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FALL 2025

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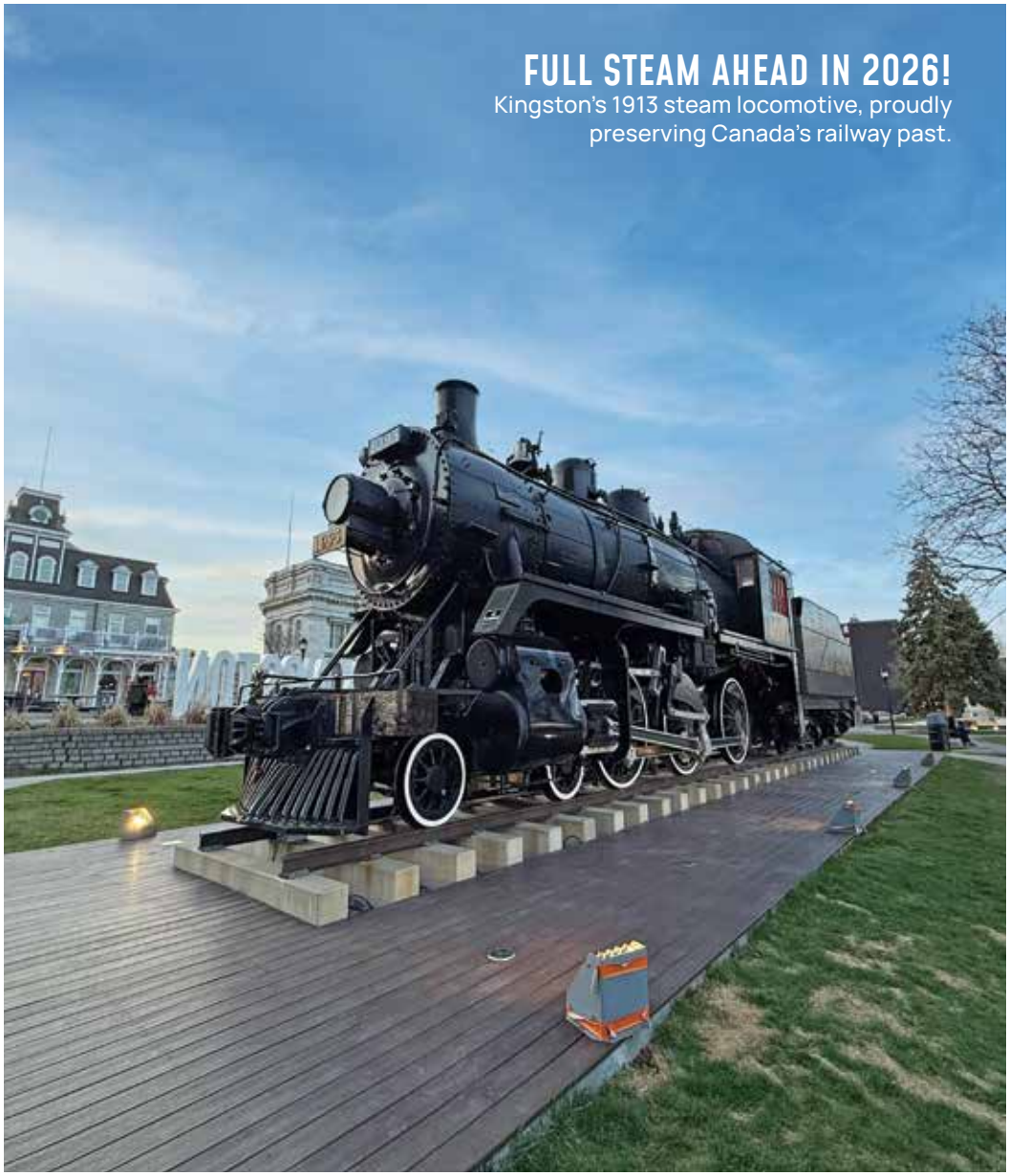


FULL STEAM AHEAD IN 2026!

Kingston's 1913 steam locomotive, proudly preserving Canada's railway past.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

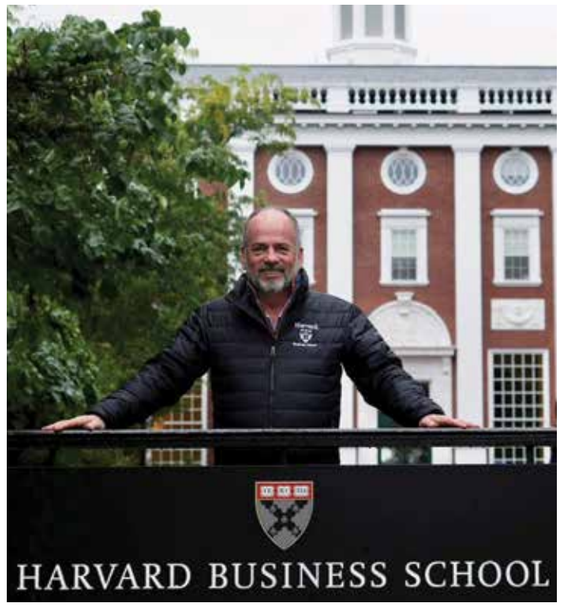
My Journey Back to Learning: TURNING REGRET INTO OUR STRONGEST ADVANTAGE

