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BROOK RESTORATION NICHE IS LARGELY RECESSION-PROOF

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Niche Is Largely Recession-Proof

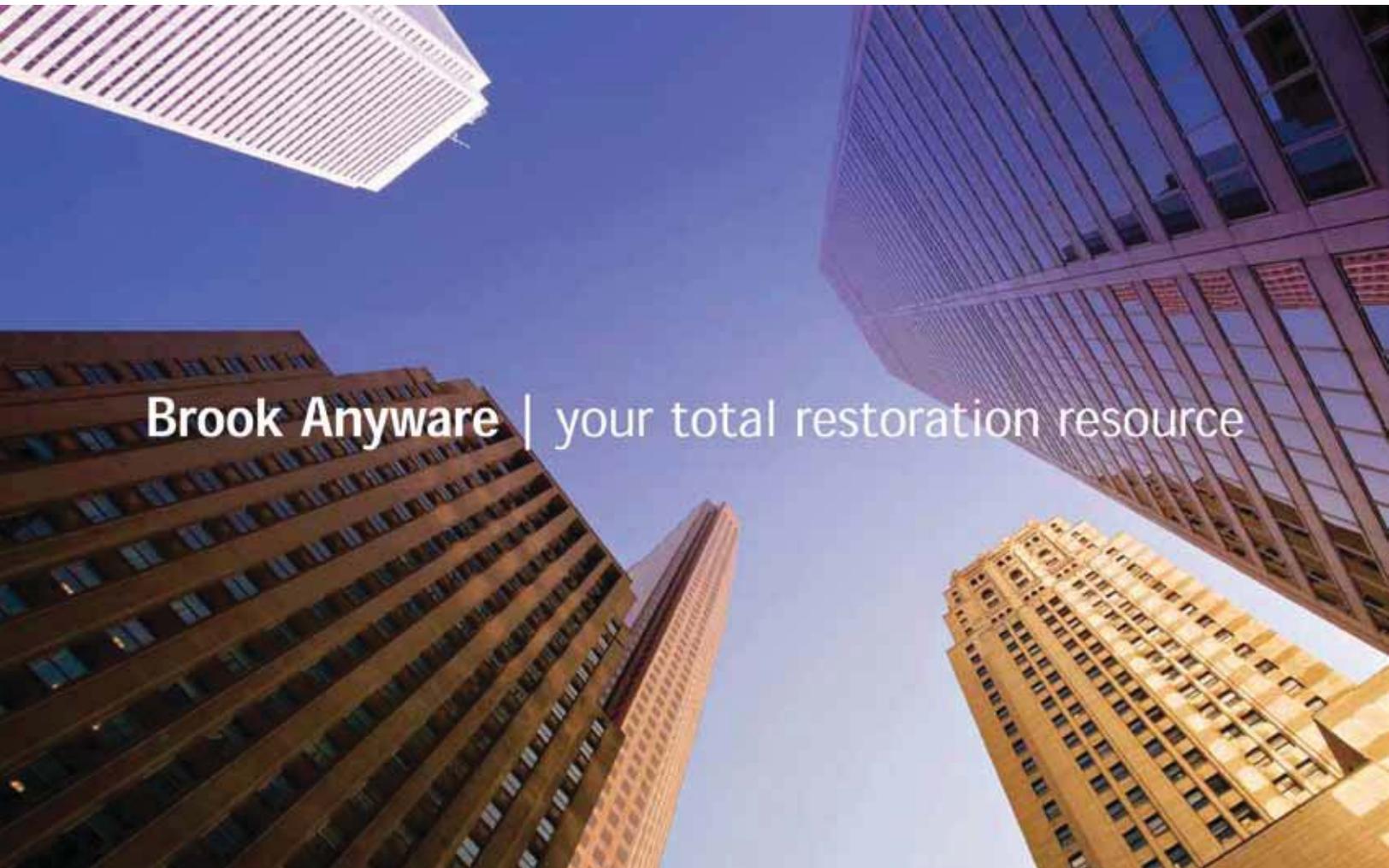
Produced by Cathi Sachs & Written by Holly Alexander

There are certain things that cannot wait until the economy improves to get done, among them necessary maintenance and repairs on parking garages and other large structure restoration needs. Brook Restoration, based in Toronto, Ontario, runs its business to be steady and even growing despite the recession, completing these

necessary projects with relative ease.

