

# Superior Packaging inspires

**LOCATION** Mississauga **SIZE** 15,000 sq. ft. **EMPLOYEES** 48 full-time **SERVICES** product assembly and customized packaging services including light assembly, bagging and sealing, kit assembly, displays; P.O.P, counter-top, and skid, fully automated heat sealing, re-worked product, fully automated shrink wrapping, bulk mailing, encoding, sorting, labeling/relabeling, collating/decorating, labour extensive jobs/gluing

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**CHALLENGE** Become a viable and sustainable competitor in the packaging industry

There are a number of things that make Superior Packaging stand out from the custom packaging and product/kit assembly services crowd, but chief among them is that its leaders and partners are individuals who have an intellectual disability.

Originally operated as a day support program by Community Living Mississauga, the evolution to a new business model (effective January 1, 2015) where the partners own and work at the business was a change embraced by everyone at Superior Packaging. This change was motivated by the belief in the importance of empowering our partners to grow and thrive in a business environment that actually competes with other like businesses within the community. Not only do they own a business, but they also have a say in its direction and in many ways engage in a business beyond just being a worker.

**STRATEGY** Sustain a positive and collaborative working environment; support skills development with continual and customized on-the-job training; encourage and mentor partners to demonstrate team

**leadership and acquire an active role sharing equally in the management of the business**

If we look at disability employment from a business perspective instead of from an advocacy perspective, the community as a whole benefits as Superior Packaging creates additional awareness by touching other companies.

**★ “You are what you think you are, not just in life but in business as well. The task in front of you is never impossible.”**

—TERESA JENNINGS  
Superior Packaging

The new business model that has been established as Superior Packaging has the overall benefit of changing attitudes and educating our community about individuals who have an intellectual disability. It supports a general de-stigmatization as it demonstrates the importance of an inclusive economy. Individuals who have an intellectual disability are labeled and devalued in society. By virtue of working

in a healthy, vibrant business demonstrates leadership, talent and a collaboration between the not for profit sector and the business community.

We here at Superior Packaging are keeping our eyes on the simple things; focus on customer care, remain committed to enhanced operating practices while keeping costs in line and keeping our partners engaged and inspired. By committing to these standards—our core values, we have strengthened our position towards long-term consistency...after all this is what keeps people; our customers and partners, loyal.

One of these loyal customers is Ross Knipe of Rollstar Metal Forming in Mississauga, a division of Martinrea. Rollstar has been working with Superior for eight years. Although part of its motivation is “to give back to the community,” says Knipe, there are also key business factors involved in the company’s use of Superior. “I have to think about costs and what I can move out of my 200,000 sq. ft. plant, where the overhead is a lot higher,” he says.

The majority of our dedicated partners have been in their positions for more than 15 years. They bring different strengths to the company’s mission, have a degree of adaptability that are especially valuable in today’s fast changing business environment, and have passion, positivity and a collaborative nature that is truly inspiring.

One leader from this group is Teresa Jennings. She insists on quality on the warehouse floor and through her drive and persistence, she holds everyone accountable to this standard. Her mantra is, “you are what you think you are, not just in life but in business as well. The task in front of you is never impossible.” Jennings is an elected member of the Steering Committee that meets weekly to assess the week’s activities. Jennings and the Steering Committee members stress the fact that everything at Superior is now a collective effort. They have a new purpose. They’re more invested.

Companies should consider Superior Packaging because of its great service and pricing. The secondary benefit is that they can feel good about their contribution to helping people who often struggle with life challenges. One of the biggest challenges is just getting the word out that we’re ready for business. 