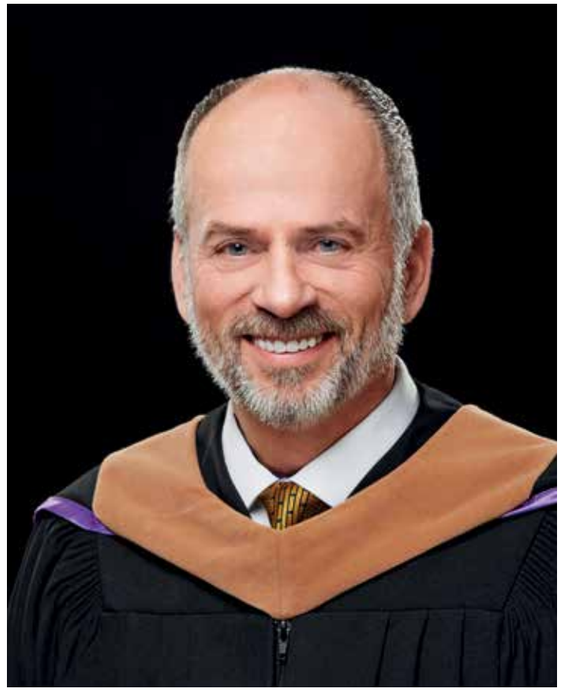
Many of us carry a "one thing" we wish we had accomplished—a goal left undone, or a dream never pursued. For me, that was obtaining a formal education. After years of navigating business challenges, failed deals, and global uncertainty, I realized my regret could become a source of inspiration and growth, not just for myself, but for all of us.

More than ten years ago, I took part in an exercise where I wrote down regrets I didn't want to carry into the future. At the top of my list was "get a formal education." That note stayed with me quietly until three years ago, when I decided to act on it. Returning to school in my late 50s felt daunting, but with the relentless support of my wife, family, and all of you, the senior management team and colleagues who took on extra responsibilities, I enrolled in the Ivey Executive MBA and Harvard's Owner/President Management program. Being surrounded by inspiring classmates, I pushed my own boundaries and gained fresh perspectives on leadership, strategy, and growth.

> "Our best achievements lie ahead, and by turning "what could have been" into "what's possible," we can build a brighter future for all."

This journey taught me that "perspective" is everything. My education helped me shift from being a hands-on operator to a strategic thinker, better equipped to make major decisions and manage complex partnerships. It also reaffirmed that success is never a solo achievement. I am deeply grateful for the encouragement of my loved ones and for the teamwork, flexibility, and dedication shown by everyone here during this





period. Most importantly, I learned that every day offers a chance to transform regret into meaningful action. The only true limits are those we accept ourselves.

What does this mean for all of us? First, I encourage you to identify your own "unfinished chapter". That one thing you don't want to leave as a regret. Make a plan to pursue it, knowing you have the support of your colleagues and leaders. Continuous growth is crucial. Our world moves fast, and staying curious, asking questions, and stepping outside your comfort zone give us a powerful edge. Just as I was lifted by those around me, let's cultivate a culture where everyone's growth is celebrated and supported.

I could never have taken this journey alone, and I am profoundly thankful for my loved ones, the incredible team we have here at GINCOR Werx as well as my professors and classmates at each of the learning degree and programs. Let's keep striving, learning, and growing together. Our best achievements lie ahead, and by turning "what could have been" into "what's possible," we can build a brighter future for all.

Author
Luc Stang,
President and CEO

Our Journey of Growth and Recognition

Luc Stang at the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Gala.

Over the past year, our organization—powered by the strength of 10 locations—has embarked on a remarkable journey. With every step, we've earned not only awards but also a greater sense of purpose, togetherness, and pride in what we are building.

Every award we've received is more than a plaque or certificate—it's a reflection of the hard work, heart, and high standards each of us brings to our workplace. These recognitions are not handed out for taking the easy road, but for consistently doing the right things, for the right reasons, and striving to be better every day.

We are ranked among Canada's Great Places to Work, for the 6 consecutive years, is not just for the honor, but because it means that we are truly listening to you, our team. Your feedback shapes our culture and drives us to better the workplace, so it not only retains great people but also attracts new talent who believe deeply in our mission.

Earning Deloitte's Canada's Best Managed Companies Award for three consecutive years is a tremendous achievement. It speaks to the leadership of our managers and supervisors, who champion best practices, set high standards, and act for the benefit of everyone, employees, customers, and communities alike.

This year, I was deeply proud to be named a finalist and recipient of the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award in Ontario. This recognition validates that what we're building together has real impact, meaning, and lasting value far beyond personal achievements.

But more than any award, these achievements belong to all of us. They represent our shared journey of pushing beyond comfort zones, learning from every challenge, and being part of something larger than ourselves. Each milestone tells a story of growth, resilience, and collective victory.

As we celebrate how far we've come, I encourage everyone to keep striving forward. Our commitment to being a Great Place to Work, a Best Managed Company, an organization with an Admired Culture, and a Relevant Leader in our industry is stronger than ever.

Thank you for being the heart of this story. The recognitions we earn are a tribute to all of us and as we move forward, we will write the future together with pride and purpose.