The company has had quite a trajectory in the Toronto area and works as far out as Sudbury and Ottawa to the north and east, and Guelph, Hamilton, and Kitchener in the south and west in southern Ontario. Founded in 2000, Brook

Restoration now employs about 130 people, said owner and President Geoff Grist. No stranger to unknown adventures, Grist was a semi-professional rugby player when he decided to visit Canada in 1986 with just \$50 in his pocket. He decided to stay when he met and then married his wife, Pauline, and went into the restoration industry in 1989.



Brook Anywhere | your total restoration resource

Brook pledges clients “service that is knowledgeable, cooperative, technically insightful and uncompromising in quality which recognizes the technical strengths and capabilities of the project consultants and incorporates and works with the design teams and building owners during the construction process.”

Grist says the company follows “a service philosophy that each project is unique and, either large or small, receives the individual attention it deserves by our professional team of senior management, project managers and skilled restoration workers.” The company also ensures that project costs range from thousands to millions of



Brook Workware | optimized site specific workforce

dollars to keep its diversity high. Typical jobs, with Brook doing just construction or taking on project management as well, include restoration, heritage building restoration, weatherproofing, moisture protection and specialty repairs for structures made with concrete, masonry or stonework. Some of the most common structures needing restoration are parking garages, balconies and exterior walls.

Interesting projects, Grist says, have included the Markham Civic Centre, where the company installed ties to re-anchor the arriscraft stone façade and then tuck pointed the entire facade, also installing control joints and replacing perimeter sealants. Brook Restoration also worked on Toronto’s historic railroad Roundhouse, now a shopping, dining and historical center next to CN Tower. Other recent projects include work at 50 Prince Arthur, a 19-story residential building in Toronto’s Annex District, and 320 Bay Street where the company restored the exterior limestone façade on the 1930s commercial building. Brook also completed work for St. Clair Church in Toronto and the University of Guelph. These are just a few of the many projects completed by Brook.

In addition to extensive use of up-to-date IT to automate functions, Grist said Brook’s other primary efficiency program is safety. “We



“We use an outside consultant and the result is a workforce that is properly trained and certified with the latest safety regulations to work smart and safe on any restoration project”

—Geoff Grist, *President*

BROOK RESTORATION

use an outside consultant and the result is a workforce that is properly trained and certified with the latest safety regulations to work smart and safe on any restoration project,” says Grist. The company has also kept up with the green movement by focusing on its waste management.

Most of Brook Restoration’s work, including brick, concrete, forming, glazing and painting is handled by its in-house employees. The company currently subs out specialty trades such as roofing and waterproofing, but it is also looking into taking

roofing inside the company. Most employees come by word-of-mouth recommendations, and the company has worked to remediate the lack of apprenticeship programs in restoration by developing classes that are beginning to offer restoration skills with George Brown College in Toronto.

Grist says that its people are the company’s greatest asset, and offers a great benefit package to help retain them, adding bonuses and profit sharing to the standard benefit packages. The company provides most training in-house

and have an established group of suppliers and subs.

Customer service is another top value, and Grist’s expectation is that when a problem arises the Brook team will “turn a bad situation into something good,” carrying that same attitude to the detective work and unpredictable conditions that are part and parcel of restoration. In addition to building a good rate of repeat business in its nine-year stint, Brook invests in trade shows, brochures, Renters News, Condo Life and similar magazines for its marketing strategies.



Because the company is relatively new, Brook pumps as much money as possible into the company. The firm prefers to own and maintain its own equipment; now owns a majority of the equipment it needs, including swing stages, scaffolding, bobcats, and other machinery; and invests in new equipment “all the time,” Grist explained.

Led by Grist and General Manager, Alex McMullen, Brook’s four project managers have a combined 60 years of experience in building restoration. Adding an excellent supporting cast of foreman, restoration mechanics, apprentices and labourers, Brook is on track for continued growth and innovation in building restorations of all types. ■

COMPANY AT A GLANCE

Established : 2000

Brook Restoration Employees : 110

President : Geoff Grist

[***www.brookrestoration.ca***](http://www.brookrestoration.ca)



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