

Crystal Fountains

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Headquarters	60 Snow Blvd. #3, Concord, ON, L4K 4B3
Year Established	1967
NAICS	339990 - All other miscellaneous manufacturing
Employees	75
Major Expansions	2000
Exports	U.S., Middle East, Europe
Parent Company	N/A
Other Locations	-

When the recession of the early 1990s caused sales of fountain equipment in North America to dry up, Crystal Fountains targeted the Middle East as a new market, specifically the growing potential in the U.A.E.. Crystal Fountains entered this market despite having no history there. Since then, the company has been involved in hundreds of projects throughout the region, including the water feature located at the residential entrance of the Burj Khalifa and the marina entrance at the Dubai Creek Harbour.

Crystal Fountains is a third generation, family-owned company whose first contract was for Expo '67, the international event held in Montréal as part of Canada's centennial celebration. The company has since designed and built internationally recognized projects attracting millions of visitors each year, the geyser-like Eaton Centre fountain, the Crown Fountain in Millennium Park in Chicago, and the renovation of the lighting at water features surrounding the Palace of Versailles in France.

Crystal Fountains was founded in 1966 by Roger L'Heureux. Not long after, the company got its first big opportunity to showcase its capabilities. This came in the form of a contract to work with famous Canadian sculptor Gerald Gladstone. Gladstone was the architect of several Expo 67' structures and hired Crystal Fountains to develop water features to enhance the visitors' experience.

Manufacturing operations were initially located in downtown Toronto. The company later moved to Scarborough in the 1970s and eventually to Vaughan in 2000. The company believes that their location in Vaughan affords them advantages in terms of access to a fast-growing labour market, transportation networks, while maintaining access to downtown Toronto. The second and third generations of the L'Heureux family continue to be active in day-to-day operations, with Roger's son Paul serving as acting

CEO, David as Director of Business Development, and grandson Darcy as VP of Sales and Marketing. Roger's legacy continues to weave its way through the company, which leverages the strong values of the family business while capitalizing on opportunities to expand globally, enhancing world-famous attractions with breathtaking water features.

The company has 75 full-time employees, the majority of whom are located in Vaughan. Others work at offices in Dubai and Warsaw. Crystal Fountains' R&D staff is responsible for designing new products. Their ideas go to the production engineering department, where they are turned into models. Throughout the process, quality control staff test products prior to full production. A team of software engineers and developers construct virtual simulations. Crystal Fountains refers to their simulation program as WATERlab™, which showcases how various features – like lighting and water sequence a.k.a the show – will look like in their intended location. The company knows that WATERlab™ will further enhance the remote management of water features from Vaughan. The research-intensive nature of these activities allows Crystal Fountains to take advantage of federal Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SRED) tax credits. Partnerships with local post-secondary institutions, including Humber College, George Brown College, and York University, help the company identify and recruit future employees with unique skills.

Collaboration with clients, suppliers, and other partners is critical to any Crystal Fountains project, especially considering that the fountains it makes are often one component of a larger project. Today, architects, landscape architects, engineers, and installers from a variety of trades are part of this collaborative effort. The company works closely with architects and landscape architects to bring their creative vision to life for the space. Engineers ensure the physical design will function as planned. The company also works closely with installers who are typically subcontracted from the location of the build. This staffing model reflects the fact that each jurisdiction has different licencing requirements for the trades who work on the projects. Rather than directly licencing and employing staff, Crystal Fountains hires local talent qualified to work in the area.

Innovation is a constant at Crystal Fountains as all of their projects are unique. Emerging technology enables the company to place LED lighting underwater that ranges in acidity, salinity, and in temperatures that range from minus 20 to plus 60 degrees Celsius. Understanding how to program the operating technology and determining what types of materials will withstand the conditions are crucial. While some complex functions have been outsourced, the company looks to bringing strategic oversight capability in-house so it can easily adapt to changes and better control its supply chain.

Crystal Fountains is proudly Canadian. The L'Heureux family believes that this is part of its competitive edge given the reputation for quality that accompanies a Made in Canada label. This advantage has helped Crystal Fountains reach sales that place them among the top companies globally in its highly specialized sector. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company was on track for its biggest year, supplying products to World Expo 2020 in Dubai. Despite facing challenges associated with the pandemic, the company found the time and resources to contribute to the Ventilators for Canadians initiative, helping design ventilators to address shortages in Canadian hospitals.

With global expansion continuing to fuel Crystal Fountains' growth plans, the company is looking to further expansion in the Middle East, Western Europe and Southeast Asia. Europe proves to be a challenging market for the company due to import duties that can price non-European companies out of projects in that region. The company works closely with Export Development Canada (EDC), a vital partner when working on overseas projects. EDC assists Crystal Fountains to identify local suppliers and understand local languages and business cultures so it can function effectively when working abroad.

Crystal Fountains believes that its skilled employees and values-based approach to doing business will ensure that it continues to play a critical behind-the-scenes role in developing unique showpieces that create lasting impressions around the world. Readers are encouraged to visit the company's website (link below), built entirely by the creative employees of Crystal Fountains, for a round-the-world tour of the many sites that have been enhanced by its work.