

Keeping Regina Clean

By Allen Warren
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Maxim Chemical president and CEO Donald Punga believes in leaving no stone unturned in growing business for his Regina-run manufacturer of institutional and industrial sanitation products.

"The company is doing about \$3 million in business right now, and is continuing to grow in small increments during the last couple of years," says Punga. "But you really have to penetrate the market and turn over every stone to make the business grow when you're as established as we are."

Since establishing itself on the local business scene in 1968, Maxim Chemical has been an industry leader in providing product and maintenance support for large and small water boiler and open recirculating cooling systems as well as for closed-heating systems.

The hotel, restaurant, and institutions industry is presently Punga's largest client base, supplying the market with dishwashing and laundry equipment such as dispensing equipment and institutional cleansing supply under the "Pro-Max" label.

The company also serves the janitorial profession with a line of floor care products, disinfectants, and all-purpose cleaners, and the automobile industry with car and truck wash products such as detergents, waxes, and degreasers. With such a diverse line of cleaning product, Punga is confident Maxim "will still continue to grow."

He says the biggest challenge to Maxim's growth today is the recent emergence of new chain restaurants and hotels in Regina whom he says are locked in to "national franchise agreements" with national distributors.

Punga says these local franchisees are often bound to an agreement to contract service from a pre-defined national



General manager, Brent Punga, along with his dad, Don Punga, president and CEO at Maxim Chemical.

cleaning supply company only, and that makes it difficult for Maxim to acquire new business.

Punga feels that is unfortunate for local owners of franchised restaurants and hotels.

"We produce world class products locally, and we don't have to take a back seat to any of these nationals. And in many cases, we continue to do better."

Welcomed as the company's first employee in 1969, Punga knows his business and remains involved in all aspects of it. Coming over from Pioneer Grain where he worked a little with agricultural chemicals, Punga was hired to fulfill just about every role in the small company at that time.

"I was put in charge of sales, distribution, manufacturing — you name it," says the Maxim CEO. "I've been in it for 35 years now, so I know the business fairly

well." He completed his purchase of Maxim in 1976.

The company now boasts of 20 full-time employees, with head office, manufacturing plant, and research and development facilities in Regina, as well as marketing, showroom, and warehousing space in Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

He says one of the nicest things about running Maxim is it allows him to be "his own boss," and being a local company, providing local people with local opportunities.

Indeed, keeping local business strong and prosperous is something that remains very meaningful to Punga.

"It's important that we have some stable, local business here. It's important to remain rooted here, to contribute to the tax base, and contribute to the local economy here. We don't truck our stuff in. We produce it right here, and that's important."