mid 1981 a spectacular financial failure threatening the survival of the company. Erwin Fischer, a gentleman of the old school of business, took responsibility for the debacle (“it happened on my watch”) and, in August 1981, resigned.

The “Modern Era”

In September 1981, Michael Carr, with Elliott since 1973, (first as a NC programmer, then as manager of Special Machine Tool Group) was named President. A short time later Frank Haydar, Elliott’s controller, was promoted to the position of V.P. Finance and Administration and Yves Juvet became V.P. Engineering. The addition of Vince D’Alessio as V.P. Sales & Marketing completed the new management team.

Brutal downsizing and frantic sales efforts to generate cash from the existing stock of used and new machines saved the company from bankruptcy. Elliott gradually recovered and, in 1985, after orderly disposal of all new and used stock of conventional machines, changed its profile and began to sell exclusively CNC machines.

Slowly, Elliott’s portfolio of exclusively represented lines in the Canadian market, started to read like a “who’s who?” of machine tools aristocrats: Agie, Koyo, Matsuura, Nakamura Tome, Nicolas Correa, Tacchi and Zeiss – a remarkable group of technologically advanced machine tool builders.

In 1987, BEG – already a highly diversified industrial group – sought to escape the never ending “up & down” cycle of the machine tool business. Accordingly, in 1988, BEG sold its Canadian subsidiary to two of its main suppliers: Matsuura Machinery Corporation became Elliott’s majority shareholder, while Nakamura Tome Precision took a small minority position. The new owners encouraged Elliott’s quest for customer satisfaction through quality products and innovative services.

In 1992, Elliott purchased three acres of land in Oakville, Ontario and in October 1993 moved into its new, employee-designed facility: 32,000sq.ft. of show rooms, plant, offices, training classrooms, meeting rooms and metrology lab.

In 1997, recognizing the contribution made by its main shareholder to design a business model well balanced between profitability and resistance to crisis, Elliott changed its name to Elliott Matsuura Canada Inc.

In 2009, Michael Carr retired after 35 years of service, and Frank Haydar took over as President. Elliott Matsuura has continued to grow, investing in W-Canada by hiring sales, service and applications engineers. In addition, Elliott Matsuura has partnered with other complementary machine tool suppliers to meet the needs of the various markets across Canada.

Today

EMCI today employs 75 people and sells direct exclusively represented lines across the whole of Canada. Our four core product lines are Matsuura, Nakamura Tome, +GF+ AgieCharmillesMikron and Carl Zeiss. Other complementary lines include Brother, Cheto, Correa-Anayak, Hurco, Skoda, Tacchi, Tornos, YCM, as well as fabrication machines from LVD-Strippit and Jet-Edge. In addition to “best in its class” portfolio of complimentary machine tools, Elliott’s services are unequalled in the industry. One such service is the Prestart Safety Review. Elliott inspects new and/or older machines and advises on needed modifications to meet provincial safety standards. Then it will document and carry out needed modifications prior to and following inspection by an accredited PSR organization.

Another important service is offering a range of affordable financing solutions to meet specific customer needs and objectives, such as:

- Pre-Approved Financing
- Capital or Finance Leases
- Operating Leases (off Balance Sheet)
- Security Agreements
- Rental Agreements

Elliott works toward matching the financial needs of each customer, such as preserving your bank credit line and bank facility, matching monthly payments to cash flow, avoiding capital budgeting constraints, conserving cash, avoiding equipment obsolescence, maximizing tax benefits, or using rental payments towards machines purchases.

In line with the company’s commitment to keep machine tool users up to date with the latest technological development of manufacturing equipment, it encourages customers to trade in machines previously purchase from Elliott against acquisition of newer models.

Service (performed by 26 factory trained technicians) and the availability of spare parts is a critical offering to meet current customer needs. Elliott offers an extensive and computerized stocking system of spare parts. It also offers machine installation and start-up, warranty, maintenance contracts (preventive and predictive), and around the clock and/or on your premises availability of factory trained service engineers.

Using modern interferometry and dynamic measurement equipment, Elliott service teams check the accuracy of customer machines and ensure the stability of the manufacturing process. Grading equipment allows customer to make complex parts on machines capable of cutting to required accuracies.

Training is another service that has grown in importance through the years. Elliott has developed training courses (beginner, intermediate and advanced levels) for programming, machine operators and machines maintenance. Customer employees may start the process as motivated but untrained – they return as qualified professionals.

More than 80% of Elliott's sales involve its Application Engineering Group. From turn-key projects to contract programming and from process development to selection & design of tooling & fixtures, this seasoned group of manufacturing engineers is an invaluable resource for customers.

When problems occur with a customer's machine tool, Elliott evaluates free of charge, the economics of repairing rebuilding or retrofitting, and proposes action best suited to a customer's needs. After thorough inspection of equipment, it submits a detailed proposal covering scope of work and time to completion. All of Elliott's "3 R" projects include limited warranty, reinstallation and training. If machines are too large, it does the work on the customer's premises.

This comprehensive approach to customer satisfaction has brought Elliott a long way from its 1905 beginnings with Hugo Frye and Beatrice Elliott. The story has had romance, it has had drama, and over 100 years later it has a happy ending that continues to evolve.

Since 1950, Elliott has been supplying quality machine tools for the Canadian metal cutting industry – coast to coast.

Your business is unique and the issues you deal with every day are complex.

That is why Elliott offers not only best equipment in its class, but also a multitude of services and solution, developed with over 50 years of working with the best run businesses in our industry.

Our product specialists are qualified to suggest advanced ways to CUT and MEASURE your parts.

Our sales engineers are trained to review your needs and propose customized solutions.

Ask us about our UNIQUE INDIVIDUALLY TAILORED FINANCING PLANS!

Our portfolio of EQUIPMENT and SERVICES has no equal in the CANADIAN MACHINE TOOL MARKET!

WE ARE QUALIFIED TO SERVE YOU – PLEASE COME AND SEE US!

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