Author
Luc Stang,
President and CEO

John Barry and Leah Martens from EY presented the award to Glen Hill and Sean Huggins on behalf of all the GINCOR Werx employees

Third year recognition of GINCOR Werx from Canada's Best Managed Companies. In the photo Luc Stang, Lindsay Foy, Jessica Maclean and Mark Resmer

CANADA BEST MANAGED COMPANIES

Great Place To Work.®

Best Workplaces™ in Manufacturing
Great Place To Work.
CANADA 2025

EY Entrepreneur Of The Year®

GROWTH 500
CANADA'S FASTEST-GROWING COMPANIES

PROFIT 500
CANADA'S FASTEST-GROWING COMPANIES

NOBA
Northern Ontario Business Awards

NORTH BAY & DISTRICT Chamber of Commerce

AUSTRALIA EMBRACES HAULMARK/BORCAT & GINCOR WERX LIVE BOTTOM FLOOR TRAILERS

Haulmark trailers (Australia) one of Australia's leading semi-trailer manufacturers has struck a deal with GINCOR Werx to bring purpose built live bottom floor trailers to the Australian market.

Haulmark trailers is a privately owned business established in Brisbane in 1963 now a leading trailer manufacturer in the Australian market with branches in Brisbane, Townsville, Adelaide and Darwin. Traditionally Haulmark built trailers to operate in the harsh remote and rural road train markets, with an extensive product offering ranging from flat tops and skeletal for containerization, livestock and construction related trailers such as extendable and side tippers.

As the Australian transport industry evolved and became more specialized in its applications there was a growing need for a bulk handling trailer that provided improved operational safety and the versatility to carry a diverse range of bulk products. After an extensive assessment of the live bottom-floor trailer market and our design parameters in mind the Haulmark and GINCOR Werx relationship began. The GINCOR Werx live bottom floor trailer range having over 40 years of research and development in Canada was an obvious choice for Haulmark to partner with, not only was the GINCOR Werx product what we wanted, the management style and corporate application of GINCOR Werx was very similar to that of Haulmark.

Over time as the relationship has developed and the increasing number of Haulmark/GINCOR Werx trailers have become operational in Australia, it is obvious the design flexibility and inherent improved safety features are providing what the industry is looking for.

Currently there are Haulmark live bottom floor trailers operating in various locations around Australia, in asphalt and bitumen, a range of quarry products, fertilizers, soil and gravel, some in road train configurations with Haulmark experience in the road train market it was a natural progression.

Importantly apart from the ability of the live bottom floor trailer to carry a diverse range of bulk products, the improved inherent safety of the live bottom floor design has become a major selling feature when compared to the traditional end tipping trailer. The ability to put the live bottom floor trailer where you need the product to be located and not needing to worry about overhead structures or live electrical wires is proving a real winner with operators.

Tub construction is based around hardox 450 grade material and premium fiber strand moisture resistant insulated walls and electric rolltop tarp maintains the required product temperature over a long period of time, perfect for asphalt, bitumen and other products required to be heated during transport.

Operators have commented on the tub shape and the fact they don't get hung up on the sides as they do with other brands. The variable speed heat- and oil-resistant conveyor belt can be operated at the optimum speed for the product being loaded or unloaded. Operation of the trailer's functions are by way of either remote control or fixed switching at the rear. Cameras are fitted at the rear of the trailer to maintain vision and safe control of the operational process.

The increasing interest in live bottom floor trailers and live bottom truck mounts in Australia is being driven by a keen interest in enhanced safety and productivity and is best explained by the owner of a new Haulmark live bottom floor trailer as "simplicity, effectiveness and reliability are definitely the keys to success with the new Haulmark live bottom floor trailer and live bottom truck mount".

Author
Mark Johnston,
National Sales and Marketing Manager
Haulmark Trailers (Australia)

GINCOR Werx Marketing Team

Rick Tibau, John Stethem, Luzianne Dagher and Erickson Palacay

The new Marketing Department was created a year ago.

After a hiatus of several months, the GINCOR Werx Marketing Department was re-established to address a growing number of needs across the organization.

In June 2025, John Stethem was appointed to lead this initiative. He began by hiring a Marketing Manager to lay the groundwork, followed by the addition of a Junior Marketing Developer and, most recently, a Junior Graphic Designer. The department's mission is to provide comprehensive marketing support to all areas of GINCOR Werx, including the Sales and Service divisions across all product lines.

The Marketing Department is actively involved in a variety of key initiatives, including:

- Promoting and strengthening the GINCOR Werx brand
- Supporting Sales and Service teams with advertising and promotional efforts
- Supplying marketing materials for trade shows and industry events
- Managing the company's digital presence, including social media, the corporate website, Google listings, and email campaigns
- Building and maintaining a library of up-to-date product and service photos and videos
- Managing and regularly updating the company website
- Leading the development of future web projects
- Designing ads for all GINCOR Werx products and services

GINCOR WERX LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE:
A Digital Step Forward

We're excited to announce the launch of the brand-new GINCOR Werx website — a major milestone proudly led by our dedicated Marketing team. Designed with both customers and partners in mind, the new site reflects our commitment to innovation, user experience, and the continued strength of the GINCOR Werx brand.

This was far more than a design refresh — it was a company-wide project that took months of planning, collaboration, and hands-on work to bring to life.

The journey began in November 2024 with a partnership between the GINCOR Werx Marketing team and Design Tactics, a professional web design company. After months of close collaboration, we're proud to share the final product.

