

By James Careless

# Norske Tools: Delivering Innovative Power Tool Accessories at Competitive Prices

**IT'S A TOUGH TIME** for smaller LBM chains and independent hardware retailers, due to their big box competitors sourcing products directly from Chinese manufacturers. By going direct and buying in volume, the big box chains are achieving discounts that are hard for smaller LBM/independent buying groups to meet – but not impossible. In fact, providing the same price advantage to smaller LBM chains and independent hardware retailers is precisely what Norske Tools of Surrey, BC aims to do.

“Founded in January 2016 to serve the North American LBM market, Norske Tools was started by an experienced senior leadership team with over 75 years of combined experience in the Power Tool Accessory (PTA) industry,” said Bob Johnston, VP & GM of Norske Tools. “With the help of an Asian PTA manufacturer that is backing our enterprise, Norske Tools sells a range of innovative accessories for the non-tradeable (buy new) and tradeable (buy new with trade-in) PTA retail sectors.”

Although Norske Tools has only been in business for little over a year, “our team’s experience, passion, and strong belief in our products have allowed us to grow at an impressive rate not typically seen with start-ups,” said Paul Johnston, Norske Tools’ Project Manager. “We attained nearly 200 dealers in nine months, currently have 17 employees at our Surrey warehouse/distribution centre – and are backed by an experienced team of field sales agents who already have strong ties with LBM stores across North America.”

According to Paul Johnston, Norske Tools was founded to fill a gap in the PTA market. Specifically, the company’s leadership team saw that smaller LBM chains and independent hardware retailers needed to match the direct buying advantages enjoyed by their big box competitors, plus improve their relationships with customer by offering superior-quality, innovative designed PTA items at reasonable prices.

“Our leadership team saw an opportunity to partner with a manufacturer and leverage their experience and relationships in the PTA industry to beat incumbents on quality and service,” Paul Johnston explained. “With intimate knowledge of customers’ needs and a fresh plate, the Norske management team wanted to introduce a simpler, more refined trade system. We also saw a chance to reignite a stagnant industry with a model that could combine the quality and innovation of a manufacturer with the service of a distributor.”

“The Norske parent company is a PTA manufacturer, which allows us to control quality, innovate, provide better service to our customers through shorter lead times and first-to-market products,” added Bob Johnston. “Meanwhile, our experienced leadership team has



## IN THE NON-TRADEABLE PTA SEGMENT, NORSKE TOOLS OFFERS:

- Hole Saws (M42, Diamond, Industrial Diamond, Thin Wall)
- Diamond Blades
- Circular Saw Blades (Thin Kerf, Professional and Heavy Duty Industrial)
- Impact Torsion Screwdriver Bits
- Coloured Screwdriver Bits
- OTAs & Starlock OTAs
- Abrasives
- Reciprocating Saw Blades (Recips)
- Router Bits

## MEANWHILE, NORSKE TOOLS’ TRADE-A-BLADE PROGRAM IS THE ORIGINAL TRADE-A-BLADE PTA EXCHANGE SYSTEM IN USE ACROSS NORTH AMERICA FOR THE PAST 40 YEARS. IT COVERS:

- Circular Saw Blades (Entry Level, Professional, Heavy Duty and Diamond)
- Hole Saws
- Oscillating Tool Accessories
- Recips
- Router Bits

access (through former relationships) to other manufacturers. These long-standing relationships have allowed us to share drawings, collaborate on designs, and ensure quality with our state-of-the-art testing facility in Surrey.”

For LBM retailers, what really matters is being able to offer great products to their clients at competitive prices. On this point, Norske Tools delivers.

For instance, the company’s ‘Flextech’ impact torsion bits use a proprietary steel and heat treat process for maximum strength and durability. “Typically, they can withstand up to 50% more stress than other impact bits,” said Paul Johnston. “This means our Flextech bits last longer and break less often; keeping customers happier and coming back for more. Our second generation of Flextech torsion bits will be introduced in 2017 with an even better grip, hardness and breaking point.”

Norske Tools’ Double-Ended Shank Recip Blades can be reversed to double blade life. “That’s right: When the blade loses its edge on its original installation, you just take it out and put it in using the other end to get a fresh edge,” Bob Johnston said. “This means you are getting twice the cutting life compared to a competitor’s single-ended recip blade; for only 20% more than their product costs.”

Meanwhile, Norske Tools’ Power Curve Recip blades use a curved, sickle-like shape to provide more bite and power to cutting jobs. “The innovative curve gives the user



Norske Show Booth 2017 Buying Show.

more cutting surface within the same form factor, speeding up the job while reducing user fatigue,” said Paul Johnston. “It is just a better way of doing things.”

Also worth noting: Norske Tools was the first Canadian company to partner with Fein and introduce Starlock OTAs. This means that Norske Tools’ PTAs can be used on a full range of power tools, including those made by Bosch, Fein, and other power tool manufacturers.

On the Trade-A-Blade side of the business, Norske Tools has simplified the

program’s administration by reducing it to just four trade SKUs. This allows for faster program set-up, much less hassle for cashiers, and overall easier program administration. Better yet, Norske Tools completely recycles all traded-in blades, with the proceeds going to charity. The new blades that customers buy are just that: They’re new, not remanufactured.

Finally, Norske Tools takes customer service seriously, and provides its LBM retail customers with attractive, easy-to-install and densely packed displays. “Relationships have been at the core of our business since Day One; both in terms of supply and sales,” said Bob Johnston. “Our magnetic merchandising options and attractive packaging have resulted in increased dealer sales. Product performance retains these sales, keeping the retailers’ customers coming back for more.”

All told, Norske Tools is a worthwhile PTA supply option that smaller LBM chains and hardware independents need to look into, to improve their positions against big box competition. “If you didn’t see a Norske product demonstration or receive a free sample at the WRLA buying show, please contact [info@norsketools.com](mailto:info@norsketools.com) to sample the Norske difference,” said Paul Johnston. “Your improved PTA sales, and the better margins our products offer, will make you happy that you did.”