



# PEMBERTON & ASSOCIATES SELLING SOLUTIONS

By: Heather Nahatchewitz, OIMP Marketing and Communications Director

Christopher Pemberton established Pembertons in 1930, selling oils and fats, with his son Jack joining him in 1945. Jack introduced the equipment side, and at 92 years young, still comes into the office today and sits on the board as Chairman. A figure in the meat industry, I'm told he comes in for no other reason than he enjoys it.

Dennis Hicks leads the company today as President and I had the pleasure of speaking with Patrick Colin, Manager, Technical Services, who joined nearly 20 years ago, and shares the same passion for the industry as Jack and Dennis.

Pemberton & Associates is a full service distributor, importing food manufacturing equipment into Canada from countries such as Italy, Germany, France, and the US and selling to the Canadian market. Historically, its business catered to the meat and poultry processing industry, from the slaughterhouse through to packaging chubs, but Pemberton & Associates now serves industries such as baked goods, snack foods, and home meal replacement.

"A customer comes to us with an application, or says I want to do this and, says Patrick, "It's our job to recommend the best solution based on price, footprint, value for money, and other indicators unique to that particular customer."

Providing effective solutions starts with the right suppliers and Pembertons has many long-term relationships, some 25+ years. They actively attend international trade shows, and research on-line in order to provide their customers with up-to-date technologies that will enhance their products and manufacturing capabilities.

"But it's easier to lose a reputation than to gain it, so it's important we choose the right suppliers. We consider our current suppliers to be 'best-in-class' and we always try to ensure that they are, or have the potential to be, the top 1, 2, or 3 best in the industry."

"When we find something new, and think yes, this is a good idea, we do background research, determine that the company is solid and get to know its key

staff members. We can't sell something without service, parts, technical support, and at the end of the day, when we sell something; it's our name on it."

Pembertons' customers range in size from large multi-national food corporations to regional and small local food processors. "In the past we've tended to focus on larger pieces of equipment, but we're re-evaluating that." Patrick spoke of a line of meat processing equipment out of Italy that is perfect for smaller customers which Pembertons will be showcasing at Meat Industry Expo. "It's built very well, all stainless steel, with great cleanability. Everything comes apart in minutes."

In terms of evolution in the industry, Patrick sees the market for the meat industry changing, medium-size plants being absorbed by larger corporations. This gives smaller plants an opportunity to grow. "Our focus will be on the owner/operators of those businesses. The market for local, natural, authentic products will continue to expand and that's the kind of product smaller processors excel at. We would like to be there to grow with these people."

Pemberton & Associates prefers to deal with people who have the same idea of business, how it should be, where relationship means something. Where handshakes are just as binding as contracts. OIMP members fall within this group and are a very important part of Pembertons' customer base. "That doesn't mean we are selling to them, but we are talking to them."

In meeting the needs of larger corporations, Pembertons has started testing a line of high speed visual

inspection systems where cameras inspect packages coming down the line. Does it have the right bar code and label? Is it the right colour? The right number of slices? Is it sealed properly?

"The human eye is very good but fatigue can set in and sometimes things get missed that machines will catch. It relates to food safety but also saves money in avoiding recalls and returns, which can get extremely costly."

Customer first is the business philosophy at Pembertons. "It's our first train of thought." Patrick goes on to say, "We are not the low-cost provider in the market. It's more important for us to offer the best value to our customers. We're not just supplying the equipment; we have the expertise, service, and support to back it up."

As a business 85 years in the making, and as a valued OIMP Associate member since 1998, we appreciate Pembertons' ongoing commitment to the industry and to our members. Make sure you stop by their booth and say hello at Meat Industry Expo 2015!

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Visit Pemberton & Associates, Booth #109, at Meat Industry Expo 2015 to view their new line of equipment from Italy, perfect for smaller plants.

*"We are OIMP members to support industry and help in terms of productivity and competitiveness, by providing new solutions with new technologies."*

