

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, IMPROVING BUSINESS

A strong commitment to customer service is a central tenet of the relationship between leading global real estate developer and manager, Oxford Properties, and one of its key suppliers, Kruger Products.

The two companies share similar corporate values, which helps them work together to meet the needs of tenants in Oxford buildings, says Stephen Adams, the General Manager Real Estate for Oxford Properties Group.

"We use Kruger Products as an example of a vendor relationship that works well," says Adams.

Adams manages four Class A office buildings in downtown Toronto. His main goal is to provide tenants a Class A office experience, while leveraging opportunities to strengthen the Oxford Properties brand. With high-profile tenants in his buildings, elements such as premium tissue and paper products are a priority.

His main contact at Kruger Products is Marney Thompson, a Senior Account Manager, who believes it is important to tailor customer service to each client, as their individual needs are distinct. She needs to know a tenant's goals and expectations in order to offer the best service possible.

"With a customer like Oxford, they have such a strong aesthetic brand so we make sure the products we supply enhance the work they've already done to create this user experience," Thompson says.

Thompson and Adams began working together five years ago. Then, the cleaning company for CitiGroup Place, one of the buildings Adams manages, was using Kruger Products towel and tissue products. Based on their experience with the company, Adams expanded the use of Kruger Products' offerings to other establishments he manages. Today, all four of his properties use Kruger Products, as well as a number of other Oxford properties across Canada.

Adams says Thompson understands the internal organization within each site, and communicates with the different stakeholders in each building. "It's not only reaching out to people at my level, but it's also talking to building managers and operational managers to find out 'Where are we getting positive feedback' on the products," he says. "One point of contact won't get you to the finish line."

From people working in the loading dock to the building tenants, Adams says it's important to ask "Are we making your job better?" and "Are we making your experience better?" This helps him to determine how he can better help everyone meet their goals, thereby achieving Oxford's overall objectives.

One goal Adams and Thompson are working together to achieve is staying in line with Oxford's steadfast commitment to sustainability. Cognizant of Oxford's green policies, Kruger Products is helping Oxford reduce waste through its towel and tissue dispensing system solutions. Leveraging

controlled dispensing, Oxford is reducing the amount of product consumed, which results in less waste. Furthermore, controlled dispensing impacts the amount of labour required for maintenance - by utilizing longer roll towels and jumbo bathroom tissue, maintenance staff can be more efficient with their time, rather than constantly refilling dispensers throughout the day. Keeping in contact with Adams helps Thompson understand how these dispensing system solutions are working and where improvements can be made.

Thompson says it's important to check-in with a client regularly to increase the level of comfort with Kruger Products, and not just to talk business. She gets to know her clients better so that they always feel comfortable calling her with feedback.

"I talk with Marney regularly and she's always wondering how different products are performing in different areas of our buildings," says Adams. "She also will ask, 'what's on your plate,' and 'what can we do to help you out.'"

"I want to make sure that the products I suggest are really measuring up and performing the way they're meant to, and if they're not, then I'll work hard to make the right changes," says Thompson. "It's easy to have a great relationship when it's business as usual, but relationships strengthen when things go wrong and we handle them efficiently with the customer at the centre of the solution."

"Kruger Products has exceeded expectations along the way, and we've given them more business as a result," says Adams. "They've become an extension of the Oxford platform."

