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YOUR SOLUTION.**

## Salon Centre Ahead of Competition with Purolator



Company Name:  
**Salon Centre**

Location:  
**Winnipeg,  
Manitoba**

Industry Sector:  
**Wholesale  
Distribution  
Salon Products**



### Company Profile:

Salon Centre is a distributor of hair care products, supplies and equipment for hair salons across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario.

### Business Situation:

With customers in rural and urban centres, Salon Centre needed a reliable way to get their products to every customer within a day or two of ordering.

### Solution:

Purolator's guaranteed nationwide delivery allows Salon Centre to deliver to its rural customers faster than its competitors. Working with warehouse staff, Purolator helped improve packaging to eliminate product damage. By integrating its ordering system with Purolator's Shipping System, orders can be sent within two hours of being placed.

### Benefits:

- Rural and urban customers receive their orders in one to two business days
- Deliveries arrive on time and in their original condition, providing peace of mind
- ExpressCheque® orders are professionally and reliably handled
- Hair salon inventories can be quickly replenished
- New regional markets are easily accessible

### Summary

When Cosimo Minnella took over Joico Manitoba (which is today known as Salon Centre), he saw an untapped marketplace. As business grew, he needed a fool-proof and hands-off method of quickly getting products into the hands of his hair salon clients, regardless of whether they were in urban centres or rural towns. By leveraging Purolator's reliability, reach and technology, Salon Centre keeps its business and its customers' businesses a cut above the competition.

### Business Background

After working in Thunder Bay as an independent distributor for Joico Hair Products, Cosimo Minnella was presented with the opportunity to take over the operation of Joico Manitoba, a small four person distribution business that had been operating for 10 years. In January 1997, Minnella and his wife moved to Winnipeg and started building the business and expanding into new markets.

"When I started, we were only carrying Joico hair products and selling strictly to Manitoba customers," he recalls. "A year later, we moved to a new facility, brought on a few more sales people and were able to start building the business."

With three sales people on the road at all times and the addition of new product lines, they started calling on salons that were interested in products other than Joico. The business continued to grow with new customers, while existing customers could now buy a greater selection of products. Salon Centre also started expanding geographically to service salons across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario.

Minnella has never looked back. From a business of four people and an inventory of

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300 products, to today's staff of 34 and more than 3,000 products, Salon Centre is a one-stop supplier of products for salons.

"We can now target salons that we couldn't sell to before and with our existing clientele we were able to grow deeper because we carrying more of the products they need."

**By using Purolator, Minnella gets orders to his rural clients within one or two business days, compared to the competition that can take seven to ten days.**

## Challenges & Solutions

With new opportunities to build the business by adding more product lines and expanding the geographic footprint, Salon Centre had to adapt its processes to support a growing customer and product base. Whether its customers need hair dryers, capes and towels, or perm rods, foils and colour, Salon Centre needs to deliver quickly.

"We increased from shipping half a skid to two skids of products every day," says Minnella, who needed to make sure clients could access all the new products they were making available, regardless of their location. The expansion increased the number of regular clients from 400 to more than 2,000, and required Salon Centre to get more products out the door more quickly.

### Rural Reach Gives Salon Centre the Edge

Salon Centre's business growth was realized both by expanding their product lines, and also tapping into the smaller communities. When these new customers were brought on board, Minnella wanted to make sure they were getting their supplies fast.

Minnella realized his competitors were using other shipping companies to deliver to rural areas, which often meant deliveries were limited to one or two days a week. By using Purolator, Minnella gets orders to his rural clients within one or two business days, compared to the competition that can take seven to ten days.

"That's something these salons never had before," says Minnella. "They know when they place an order, they will get it fast. We know that's a real competitive advantage."

With these new customers, business continues to grow as Salon Centre expands the volume of products being ordered by each hair salon and helping these small operators to manage their inventory more effectively.

"It all comes down to customer service," says Minnella.

### Reliability Gives Peace of Mind

With a main focus on building his business, Minnella wanted to hand his shipping over to a company he could trust to get the job done right. Minnella chose Purolator for its reliability which provides Salon Centre with a competitive edge.

When shipping bottles and fragile shampoo containers, Salon Center needed to learn how to minimize damage in transit. Minnella called in Purolator to teach his staff how to better fill orders, pack their products and reduce damage.

