



COMMERCIAL SHELVING AND
INDUSTRIAL RACKING SOLUTIONS

ON THE TOP SHE

Etalex's commercial shelves and industrial racks cater for warehouses. We discuss the Canadian company's unique solution.



ELF

for the requirements of retailers and
operations with CEO, Thierry Lachapelle

Writer: Jack Salter | Project Manager: Scarlett Burke



With the huge expansion of online sales in the last decade, and the recent challenges experienced with the global supply chain, warehouses and distribution centers are growing in numbers and size.

Combined with the arrival of automation and robotics, it makes for a particularly exciting time in retail and warehousing. ■

Forming the backbone of both fields are the commercial fixtures and industrial racks manufactured by Etalex, a Canadian leader in shelving solutions.

Founded in 1966 by Ludger D'Amour, the company as it is today was born through a merger of Etalex with two other Quebec companies – Boni Equipment and Forma Fil.

Etalex's three facilities in the Greater Montreal area span over 750,000 square feet (sqft) and thus have the capacity to design and manufacture a wide range of high-quality fixtures, racking systems, and displays.

"Our product offer is unique and different to most competitors in the sense that we can provide all the elements necessary in a commercial retail space, including fixtures, counters, displays, cold room shelving, and millwork," introduces Thierry Lachapelle, CEO of Etalex.

"I would say 90 percent of the products we produce are fairly standard, but there's 10 percent that are custom-made and give stores a different feel from their competitors.

"The same can be said of our racking solutions for warehouses and distribution centers. We know exactly what type of racking they require, and often it's not necessarily the same throughout the whole warehouse, so we'll propose the most efficient system for their needs, which is where we differentiate

ourselves," he adds.

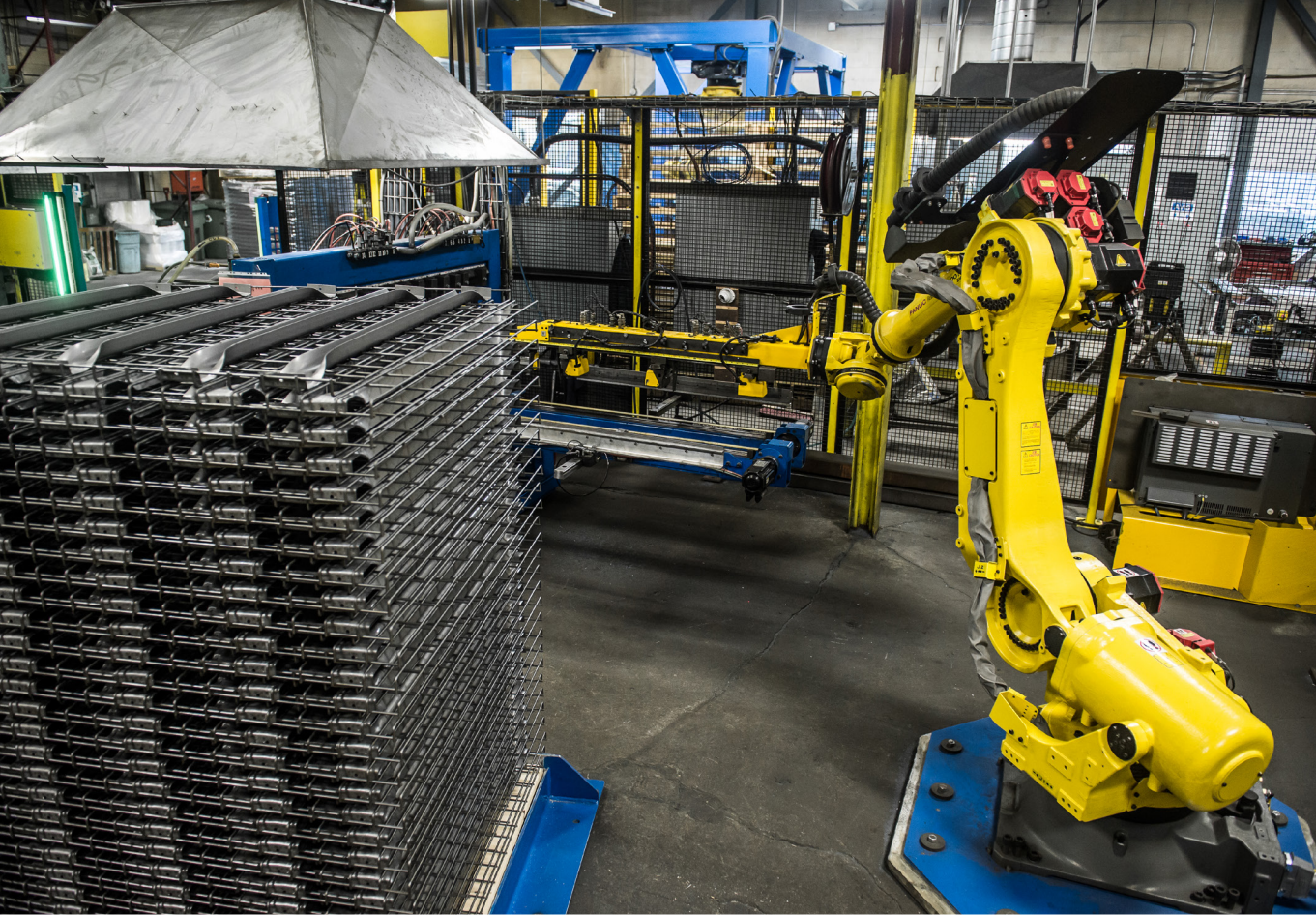
In both cases, Etalex therefore provides unique and complete solutions adapted to the specific requirements of its clients, whether they be commercial or industrial.

