



BESPOKEPLUS



"If your work speaks for itself don't interrupt"

Well into the New Year



This started out being a Happy New Year heading, but it has taken over a month to get this edition of the Bespoke Plus off to you. This is the 21st year of this publication sharing news and events in and around the industry and people in our

community. The ruminations are our attempt to keep you abreast of things we see and hear as much as it is to assist in the marketing and promotions of the products we deliver to you.

Although we have yet to have an official grand opening (and a year down the road it looks like the best we will be able to do is have a big bar-b-que some day), we are getting more settled in our new stand alone building. We have new furnaces, doors, cameras, racking, lighting, entrance, washrooms, and basically a huge facelift to what it was a year ago. There is still lots to do and when that is finished we may have to start over redoing things, but it has become a great place to come to every day. We take this opportunity to wish everyone all the best in 2023!

Mobility Reimagined



The Toronto Auto Show started in 1974 with approximately 85,000 visitors. Now it is called the "AUTOSHOW" and the slogan this year is "Mobility Reimagined". It will have in excess of 1.2 million paid visitors and Marco Ferrara's Universal Motion will be playing a prominent role showcasing vehicles.

We will assist with product placement that follows the "Mobility Reimagined" theme so you will see a number of different wheelchairs and power products. Check it out at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) in downtown Toronto and visit www.autoshow.ca for more information.

CFPDP



We hope to see a number of you at the 39th Annual Great Valentine Gala set for Saturday February 11, 2023 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in downtown Toronto. **The Lay Awakes** will be playing! For more info www.CFPDP.com.

Pricing

We have received pricing notices from most suppliers, and some have just served them without notice. There are multiple reasons provided for the hikes in pricing, but most blame their raw material suppliers and the cost of shipping as being the big reasons for their increases. One supplier in particular has started a temporary surcharge on shipping of product to them which they claim is no longer able to be absorbed in their cost of doing business: 15% increase plus 15% on the cost of shipping! Many of our suppliers have referred to this shipping surcharge as a temporary measure, but we remind you again that is what the population was told about income tax in 1917. We keep our retail pricing under support on our web site.

Customer Relations

The dealer network in our industry continually run into the problem of feeling that they need to hand hold the funding process for their customers. Customers, more often referred to as patients or clients, are often asking the dealer to assist with funding applications that provide services to people with a disability, as if it is their responsibility to seek funding for products and services that they provide.

End users of these products have a responsibility to understand the costs involved and may apply for assistance from funding programs which are available to the general population in most areas of the country albeit tremendously different in each province/territory. The end user controls that process; however, our industry

knowingly or unknowingly has adopted a model where they may treat the customer more as a person that requires their assistance to speed up the funding application procedures and the sale of their products.

We liked the message behind the quote from Lou Holtz, athlete, coach, and broadcaster, where he said, *“athletes of today talk in terms of rights and privileges whereas yesterday’s athletes spoke in terms of responsibilities and obligations”*.

Often time today we suspect that the dealer network is wondering about this phrase when asked to chase funding for product that individuals are purchasing. This is an industry that is attached to the health care system; a system born public funded creating the belief that everything is free. In Canada’s biggest populated province everyone is eligible for funding through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) who have watered down funding for 75% of what they determine should be a reimbursable amount for a product which is generally speaking a far cry from the manufacturers retail pricing. So, if the product costs \$6,000.00 and they pay \$4,000.00 because they feel that is what it is worth, the end user pays \$1,000.00 plus \$2,000.00. Some folks are wondering out loud what would happen if there was a funding eligibility process and once confirmed a cheque was provided to the end user and they would go shopping as a customer! Would that \$6,000.00 product become less?

Invacare Chapter 11

In small business if your earnings don’t match or exceed your expenses the owner starts looking for a job or taking whatever resources he/she may have and invest in a new enterprise. In publicly traded big business it seems the senior executive get a longer leash from creditors when they produce a financial statement that shows if they have an incredible amount more debt they will be able to turn the corner and emerge on the black side of an otherwise red ledger. That appears to be what is happening with Invacare Corporation and it continues to impact just shy of 100 other corporations worldwide that they wholly own directly or indirectly including Invacare Canada companies.

Top End Sports and Recreation Wheelchair Division has good product, and it is nice to see it was peeled off and now lives on it own as Top End Sports, LLC under the direction of Kris Horner, CEO.

Keep an eye on Kuschall AG, a Switzerland company wholly owned by Invacare who will likely have some announcement soon; we could never understand why Invacare would have pulled the plug on this company in

North America when it was doing well all over and manufacturing was established here in Montreal, Canada.

We wish all the displaced employee’s well in their future endeavours and hope that they find their passion to continue to develop products and services that enhance the lives of people that need them.

Benoit Systemes

Benoit Systemes have made an economic decision to sell their product to other distributors/dealers in Canada. Currently, they have brought Maximum Health Care and Mobility on board and seek others to be involved with the product line. For companies interested in being involved with Benoit Systemes directly you can contact Tanya Veraksa Chevignard tanya.veraksa@benoitsystemes.com to establish the relationship.

We’ve had good experience with the product line conceived and built by the late Robert Benoit, a pioneer in the development of products to meet the needs of people with a disability. The product quality is excellent and end users that have been using the product have positive reviews.

An MDEL may be a prerequisite but that will be clarified by Tanya. The prior demo product discussions with dealers may be discussed directly with Tanya and the chairs used may be any on their compatibility listing however, 49 Bespoke Inc have stock on the Rehasense product that was going to be used for that purpose and they are available at preferred pricing.

We wish everyone success with the product line and will provide parts going forward as stock allows.

Bits and Bytes

- 49 Mobility Reimagined Feb 17-26 Toronto, ON;
- 49 Abilities March 10-12, 2023, Los Angeles, CA;
- 49 REE March 7, 2023, Richmond Olympic Oval, BC;
- 49 38th ISS Pittsburg, PA April 13-15, 2023;
- 49 Pedaling Possibilities May 2023, Canada;
- 49 CSMC Sep 12-13, Toronto, ON;
- 49 Rehacare Sep 13-16, Dusseldorf, Germany.

BESPOKE PLUS is the newsletter of 49 Bespoke Inc., which markets products from around the world designed to better meet the needs of people with a disability. We have grown up in sport, have a social service background, and have adopted an advocacy role in our business practice. **Comments are welcome.**