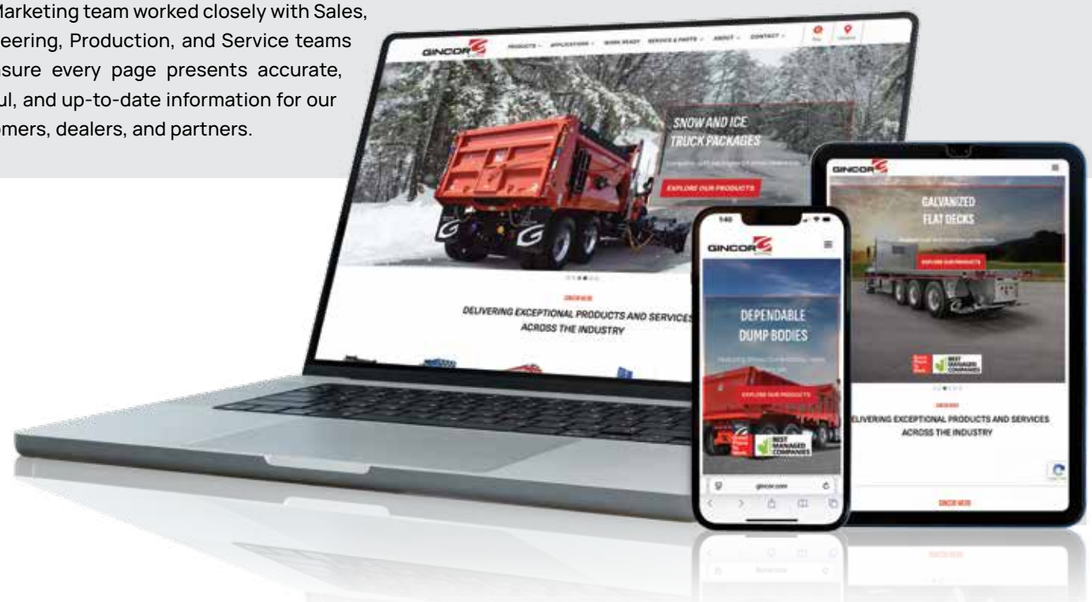
Creating the new website involved much more than just writing content or choosing colours. It required our team to travel across multiple GINCOR Werx locations and events to capture updated, high-quality images of our products in action — all while balancing other high-priority projects across departments. In addition, all content had to be professionally graphic designed to align with our brand and ensure a cohesive, polished look throughout the site.

Beyond photography and design, extensive research and collaboration were key to making the site what it is today. The Marketing team worked closely with Sales, Engineering, Production, and Service teams to ensure every page presents accurate, helpful, and up-to-date information for our customers, dealers, and partners.

What's New on the Site?

Here's a glimpse of what the new website has to offer:

- ✓ **Expanded Product Pages**
  More photos, technical specs, and real-world application insights.
- ✓ **Extensive Company Information**
  Dozens of new pages covering our products, services, manufacturing capabilities, and career opportunities.
- ✓ **Mobile-Friendly Design**
  smooth experience across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.
- ✓ **Improved Navigation**
  Easily find what you're looking for with a streamlined layout and user-friendly menu.
- ✓ **News & Resources Section**
  Stay up to date with company announcements, events, and industry insights.
- ✓ **Stronger Contact Tools**
  Quick and easy access to our sales and service teams across Canada.



Join the GINCOR Werx Family on Instagram!

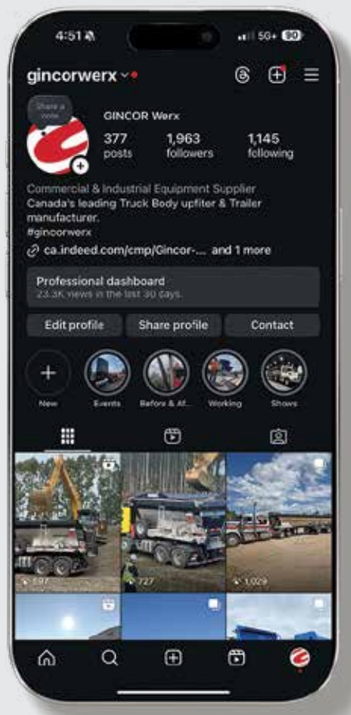
Want to keep up with what's happening with the entire GINCOR Werx Family? Now you can with our new GINCOR Werx Family Instagram page.

Get the latest updates from Mattawa, Sudbury, Carleton Place, Newmarket, Keswick, Aylmer, Blenheim, Kingston, and Oshawa. Our new Instagram page is all about sharing fun times, celebrations, great work, and the pride of being part of the GINCOR Werx Family. If you have something you want to share, talk to your supervisor or Human Resources and they'll post it with the perfect caption, of course!

Follow us at gincorfamilywerx today and we'll follow you back. Let's share the good times—together!

Author
Nicolette Augruso,
HR Business Partner

Our Newmarket employees enjoying a good barbecue of burgers and hotdogs during Labour Day



STAY IN THE LOOP:

Follow us for the latest news and updates!

YOUTUBE

LINKEDIN

FACEBOOK

INSTAGRAM

FALL 2025

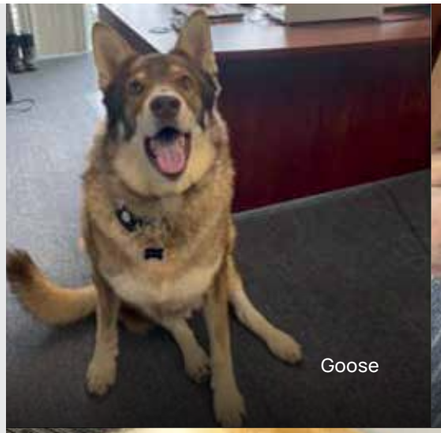
workperks®

Did you know you have access to discounts and a variety of services through our benefits? Well, we all do! Going out of town and need a discount on a hotel, restaurant, or attractions? Got a new cat or dog and need pet insurance? Looking to buy property and need a mortgage? Or maybe you can't get to a pharmacy for medication and need assistance.

