

A Concord Dealer Success Story

Manufacturer-dealer collaboration results in tool that reduces rail-installation time by 75 percent

With Innovation Comes Challenge

In September of 2002, Concord Elevators and Lifts introduced a new state-of-the-art product line. For the manufacturer and its dealers, this event presented significant opportunities and significant challenges. The new line introduced by Concord featured highly-advanced design and technology that set a new standard for innovation in the industry. However, with these improvements and changes also came an increased learning curve for crews installing the product. We recently spoke with independent Concord dealer, Chris Rastin, to learn how Concord collaborated with him to address a particular challenge and create a proprietary installation tool.

"At a dealer meeting held by Concord during development of its new line, there was a general consensus among dealers of the need to enhance the rail system," recalled Rastin. "At the time, we [the dealers] recognized there would be more complexity and, therefore, some increases in the installation time while we learned to new system." However, Rastin suggests, dealers were not prepared to incur the actual increases they experienced. "Following the line standardization, rail installation was requiring significant amounts of senior crew time – beyond what most dealers were willing to tolerate," advised Rastin.

Recognizing the need to support dealers and protect their profits, Concord, with the help of

Rastin, focused on creating a solution that would reduce rail-installation time. The bottom-line result of those efforts, according to Rastin: "Our rail-installation times have been reduced by 75 percent thanks to the new Concord tool."

Perhaps as interesting as the time savings is how the solution was achieved. "That story is a textbook example of a successful manufacturer-dealer partnership," said Rastin. So we asked Chris to explain how that collaboration played out.

A Dealer Becomes Part of the Solution

Following release of the new line, it quickly became clear to Concord that a rail installation "tool" would be essential to assisting crews in the field. "Without such assistance, the time demands were too great to bear on a long-term basis," said Rastin.

Knowing this, Concord assembled an internal project team and developed two versions of a gauge intended to reduce installation time. With those concepts developed, Concord approached Rastin about field-testing the devices. "I was eager to be involved and in no time we had tested each device at separate work sites," he recalls. Unfortunately, after tests, the group agreed that these particular devices were too complex and presented other challenges. It was back to the drawing board.

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- Chris Rastin, An Independent Concord Dealer

However, the exercise was not a complete loss. During the field tests, Rastin had a chance to focus on the concepts developed by Concord and that led to some original thoughts of his own – thoughts he would soon bring to Concord and which would lead to the final fix.

Chris presented his new gauge concept to Rob Murphy who was heading the project for Concord. Rob and his crew, including Eric Perron and Nelson Tremblay, wasted no time. They used Rastin's concept to fine tuning a new design. Once that was completed they created an installation manual to support the new gauge. Shortly thereafter an "alpha" gauge was produced. The new gauge was field tested, again in partnership with Chris Rastin's team, and additional refinements were made based on results of those tests.

The product of this effort is a proprietary rail installation tool that will be available to all dealers very soon. "I am extremely pleased with this collaboration, which lasted about two months or so," says Rastin. "We now have a tool that will greatly benefit all dealers installing Concord elevators. We have solved a big challenge presented by the new Concord line of elevators."

How significant are the benefits of the new rail installation tool? Rastin advises that the gauge provides three major benefits:

- Time savings – a 75 percent reduction in installation time

- Improved quality of the installation

- Reduction in the skill set and training needed for crews – it takes Rastin just two jobs to fully train someone in the field

Rastin observed that the third of these benefits (reduction in skill-set demand) is critical. "Unfortunately, our industry has a very high level of turnover. So this tool is incredibly valuable. I can now look to "green" crew members to contribute to installation of the rail system."

Bottom Line

"All in all, I could not be happier with Concord right now. We had some challenges a while back, but the company listened and cooperated," said Rastin. "But that part – the cooperation – is not a surprise. I can say that my calls to Concord are typically addressed within 48 hours. Concord always gets back to me. Even if the response is not exactly what I want to hear, at least I know they are there and know where I stand."

"I am very pleased with recent changes at Concord" reports Rastin. "Their improvements and quality of support and product are reflected in my numbers. I am more profitable than I was six months ago and my after-installation service calls are down 80%, and of those calls only 4% or so involve the Concord product itself. That's superb." ❖

Concord Elevator Inc., located in Brampton, Ontario, is a leading designer and manufacturer of lifts and elevators. Concord's products include a complete line of public and residential elevators, incline wheelchair platform lifts and vertical accessibility lifts. Innovative ideas by Concord's engineering staff, one of the largest in-house engineering departments in the industry, have become recognized standards by which all accessibility lifts are judged. Visit the company's website at: www.concordelevator.com; or telephone: (800) 661-5112.