Over 550 experienced members of staff are employed by Etalex across its three plants in Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville and Anjou, Quebec, who are dedicated to finding the optimal solution for these various space management, timeline, and budget constraints. ■

"OUR EMPLOYEES ARE EXPERTS IN ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURING, DESIGN, INSTALLATION, AND SUPPORT. THIS ALLOWS US TO GUIDE OUR CLIENTS THROUGH THEIR PROJECTS"

- THIERRY LACHAPELLE, CEO, ETALEX





ETALEX SUPPLY CHAIN

“Our employees are experts in engineering, manufacturing, design, installation, and support. This allows us to guide our clients through their projects,” Lachapelle assures.

With a plethora of customers comprising industrial manufacturers, supply chain and storage firms, and large grocery, pharmacy, hardware, and retail chains, Etalex serves an expanse of blue-chip companies in key sectors of the Canadian economy.

“We offer a fully integrated and complete service for our customers, from project assessment, conception, and design through to delivery and installation.”

NEW CORE VALUES

Following a strategic planning process, Etalex has just launched a new set of core values to guide its internal and external behaviors.

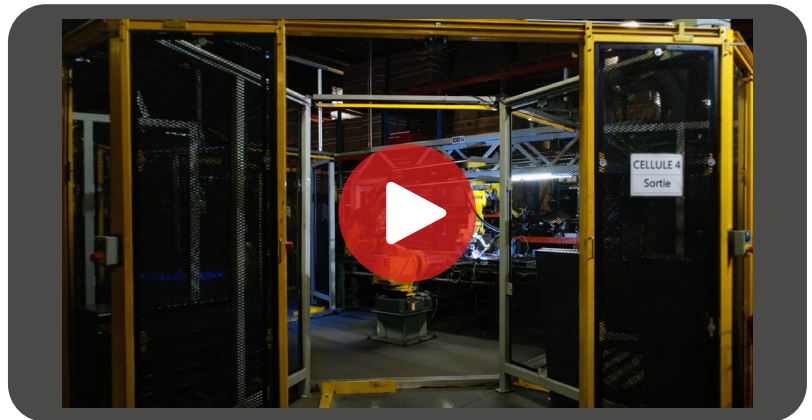
ETALEX PRODUCT RANGES AND PROJECT TYPES

PRODUCT RANGES

- Commercial shelving and furniture
- Industrial warehousing
- Wire mesh and decking

PROJECT TYPES

- Grocery stores
- Retail businesses
- Pet stores
- Convenience stores
- Warehouses and distribution centers
- Pharmacies
- Hardware stores



The first of these core values is collaboration, as the company has to ensure its employees work as a team in all aspects.

By the same token, collaboration with customers is important as the mutual success of Etalex and its clients rests on their capacity to rely on each other.

“We need collaboration between our teams to succeed. This means

working together with both partners and customers outside of the company,” emphasizes Lachapelle.

The values of openness and respect, meanwhile, go hand in hand as Etalex has to demonstrate an open mind to new ideas and points of view if it wishes to grow and improve.

Respecting different perspectives allows the company to explore new concepts, whereas a lack of



openness may result in people closing themselves off and not exploring new avenues that might become the source of groundbreaking initiatives.

“Internally, respect for team members is something that we really want to see because if not, they won’t be open and tell you about the great ideas they have,” Lachapelle affirms.

Etalex must also consider the ongoing shortage of labor in Quebec and therefore be open to bringing in temporary workers and harnessing their expertise.

“We have temporary permits for people that come from other countries to work with us for a period of two to three years and sometimes establish themselves in the long run.