With a new packing system in place, products are not being crushed or broken en route. Customers don't get boxes with product leaking everywhere, says Minnella, who was also impressed with the tips and expertise Purolator brought to his warehouse.

"I never have to worry about my packages getting to clients. When a parcel leaves, I know it will get there on time and intact," he says. "Thanks to Purolator's expertise, we have been able to pack boxes more effectively. We have less damage and customers are happier."



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With an eye to constantly improving his business, Minnella has found Purolator to be a reliable partner in collecting from clients who pay for their products using Purolator's ExpressCheque® service.\* With other transport companies, the drivers would often drop off the packages and not pick up the cheque. In other cases, they would pick up the cheque but it would take months to get the cheques back to Salon Centre.

Purolator drivers not only make sure they get the money from customers before leaving the package, but with ExpressCheque® service Salon Centre gets its cheque back quickly.\*

two," says Minnella. "By getting these products to them fast, we make it easy for them to do business. Our customers like to know that behind the scenes we are looking after their business. We make inventory control simple for our customers."

"We want to be able to offer top notch service but it has to come at a reasonable rate," says Minnella. By using Purolator, Salon Centre keeps shipping costs competitive and delivers to both cities and rural towns within a day or two after an order is placed.

## Automating Processes Gains Efficiencies

Taking orders and calling them into the office at the end of the day was inefficient so Minnella looked to technology to both speed up order time and improve customer service.

All of his sales people now carry laptops with wireless access to Salon Centre's inventory database. From the salon, a sales person can tell a client instantly if a product is back ordered and offer alternative products on the spot.

As soon as an order is placed and the screen is closed, the Salon Centre warehouse is notified electronically, and within seconds the staff can pick it, pack it and get it out of the building. The Salon Centre order system is integrated into Purolator's Shipping System so that it is ready to head out the door immediately after being prepared, packed and labelled.

"It's instant," says Minnella. "Using laptops and wireless access, we've cut out an order entry step which makes us more efficient. It's all about efficiency and speed, getting labels and having parcels weighed and shipped out instantly. We want to be able to turn around an order in a couple of hours."

Since the orders are simultaneously entered into the order management and Purolator tracking systems, Salon Centre has instant visibility of their packages every step of the way.

Thanks to Purolator's expertise, we have been able to pack boxes more effectively. We have less damage and customers are happier.

"When you have a professional person delivering the order you look professional," says Minnella. "Our clients know when the Purolator driver arrives, the shipment is coming from us and that their cheque is going to make it back to us. Purolator drivers care about the business and that means I don't have to worry about it."

## Taking Care of Salon Business

A differentiator for Salon Centre has been its ability to help clients grow their business. By looking after all aspects of a salon's inventory, salon owners can focus on customers and business growth.

Salons need, on average, 400 items to run their business. Since Salon Centre's sales people take the time to understand each client's business, they can provide added value by managing inventory and making sure everything is there when a customer comes in for a colour, cut or a perm.

"Our sales people will go into a salon, check inventory and make sure there are enough supplies to last them a week or





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“If our customers call, we know we can locate their order right away. Again, it shows professionalism and good customer service.”

## The Future

Growth will be a continuing facet of Salon Centre's business in the coming years.

Minnella has plans to add another major product line this year, and sees customer growth continuing as well.

“We are going to be shipping more and more products to more and more customers,” says Minnella. “As my business grows, so does my need for Purolator.”

**By handing this part of our business over to Purolator, I can focus on continuing to build the business. I know my shipping is being looked after.**

Leveraging new technologies is also a key priority for Minnella who is constantly looking for new ways to increase customer service and improve reliability. “The fact is our business continues to grow every year. I believe that's because we offer great service, have a good selection of products and we take good care of our clients. That helps us stay competitive and grow our business.”

“Purolator is there at the forefront of our business growth. With them, we have professional service, we know where our products are and that our customers are getting their orders when they need them. That's important to our business,” says Minnella. “And, by handing this part of our business over to Purolator, I can focus on continuing to build the business. I know my shipping is being looked after.”



For more information about how Purolator can partner with your organization to exceed your customer's expectations, call a Purolator Representative today at **1-888-529-9777**

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