

[3 Questions for Sparta Innovations CEO Bruno Lagacé](#)

Mar 28, 2017 by [Huddle Staff](#)



Sparta Innovations CEO Bruno Lagacé Image: Submitted

Based in the small community of Notre-Dame, New Brunswick, [Sparta Innovations](#) has become a leader in construction and demolition recycling in North America. Last year over 80 per cent of the company's revenue came from exporting south of the border.

As the company enters the final phase of a big contract in the Big Apple, we wanted to ask CEO Bruno Lagacé three questions:

1) You guys recently scored a big contract in Brooklyn, New York. How did you win this piece of business? What is your export strategy?

To put things into perspective, we have been serving the recycling industry for over 20 years now and even though our market is throughout North America, we have a strong presence in the construction and demolition (C&D) materials recycling segment. People in this industry are highly connected therefore it is quite important to keep a strong reputation. This reputation certainly helped us to get the customer to approach us to look at their project.

To start off, the project was a mere retrofit of a few pieces of new equipment needing to be incorporated within the existing system on a very tight footprint in the heart of Brooklyn, NY. For the first year and a half after the initial meeting, Sparta provided several iterations of design to fit the ever challenging site, services and regulatory parameters.

While working on this design, the customer came across a permitted site that was for sale. This site had several advantages over the existing one and fit well with the customer's vision to become one of the largest C&D recyclers in New York. So after a thorough explanation of the vision and what the new site parameters were, we stopped working on the recycling design of the old site and started to work on the new site.



A shot of Sparta Innovations's project site in Brooklyn, New York
(Image: submitted)

After multiple iterations and an additional two and a half years (for a total of four years), the customer felt confident enough that they had all the pieces of the puzzle and trusted Sparta with the project.

I think that a big advantage we had over our competitor on this deal was that we did approach it with a serving attitude. We could have taken the same stand as some players in the industry and agree only to a deal if we could directly benefit from all aspects of the project. We chose to do what was right for the customer and helped him manage the project, source and negotiate the right third party equipment and auxiliary support equipment. In taking this customer serving approach we were able to build strong project team consisting of Sparta, a third party and customer's team member. The project is now over 90 per cent complete with all members of this team being highly satisfied with the seamless progress achieved thus far.

Our export strategy is limited to North America and we achieve our strategy by choosing the right team members in business development and sales who are knowledgeable of the industry and are usually located in the market we are actively pursuing.

2) Why don't more New Brunswick companies follow your lead and seek opportunities in relatively close large markets like New York?

Hard for me to talk about what others do or don't do but for some companies it might not be as easy to export. Some products or services are certainly not as exportable as others so I would say that some New Brunswick companies fall into that category. For others, it is the unknown that prevents them from putting in motion an export strategy. For some, it might be that their need to grow is satisfied on this side of the border.

For us, it has never been a question. From day one the strategy was to export as much as we could south of the border. Last year, we exported over 80 per cent of our revenues to the United States and will continue to do so as long as we can. There is some uneasiness about the Trump protectionist

administration but that should not deter anyone to export to the U.S. We have had many decades of trade with the U.S. and I strongly believe that with motivation and persistence, New Brunswick companies will find ways to have their product or services cross the border.

3) Where do you see your business in five years?

I see Sparta as a thriving company serving two segments of the recycling industry; construction and demolition waste recycling and municipal solid waste recycling and the organics industry; mulch, peat, wood and biomass. I see that we will have maintained an export average of over 60 per cent of revenue and that we will have kept producing a healthy bottom line. I also see that Sparta will be a place where people love to work and are able to fulfil their career ambitions.