“Rather than saying we need these people because we don’t have anybody else, we try to integrate them and utilize their experience, which makes us a better company,” Lachapelle tells us.

Last but not least, the core value of empowerment is key to the growth of



Etalex, for as the company evolves, it becomes harder for a very restricted number of individuals to make all the decisions within the organization.

Helping the team to realize the impact of their actions, giving them the proper framework to understand the field in which they can make decisions, and making sure that communication flows in

order for good ideas and initiatives to be recognized and replicated are elements that guide Etalex’s approach to empowering its staff.

“We need our people to have autonomy, but that comes with responsibility, and you have to work with your team to ensure they understand the impact of their actions or decisions,” Lachapelle acknowledges. ■

“However, you have to give them some capacity to make decisions and innovate in their own field. That’s how you’re going to grow as a company, so we really want to empower our employees to help us to better serve our customers at the end of the day.”

RACKING PROJECTS

WIPTec, an Etalex client and expert in order fulfillment, entrusted the company with constructing the racking and mezzanine of a new 1.7 million sqft building on the south shore of Montreal, Quebec.



The project included a four-level picking tower totaling more than 156,000 sqft of storage and order picking space.

To build this impressive facility, more than 2,100 uprights and over 20,000 beams were produced by Etalex, who owes the success of this massive project to the close collaboration between its teams and WIPTec.

The company is likewise proud of its recent collaboration with BJ’s Wholesale Club, an American chain of retail stores predominantly located in the Eastern US.

Etalex provided commercial racking to BJ’s Wholesale Club for their many new store openings over the last few months.

“We feel this is a great partnership in which we can contribute to their success through our expertise, assessment, and flexibility,” insights Lachapelle.

These two significant endeavors reflect Etalex’s competitive position to bid on and participate in big projects.

“Our ability to understand and serve our customers is something that we are really proud of,” he acclaims.

The company equally prides itself on leading its own automation projects and creating momentum around the associated productivity gains, conscious of the pressure on manufacturers to improve their efficiency to compete in today’s market.

“It’s a matter of being more efficient and increasing value for our customers, so it’s something that differentiates us.”

SUPPLY CHAIN SUCCESS

The supply chain is just as key to the success of Etalex, who deals with local and international steel partners.

Understanding the logistical risks involved with being supplied by the latter is a strategic element that has a direct impact on the company’s operations.

“Steel is the main component that we’re using, so if we have issues with our steel purchasing in terms of price or availability, we can’t be competitive or manufacture our products, so it’s key for us,” Lachapelle asserts.

Being local gives Etalex an edge as it is able to quickly serve nearby customers, understand their issues, and turn around their orders.

With customers throughout Canada and now the US, however, logistics is also crucial to Etalex in order to deliver products on time, which is mostly done

FORMULATING THE RIGHT MIX.

with paints, powder coatings,
and specialty materials

www.theprotechgroup.com



PROTECH
— GROUP —

PROUD
PARTNER OF
ETALEX



“WE OFFER A FULLY INTEGRATED AND COMPLETE SERVICE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS, FROM PROJECT ASSESSMENT, CONCEPTION, AND DESIGN THROUGH TO DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION”

— THIERRY LACHAPELLE, CEO, ETALEX

by truck and occasionally by train in some circumstances.

“Logistics is vital to the business, because if we’re not there on time or when a store is setting up, it’s a huge burden for us and the customer,” he says.

For Etalex, it is also important to support causes that are cherished by employees, customers, and suppliers.

The company is privileged to contribute to a number of strong causes, and firmly advocates giving back to help those in need and develop the leaders of tomorrow.

“It’s part of our responsibility,

but also something we should be proud of doing. In some cases, our contributions can help people that are directly linked to our partners, which allows us to experience the impact that our actions can have even more closely,” shares Lachapelle.

Another of Etalex’s responsibilities is workplace safety, ensuring that employees return home to their families in good health.

This ties into the optimization of its manufacturing processes through automation, one of a number of key priorities for the year along with market development, business

intelligence, and branding.

“Right now, the company is working to expand our market and geographical reach in North America. Eventually, we will probably have to make some acquisitions to grow and keep moving forward,” Lachapelle concludes.

In terms of business intelligence, the company is starting to look in a more strategic way at different market segments that it wants to attack in retail and warehousing, whilst building the brand so people understand that Etalex is more than just a metal folding and welding business. ^{NA}



Tel: 1 (800) 351-3125
info@etalex.ca
www.etalex.ca



ETALEX

Tel: 1 (800) 351-3125

info@etalex.ca

www.etalex.ca



NORTH AMERICA
Outlook

PRODUCED BY NORTH AMERICA OUTLOOK MAGAZINE