These are just some of the various benefits that GINCOR Werx has for their employees called "WorkPerks". WorkPerks is part of our benefits plan and is available for all full-time employees. If you have any questions on how to sign up or where to go, speak with your local Human Resources Representative and they will be happy to assist you!

Author
Nicolette Augruso,
HR Business Partner

GINCOR Werx Pets!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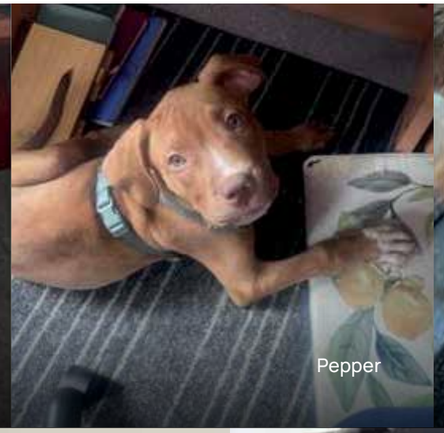
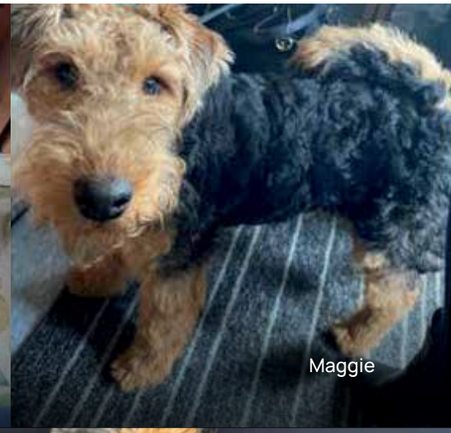
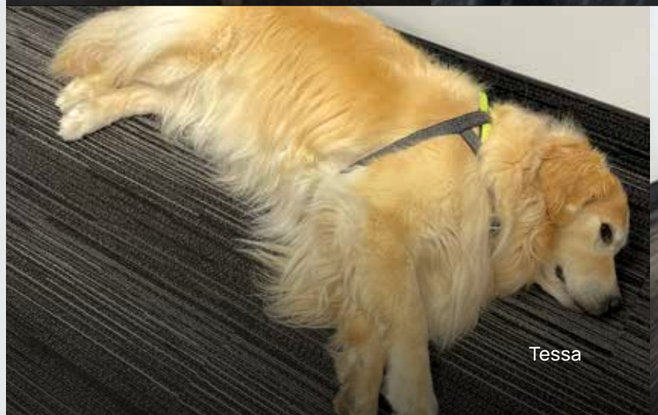

Pepper


Maggie


Tessa

Leo

YEARS OF SERVICE AND RECOGNITION

5 YEARS

Wilton Wilson
Corwin Sam
Logan Provost
Ryan Nicholls
Roshane Ferron
Frank Gutierrez
Nicholas Brown
Matthew Lambert
Alexander McCurdy
Michel Villeneuve
Ryan Yerlitz
Brandan Howe
Steve Cryderman
Michael Laurie
Mike Roblin
Derek Lanoue
Ian Robain
Sabin Sunny
Micha Wallace
Sherdian Baldwin

10 YEARS

Phil Webber
Kalim Hussain
Chris Kandhai
John Blunden
Andrew Callow
David Rose
Mark Verkaik

15 YEARS

Deepal Saram
Pierre Ranger
Brandon Resmer
Matthew Spinks
Jo-Anne Stang
Marcel Bevand
Jacob Hodgson

20 YEARS

Richard Roy
Christian Stang

25 YEARS

Al Neault

35 YEARS

Sam Rowell

40 YEARS

Manuel Sousa

> The roots of true achievement lie in the will to become the best that you can become.
> - Harold Taylor

Building for a New Market: Arauco Project Success Story

GINCOR Werx Group Designed, Engineered, and Built Custom Live Bottom Trailers and Truck Mounts for Arauco in Chile.

Our recent collaboration with Arauco marked an exciting milestone for GINCOR Werx. From the very first meeting, the partnership sparked excitement and inspiration across our team. We were proud to be chosen to create a live bottom and truckmount product for a brand-new customer — and even more thrilled that it gave us the opportunity to build for a new country.

Despite the challenges along the way, the build was completed on time and to the high standards we set for ourselves. Along the journey, we learned a great deal about Arauco's transportation industry and the specialized requirements for the jobs they do. This project kept our plant buzzing with activity, but also expanded our knowledge in a new market, opening doors for growth in our supply chain.

To support this exciting new venture, members of our team traveled to South America to collaborate directly with our partner company, Arauco. The trip proved to be a valuable learning experience, offering firsthand insight into the South American market and reinforcing our commitment to expanding GINCOR Werx's footprint overseas.

We worked through a variety of differences — from regulatory, safety, and technical standards to work culture and communication styles — and each presented opportunities for learning and growth. For example, comparing South American safety protocols with North America's more rigorous standards allowed us to exchange valuable practices and strengthen our collective approach. Likewise, blending North American technical specifications with the mixed European/North American standards common in South America encouraged innovative solutions, particularly in vocational truck "upfitting," and ultimately enhanced our adaptability as a team.

