

Mid-Way Toyota, located on College Street in Belleville is celebrating 25 years of loyal service to its customers this year. The dealership began in 1970 in Trenton, later moving to Belleville. Owner Chris Christensen says 60 per cent of his customers are repeat customers, testimony to Mid-Way's commitment to Toyota product, quality and service.

In 25 years, Christensen says much has changed in the industry, technology, stiffer competition, but one thing has remained the same — knowing what the consumer wants.

"If you know and firmly understand what your customers want and you follow up with good service it usually spells success," said Christensen. "This hasn't changed over the years."

Mid-Way Toyota invests heavily to maintain its award-winning service staff through equipment purchases and training.

"Technology has evolved so much that it is just incredible. When I started as a mechanic, I may have had \$500 in tools. Today, we have somewhere around \$170,000 in equipment. And the mechanics need about \$20,000 each in tools to stay current."

The high technology is ever-changing as car companies vie to become the best to attract an extremely demanding public.

Toyota, for example, has invested billions of dollars into its manufacturing and distribution infrastructure in North America.

**I**N DECEMBER, TOYOTA MOTOR CORPORATION ANNOUNCED it will invest \$600 million in new capital to increase the annual capacity of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada by 120,000 cars. Currently, the Cambridge Toyota plant is producing 85,000 cars annually.

Christensen said his corporate's commitment to its product will mean the hiring of an additional 1,200 employees, more than doubling the 1,000-employee workforce currently working in Cambridge.

"Toyota is probably the most financially secure auto

manufacturer in the world. They're the third largest in the world since they first entered the North American market 30 years ago," said Christensen.

Toyota also celebrated its pole position finish in the Customer Satisfaction Index or CSI for 1994.

**F**OR THE FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW, TOYOTA CLINCHED THE top spot as the people's choice of auto manufacturer for customer satisfaction, as reported in the Toronto Star's Wheel's section Feb. 4 of this year.

Today, the Toyota product has grown to include 10 model lines: Corolla, built in Canada, Tacoma, Camry, and Avalon, built in the United States.

Tercel, Paseo, Celica, Supra, T-100 and Previa round out the fabulous selection. Sixty-five per cent of the Toyota vehicles sold in Ontario are built in North America, at Cambridge and at three Toyota plants in the United States.

"Value is a perceived thing and our job is to inform our customers of the extreme value they are getting when they buy a Toyota. People are much more educated today and much more aware of the products they are buying," said Neil McQueen, Mid-Way Toyota manager.

But while Mid-Way's sales team is there to sell cars, they are also there to help make the car-buying process as comfortable as possible.

"We don't pressure potential customers. We want to instill the word "fun" into the process for both our employees as well as our customers. It can be such a grind to buy a new car. We try to approach it a little more laid back so that the car-buying experience is fun," McQueen said.

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*Mid-Way Toyota*