

Christie Digital

Christie Digital is a global visual, audio and collaboration solutions company offering diverse solutions for business, entertainment and industry.

Headquarters	809 Wellington Street N, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4Y7
Year Established	1929
NAICS	334310 - Audio and video equipment manufacturing
Employees	680
Major Expansions	2010
Exports	US, Asia-Pacific, EU
Parent Company	Ushio Incorporated
Other Locations	Corporate Headquarters - California, Manufacturing - Shenzhen

Movie premieres are a long-standing Hollywood tradition—a celebration for the culmination of the filmmaking process, the final stage when the film is unveiled to the world. These events are expected to be nothing short of magical. With these expectations in mind, Christie Digital Systems Canada Inc. (Christie) was called upon to provide all of the digital display technologies for the world premiere of one of the most highly anticipated films in cinematic history: Star Wars: The Force Awakens.

Christie is a global visual, audio and collaboration solutions company that provides customers with state-of-the-art projection technology, as well as full service and support infrastructure. The core of Christie's business is the advanced manufacturing of its projector product lines at its Kitchener, Ontario facility. Christie's production floor more closely resembles a laboratory environment than a factory. The floor is maintained to a class 10,000 cleanroom standard, meaning the area is designed never to allow more than 10,000 particles per cubic foot of air—an astonishing production feat, given that the average cubic foot of urban air contains around 35 million particles. Yet this standard is at the root of Christie's company culture, where product quality is paramount and precision manufacturing is a must.

This strict attention to quality is well received by customers, as is demonstrated by Christie's staggering sales throughout 2015, which are in the \$300-400 million Cdn range from the Kitchener site alone. While the majority of the company's sales are driven by the projector/projection side of the business, Christie continues to expand and streamline operations; this means added investment into the creation and growth of digital content in order to provide a one-stop solution for customers. One of the firm's greatest challenges is the increasing commoditization of typical projection. However, innovation has, and always will be, at the forefront of Christie's business. Presently, the company is working towards sparking a market

shift to disruptive technologies (e.g., direct view LED and laser projection) to combat market stagnation.

Christie's markets have a worldwide scope. Canada represents only a small piece of Christie's total market, as the company exports 95 percent of its products. With 40 percent of its total revenue based in the United States, and the remaining 60 percent split evenly between Asia and Europe, Christie is a truly global company. Its products are installed almost everywhere in the world, so the company's strategy has become almost as important as the product itself. Christie's strategy revolves around staying one step ahead of the market through continual investment into research and innovation. Conducting market research/intelligence to determine the direction of the market and keeping a lookout for both disruptive and complementary technologies are key to Christie's continued success.

After experiencing exponential growth from 2010 to 2012, year-to-year growth has now stabilized. This stabilization is largely due to Christie's products being extremely robust and built to last. The products do not require regular repurchasing, which is why Christie is always innovating and taking projection technology to the next level.

Christie's innovation is fuelled by its workforce.

With a total of 650 employees (200 of whom are engineers in all disciplines) at its Kitchener location, it is easy to see how the company fosters a culture of innovation. One-hundred and fifty advanced manufacturers implement designs into the final products. Christie has a diverse workforce with respect to background, education, and culture, so while it is not necessarily difficult to find workers with the requisite skills, it can be challenging to find specific talent, especially in software. This difficulty can be amplified by competition with firms such as Google, which are also continually expanding and searching for new hires in the region.

However, Christie maintains its allure as an outstanding employer. Having a strong connection with the University of Waterloo and providing highly sought-after internship positions are two ways that Christie is able to attract top-tier talent. Furthermore, as an active community partner, the company acts as a mentor to many entrepreneurial startups, with incubator programs that provide guidance and much-needed exposure.

As the only projection manufacturer in Ontario, Christie is unique. With its cutting-edge manufacturing capabilities, as well as the many advantages it has found in manufacturing in Ontario, Christie is sure to find continued success.