Work culture also varied significantly. We noticed more relaxed working hours, later start times, and extended lunch breaks — often similar to siestas. The slower pace, while culturally appropriate, required some adjustment from our North American team.

Communication was another key hurdle. Even with translation tools, technical terminology was difficult to convey accurately, at times leading to miscommunication and unclear documentation. However, being in the same time zone as our GCTW technical support team helped maintain smooth communication overall.

Logistics came with a few unexpected twists. An ocean freighter incident off Newfoundland led to shipping delays, while a travel disruption in Montreal caused a missed connection flight and a lengthy layover in Panama City ending with a 4 a.m. arrival in Chile. Despite these setbacks, the warmth and hospitality of our partners at Orbitec played a vital role in helping us navigate the challenges and maintain a strong working relationship.

Our GINCOR Werx team working with Orbitec in Chile. In this photo: Pedro Schiavi Stroiber, Alain Duhaime, Jordan Priddle.

Back home, the Arauco project sparked an exciting period of growth and innovation. It led to the creation of a new production line in our plant, giving us invaluable experience in launching and managing new workflows.

This expansion not only increased our production capacity but also created new job opportunities and strengthened the collective skill set across the shop floor.

The initial builds did require extra problem-solving, but those efforts paid off. We used the experience to improve processes throughout the plant. Departments cross-trained, teams collaborated in new ways, and innovation flourished. There was also a strong sense of pride — our employees could proudly share that they were building a product destined for another country.

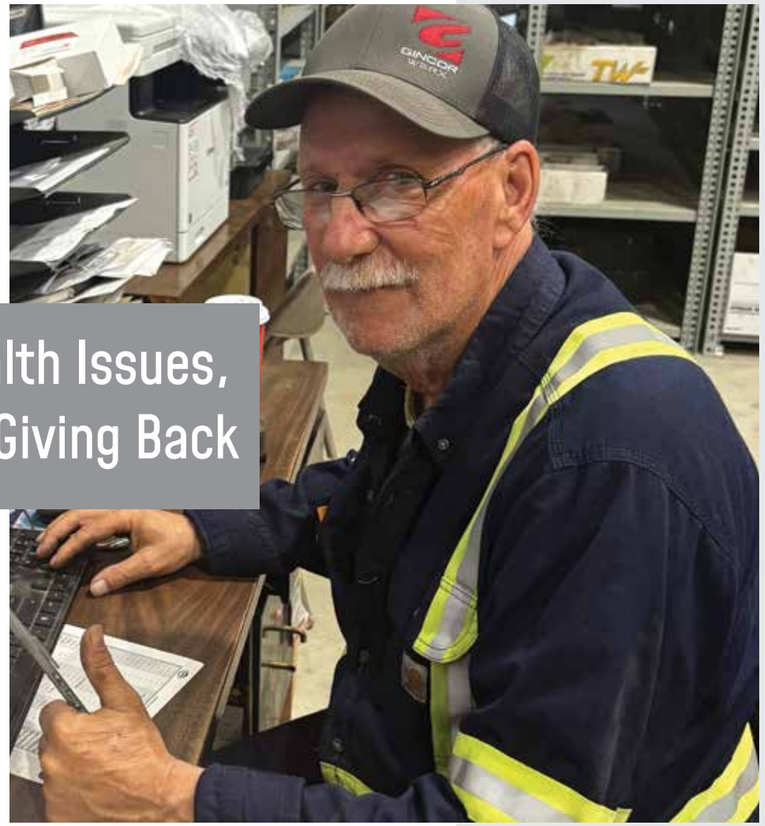
From day one, we had clear objectives and timelines, and strong interdepartmental communication ensured parts were ordered, assembled, and shipped on schedule The project also allowed us to broaden our global shipping expertise, from documentation requirements to loading and logistics — all handled smoothly thanks to careful planning.

This achievement is more than just a completed project — it's a testament to what we can accomplish together. We gained new market insights, strengthened our operations, and most importantly, proved that with teamwork, adaptability, and a commitment to learning, we can tackle any challenge and create lasting success.

Thank you to everyone involved in the plant, on the ground in Chile, and behind the scenes for your dedication and determination. Together, we're building a stronger, more connected GINCOR Werx.

Author
Jordan Priddle, Operations Manager
Tara Nead, Inside Sales

Employee Focus



Overcoming Health Issues, Dedication and Giving Back

Meet Richard Gosselin, a 13-year member of the GINCOR Werx Sudbury Branch, also known as Drivetec Manufacturing. Richard began his career with Drivetec Manufacturing back in 2012 as a shop helper, then transitioned to parts advisor and following the acquisition of Drivetec, he has recently moved into the role of Shop Supervisor.

You can always count on Richard to greet you with a great attitude, a sense of humor, and a willingness to help wherever needed. Anytime I walk into the Sudbury branch, he finds a way to make me laugh and feel right at home all while he has faced many health challenges over the past two years.

First, came in the spring of 2023 Richard was faced with a diagnosed hernia and gallstones which were only surgically treated over a year and half later in December 2024. If that wasn't enough, two months following this surgery, he received a cancer diagnosis with news that the cancer had spread to nearby tissues. All of this should have been enough to make anyone crazy, but Richard didn't skip a beat. He kept up with a positive outlook all while continuing to work and mentor those around him.

I sat down with Richard to get a better understanding of how he is overcoming his health issues, his dedication to his work and how he gives back to others:

MEGAN:
What motivated you to persevere through your health challenges?

