



## expanding reach and capabilities

Peter Jamieson on **Wheels Group's** current and future growth plans

**CT&L:** *What have been the most significant developments for Wheels Group over the past year?*

**Jamieson:** We recently acquired the Clipper Group to expand our customer reach and capabilities within the US. We are now proceeding to integrate our non-asset companies – Wheels International and Clipper – into one larger North American 3PL (branded as Wheels-Clipper) to offer our customers on both sides of the border a greater product and service offering. In addition, we continue to expand our freight forwarding efforts as Wheels Global to meet our customers' growing needs for a door-to-door service provider concentrating on the Pacific Rim and Europe.

**CT&L:** *Although you are repeat winners of the 50 Best Managed Companies Award, your services have garnered a considerable amount of other forms of recognition. Can you elaborate?*

**Jamieson:** We were also the first Canadian 3PL to achieve ISO 9001-2000 certification, and have been named a top North American 3PL by both *Inbound Logistics* and *Logistics Quarterly*. We are also Ford Q1 qualified. But our most important strength is people. We focus on attracting, developing and retaining the industry's best so that we can provide superior service to our many industry channels – packaged goods, food, automotive, general manufactured and consumer goods.

**CT&L:** *The impact from a high Canadian dollar combined with a general economic slowdown in North America is creating a much different marketplace than what we have been accustomed to in recent years. What challenges is this posing for your specific client base?*

**Jamieson:** Reduced Canadian export shipments into the US coupled with the overall economic slowdown has created many challenges. For northbound shippers this



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means reduced carrier capacity and increased costs, plus add the border clearance issues.

**CT&L:** *How is Wheels responding to this new reality to help out shippers?*

**Jamieson:** We continue to increase our carrier efforts, look for opportunities where we can provide round trip service, alternate intermodal solutions and more innovative cross-border options around collaborative US and Canadian carriers. Our combined North American rail and highway capabilities offer our clients stronger knowledge and strengths for transactional shipping needs. In addition, we can offer our value-added supply chain analysis and optimization team to identify ways to both improve service and reduce overall costs. Our experts can leverage our knowledge and strengths to find improvements in areas that may not be as efficient or may be driving costs into the supply chain. We touch transportation, modes,

inventory, service levels, in and out distribution, customer order agreements, business strategies and rules, etc. This customer value solution focuses on understanding the business strategies and issues and leveraging our strengths to help identify and improve processes, information management and implement supply chain optimization and service solutions.

**CT&L:** *Often costs creep into supply chain functions because a company has not developed the tracking and measuring procedures necessary to identify and isolate the costs of certain operations. How can your information technology provide them with more visibility into their cost structures?*

**Jamieson:** Customer focused information technology is really about delivering timely business information to both manage activities and processes. Our Wheelslink portal provides key shipping information: load status; pick-up; enroute; delivered OTD, plus much more customer-tailored reporting by product such as SKU, shipping and receiving points, OTD to their end customer/receiver and performance reporting around core supply chain elements such as production, inventory, carrier, order details etc, to focus on core causes. It is really about turning supply information into valuable business knowledge to identify and drive change.

**CT&L:** *Are you satisfied with the current size of your company and the breadth of its service offerings? If not, how do you plan to continue growing in the future?*

**Jamieson:** Wheels has had an impressive growth record. Our annualized average growth rate has been 25% since the company's inception in 1998. We see future growth through expansion into the warehousing distribution services, reefer controlled logistics, and kitting/sub assembly services, being driven by integrated collaborative customer needs in the near future.