

# SUCCESS STORY: NORTHERN DIGITAL INC.



## ABOUT NORTHERN DIGITAL INC.

For over three decades, Northern Digital Inc. (NDI) has built a reputation as a global-leading innovator and manufacturer of advanced 3D measurement technology systems.



With more than 45,000 installations worldwide, NDI's optical measurement and electromagnetic tracking solutions are trusted by the world's top OEMs and institutes for the most complex—and groundbreaking—tracking applications in medicine, industry, and academia.

Among its many applications, NDI technology is the foundation of some of the most progressive surgical navigation systems in medicine—facilitating computer-guided surgery and therapy. One of the company's products can track a moving object as small as a blood cell from six meters away.

With headquarters based in the City of Waterloo, these technical capabilities have been integrated into image-guided surgery, biomechanics research, automotive assembly, virtual reality simulation, and other tracking applications that require unrivalled measurement accuracy and reliability.

## “GROWING UP” IN WATERLOO

NDI was founded in Waterloo Region in 1981 by Jerry Krist, a former professor of computer science at the University of Waterloo (UWaterloo).

Like many more established companies in the Region that stemmed from the university, NDI opted to keep its headquarters in the community, and as a result, helped foster the area's development and growth over the last three decades.

Today, NDI has 120 employees in Waterloo, and manages research and development, engineering, manufacturing, sales and marketing, and corporate support functions from its headquarters. It also has approximately 100 other employees globally, with additional offices in Vermont, Germany and Hong Kong.

“After 35+ years here, Waterloo really is our home. It's where we got our start, and where we continue to grow and mature as a company through technology advancements, acquisitions and global expansion,” says David Rath, president of NDI.

“With the aid of the business community and availability of technical talent, we have every expectation to continue to expand and grow here. We cannot imagine having our global headquarters anywhere else.”

## A PLACE WHERE “BIG THINGS HAPPEN”

Talented. Diverse. Energetic. Inventive. These are the four words Rath uses to describe Waterloo. “From a business perspective, this is a vibrant and diverse area,” says Rath. “Many of the country's top organizations in technology, manufacturing, insurance, and other industries have a presence here.”

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“Waterloo is also home to some of the world’s most respected academic institutes and think tanks. So, there is a real sense of this being a region where ‘big things happen.’”

Jennifer Andrews, head of human resources at NDI, adds that the community’s ability to make “big things happen” is due to the area’s amount and quality of talented professionals.

“The talent in this area is second to none—and it’s not just technical talent such as engineers and software developments, although Waterloo is known as part of ‘Silicon Valley North’ for good reason,” she says. “At NDI, every aspect of our business—from R&D to sales, to manufacturing to corporate services—is home to brilliant, talented, hard-working people.

“It’s this unique blend of technical know-how and an entrepreneurial spirit that has created an ecosystem for innovation that truly sets Waterloo apart from other cities.”



### STANDING OUT AMONGST THE REST

For businesses considering a move to Waterloo, Andrews and Rath provide two main pieces of advice.

For new businesses who want to stand out to potential employees, Andrews says the key is this: “Have all employees embrace who you are as a company, and as a business, be true to your company’s values and culture. It’s not enough to just attract potential hires—you also have to be a workplace where employees will want to stay and thrive.”

Rath also recommends taking advantage of the many corporate networking and professional development opportunities throughout the Region.

“As a community, we take a collective pride in the many diverse companies that call Waterloo home—and we all want to see those companies succeed,” he says.

“There are so many organizations and opportunities to help get your name out there—Waterloo EDC, the Accelerator Centre, the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium, the Manufacturing Innovation Network, lots of professional and peer groups, all the universities and colleges, the KW Chamber of Commerce, and so much more.

“They are there to help you—so be sure to engage with them.”

### A WONDERFUL PLACE TO LIVE

In addition to its supportive business community, Andrews also points to the area being a great place to live.

“Waterloo combines many of the amenities of a much larger city with the accessibility and pace of a smaller city,” she says.

“Outside of work, the Region is a progressive and inclusive community that enjoys great schools, amenities and attractions. So, whether you’re a nature lover, theatre enthusiast, sports fan, or a foodie, there is something for just about everyone.”

Andrews summarizes what it’s like to live and work in Waterloo: “Both inside and outside of the office, the people here are very welcoming, and it’s wonderful how quickly you’re made to feel part of the community. It’s a place rich with opportunities for professional and personal growth.”



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