RICHARD:
That's easy. Overwhelming support from family (spouse, mother, siblings, grandchildren and friends).

MEGAN:
What were some of the biggest obstacles you faced and how did you overcome them?

RICHARD:
Biggest obstacle I would say was the mental health side. I learned to be positive and very strong. Also, the physical aspect some days you don't feel good enough to do your normal activities. I've learned quickly to pace myself.

MEGAN:
What was your biggest motivation in continuing to work through your health challenges?

RICHARD:
Simple support from all aspects of the GINCOR Werx Team. Think of where we were before to where we are now! How can you not be motivated!

MEGAN:
What lessons have you learned about managing your time and energy while working with health considerations?

RICHARD:
Do not be so stubborn and make sure to ask for help. There are always people willing to help in all aspects.

MEGAN:
What advice would you give to someone currently facing similar health challenges?

RICHARD:
Listen to your body! Speak and reach out to people, there are so many resources out there. And do not be so stubborn, it almost cost me more aggravation than needed.

Richard is in remission due to hormone therapy and on the advice of his oncologist, he is set to undergo radiation treatments in late August. His doctors, his family and Richard himself are all optimistic that he will make a full recovery in the near future.

If you're ever in the Sudbury area, stop by at the GINCOR Werx location for a visit. I promise you will leave a smile and more enthusiastic than when you entered.

Author
Megan Resmer,
HR Business Partner

Thunder Valley Semi Races

GINCOR Werx Team Builds 8 Live Bottom Trailers for Thunder Valley Races

Mattawa, ON – The rumble of diesel engines echoed through the hills of Northern Ontario as the 2025 Thunder Valley Semi Races took over Mattawa for an unforgettable weekend. But this year, the crowd wasn't just there for the trucks—they were there to see innovation in motion, courtesy of GINCOR Werx and its fleet of eight Live Bottom Trailers for the event.

GINCOR Werx, a Canadian leader in vocational truck and trailer manufacturing, made a bold statement at this year's races by supplying eight Live Bottom Trailers to be used throughout the competition. These trailers weren't just built—they were engineered for action.

Off to the races! The GINCOR Werx live bottom trailers used during the races was loaded with 30,000 kg of aggregates.

Thunder Valley kicks off with a ribbon cutting event. Among those in the photo: Mark Resmer, Christian Stang, Garry Anderson, and Bob Corriveau.

Designed to handle the unique demands of semi-truck racing logistics, each Live Bottom Trailer delivered superior performance, safety, and control under the extreme conditions of the Thunder Valley track.

Live Bottom Trailers are known for their continuous unloading capability, increased safety on uneven terrain, and low center of gravity—making them ideal for hauling in high-performance environments. At Thunder Valley, trailers loaded with 30,000 kilograms of aggregates raced with remarkable precision and control. GINCOR Werx adapted their proven Live Bottom designs to meet the unique requirements of the Thunder Valley event, showcasing the company's flexibility and commitment to pushing the boundaries of trailer engineering. While the races thrilled spectators, it was the sense of community and pride that truly stood out. As a company with deep roots in Ontario and a reputation for supporting local industry, GINCOR Werx's presence at the Thunder Valley Semi Races represented more than just metal and mechanics—it was a celebration of Canadian craftsmanship and community spirit.

The performance of the Live Bottom Trailers on and off the track proved once again why GINCOR Werx remains a trusted name in vocational equipment across North America.

From concept to completion, every trailer reflected the innovation, durability, and dedication that has defined GINCOR Werx for over 40 years.

We hope to see you there on 2026!

HEAVY HAUL TRAILERS:

Transitioning to An Assembly Line Approach

On December 1st, 1913, Henry Ford revolutionized manufacturing with the introduction of the moving assembly line, a groundbreaking innovation that combined interchangeable parts, subdivided labor, and fluid material movement. This milestone continues to serve as the cornerstone of modern manufacturing practices across various industries.

The assembly line method offers several significant advantages for manufacturing businesses, including heightened productivity, reduced labour costs, consistent product quality, minimized waste, and increased production volume. These benefits have proven instrumental in driving efficiency and competitiveness within the manufacturing sector.

While JC, has historically thrived on traditional stationary building methods, such as two fabricators working in tandem in a single bay to fabricate one trailer. Embracing the principles of the assembly line presents an opportunity for us to enhance operational efficiency and sustain our competitive edge in the market.

Transitioning to an assembly line approach requires meticulous planning and seamless execution across various departments. It begins with the engineering team, tasked with developing precise designs and comprehensive bills of materials to guide procurement and inventory management processes. Successful collaboration between engineering and purchasing is essential to ensure timely acquisition of materials and efficient inventory control, laying a solid foundation for streamlined production scheduling. Once the materials have been acquired, we can begin kitting each build, having the components readily available will save time for the fabricators and increase productivity.

Admittedly, the initial stages of implementing the assembly line comes with challenges and unforeseen obstacles. However, it is imperative to view these hurdles as integral to the learning process and opportunities for continuous improvement. As we navigate this transformative journey, it is essential to remain agile, adaptive, and committed to improvement remembering that success is not a straight line but a series of learning curves that must be intelligently navigated towards our goals.

In adopting the assembly line methodology, JC reaffirms its commitment to excellence, competitiveness, and sustainable growth in an ever-evolving industry. By embracing change and harnessing the power of innovation, we position ourselves not only to endure but to thrive in the dynamic manufacturing landscape of the future.

