



Case study:

P&H MILLING GROUP

In August 2017, P&H Milling started up the first greenfield mill to be built in Ontario in over 75 years. In Hamilton, Ontario, the highly automated, \$45-million facility processes 480 tonnes of grain/hour with just 20 employees.



CHALLENGES

- The size, scale and in-house manpower to wire an entire plant within tight timelines
- Food-processing expertise and experience to ensure food-safety compliance
- Flexibility since the unexpected was to be expected at the province's first greenfield mill in 75 years

BENEFITS

- New Electric had the size, scale and in-house employees required to accommodate P&H Milling's installation and production timelines.
- New Electric's food-industry customers include Canada Bread, Mondelez, Cott Beverages and others.
- New Electric's flexibility and ability to adapt and problem-solve easily accommodated significant changes in scope as the project evolved.

SOLUTION

New Electric, a Spark Power Company, and its staff installed and tested the multiple electrical systems required to light the mill, power the extensive automation and communications systems and drive the massive bulk handling and conveying, grinding and processing, air filtering and air handling that support the milling of Canadian grain.

PROJECT

Even when you're P&H Milling, the largest Canadian-owned milling company with more than 100 years of milling experience, challenges will be a given when you build Ontario's first greenfield mill in 75 years.

"P&H Milling had built a highly-automated, technology-intensive mill on a patch of empty land, so we needed a highly adaptable electrical contractor with food-industry experience and the fulltime staff required to do the job without turning to subcontractors," says Roger De Winter, vice-president, national operations, P&H Milling, Cambridge, Ont., who needed an electrical contractor to bring light and production to an empty shell of a building. "As it turned out, New Electric had no problem whatsoever rolling with the punches - they just dealt with whatever came up without making it a big deal."

P&H Milling built its new \$45-million, Hamilton, Ontario mill, which started up in August 2017, to increase its flour milling capacity in Ontario. With 8 pre-existing mills across Canada, P&H Milling had worked with a wide range of smaller electrical contractors over the years. However, De Winter knew they simply didn't have the scale to tackle a project as massive as its new Hamilton mill.

In today's business environment, many consider sub-contractors a given, but it's also widely accepted that full-time staff offer superior quality control, guarantee expertise and experience and ensure on-site availability and flexibility. That's exactly what P&H Milling needed on an incredibly complex project with demanding deadlines. Requirements ranged from the installation of hundreds of light receptacles to the millions of feet of cable and conduit that would power everything from the communications and computer systems to the milling equipment.

"New Electric had an army at its disposal and the sheer number of full-time, permanent, non-union employees made all the difference to us," says De Winter, who also noted a P&H Miller staffer's positive experiences with New Electric played a role in their hiring. "A company the size of New Electric doesn't get overwhelmed when you ask them to do something extra. They simply pull in additional staff rather than asking more of their existing people who are already working at maximum capacity."

The fact New Electric is a non-union shop was also a bonus from P&H Milling's perspective. P&H Milling, although willing to work with a unionized electrical contractor, benefited from New Electric's inherent flexibility and ability to avoid issues such as strikes. New Electric accommodated everything from the project's shifting scope to weather-related delays.

Yet, as much as New Electric's size virtually guaranteed the company had the necessary resources, P&H Milling was accustomed to dealing with smaller firms. New Electric made it clear that P&H Milling employees would always have direct access to New Electric's leaders and confirmed the entire New Electric team's attention to detail. In addition, New Electric's dedicated project managers and on-site supervisors and lead-hands ensured P&H

knew exactly what was happening, when and why while keeping the project on track.

"Before committing to a big firm, we needed assurance they'd be on top of everything, from the big picture to the details and we had in-depth discussions regarding our need for complete transparency and very direct, straightforward communications," says De Winter, who had come to expect it from smaller providers. "Tell us what's what, exchange information and keep the dialogue going until we have a viable solution - New Electric did exactly that."

As a food processor, P&H Milling has to meet stringent food-safety requirements from a broad array of third-party certification and standards organizations such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point), GFSI and BRC Global standards and certifications. Over the years, New Electric has serviced a variety of food and beverage manufacturers, including Maple Leaf Foods, Canada Bread, Mondelez, Cott Beverage and Maple Lodge, Canada's largest chicken processor, and has first-hand experience with those organizations' demands.

"When you look for an electrical contractor with the scope and scalability that we required for our new Hamilton mill as well as the food-industry experience, you find New Electric - that's it," says De Winter.

To mill Canadian grain into approximately 40 different food products, P&H Milling's electrical consumption is second only to the wheat consumption, as it converts raw grain into products such as flour and granular products. In today's health and safety focused industrial environment, dustless mills are the norm. Air handling and filter systems move massive volumes of air to create a dust-free space and equalize the air pressure inside and outside the mill to maximize production efficiency.



CUSTOMER PROFILE: P&H MILLING GROUP

- The largest Canadian-owned milling company, P&H Milling facilities, have been in the flour business as far back as 1807
- P&H Milling has 500 employees in 9 owned and operated mills (Halifax, Montreal, Acton, Hamilton, Hanover, Cambridge, Saskatoon, Lethbridge)
- P&H Milling is a division of Parrish & Heimbecker, Limited, a family business that has been owned and operated by the two founding families since 1909.

PROJECT (CONTINUED)

“New Electric and its employees got our facility fully wired and along the way, they gave us a comfort level and peace of mind,” says De Winter. “Yes, I’d definitely work with New Electric in the future.”

TALK TO AN EXPERT

Choosing the right contractor can be stressful, time consuming and confusing. Spark Power recognizes the value of rapid response times, comprehensive project management, superior quality workmanship and a deep commitment to safety on every job site.

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