Author
Nathan Johnston,
Operations Manager

WILTSIE TRUCK BODIES:

A New and Evolving Chapter in the GINCOR Werx Story

In the world of custom truck body manufacturing, precision and adaptability are everything. And that's exactly what makes Wiltsie Truck Bodies, the newest member of the GINCOR Werx Family, such an exciting addition.

Nestled in southern Ontario, Wiltsie isn't your typical dump body manufacturer. Sure, they build top-tier dump trucks—but that's just the beginning. What sets this team apart is their ability to go beyond the standard and deliver custom-engineered solutions built to match unique customer needs.

Take, for example, their current project: a large custom order for a major client, Messer. Wiltsie's team is fabricating curtain-sided flat decks, specially designed to carry skids of various gas bottles. It's not just a build—it's a solution, tailored from the ground up for one client's very specific requirements.

But curtain-siders are only a glimpse of what Wiltsie can do. From aluminum and steel flat decks, to dumping landscape bodies, service body installs, and SPIF-compliant lift axles, they offer a comprehensive range of builds. And if it needs to be fixed, they can handle that too. Whether its hydraulic system installs, wheelbase modifications, or dump box repairs, Wiltsie has the tools, the team, and the know-how to get it done.

Behind the scenes, the shop is buzzing with activity. A fully stocked parts department keeps the workflow moving, while the sandblast bay and dual paint bays ensure every job leaves the yard looking as good as it performs.

For GINCOR Werx, the integration of Wiltsie Truck Bodies marks a significant expansion, not just in services, but in spirit. Wiltsie brings a hands-on, solution-first attitude that aligns perfectly with our values. Their commitment to custom work, precision craftsmanship, and customer service is everything we stand for.

Author
Travis Honsberger,
Operations Manager

From the Azores to Ontario:

The Remarkable Journey of Manuel Sousa – 40 Years of Service at Durabody

Born on July 22, 1947, in the small town of Arrifes in the Azores Islands off of Portugal, Manuel Sousa was the second oldest of seven children, 6 daughters and the only son raised by Joe and Lucinda Sousa.

Manuel started working at the early age of 12 years old! He started in a welding shop, like Durabody, making flat decks, welding farm equipment and other projects. Back when Manuel started, there was so such thing as “Health and Safety”, he worked without work boots, gloves, safety gloves, etc.

At 22, Manual married his wife Maria and together had 2 daughters. After hearing about “living a better life” in Canada, Manuel made the decision to leave the Azores at the age of 24 with his wife and daughters in tow. They landed in Winnipeg where Manuel found work with a company that built farm equipment. Over 11 years, he became a key contributor—spending two of those years hand-building a prototype tractor, the first of its kind in Canada, consisting of exactly 1001 parts. A scale model of that tractor was gifted to him in 1983. This project remains one of his proudest achievements.

In 1983, Manuel decided to return to Portugal to rebuild a life for his family in his homeland. His young children and wife, however, did not want to leave Canada. Missing his family and unable to convince them to return to Portugal, Manuel returned in 1985 and settled in Bradford, Ontario where one if his sisters lived.

One day, while driving through Bondhead, Ontario, Manuel passed by Durabody. Curious he stopped in and there he met Mr. Lowell Tipping, founder of Durabody. After a quick welding test and within 15 minutes, Manuel impressed Mr. Tipping with his accuracy and quality as a welder fitter. Manuel offered to work two weeks for free to prove his worth. He didn’t need to—his skill spoke for itself. Within months, he was rising through the ranks, earning raises and respect with every project.

When Manuel first started with the company, drawings were limited, and workers had to rely on their knowledge to build quality products. Manuel would go outside and study suppliers’ trailers in the yard as they were dropping off materials. He would crawl underneath the supplier’s trailer to see how it was built. Manuel built the first 53’ trailer for Durabody.

Manuel worked on several complex jobs over the years. Building a Church steeples without drawings, relying on skill and vision. He’s particularly proud of the fire-fighter training trailers that he built over the years. These were very complex units that had flames, smoke and heat swirling around inside the trailer, creating a house-fire scenario to train fire-fighters on extraction exercises within.

Now in his late 70s, Manuel still shows up every day, producing high-quality work with the same passion he had at 12. He once had a hobby-farm at his property in Bradford. He tended to chickens, goats, turkeys, even Peacocks but has since scaled back. These days, he enjoys tending his garden, caring for his home, and spending time with his beloved granddaughter.

At the end of each shift, Manuel and a co-worker, Jan Karpienia stop by a local pub in Bradford and enjoy a cold beer, often reminding each other that it’s their turn to pay the tab.

When the time comes to hang up his welding helmet, Manuel plans to spend a few months each year in Portugal—but Canada is home now. His heart belongs to his family, and especially to his granddaughter, who keeps him grounded and smiling.

Manuel’s story is one of resilience, craftsmanship, and quiet heroism. He’s not just a part of Durabody’s history—he’s part of its legacy! Happy 40th Anniversary - Manuel Souza!

Author

Sean Huggins,
Production Manager

Manuel’s story is one of resilience, craftsmanship, & quiet heroism. He’s not just a part of Durabody’s history—he’s part of its legacy! In the photo, from left to right, Brad Metcalf, Jim Noble, Manuel Souza, and Lowell Tipping (co-founder of Durabody).

A scale model of that tractor was gifted to him in 1983. This project remains one of his proudest achievements.

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