



Interview with Kevin Long - OPW's new President

At the NACS/PEI Show we had the chance to speak to Kevin Long, President of OPW - one of the leading forecourt equipment manufacturers in the industry. We discuss the company's 125th anniversary, the challenges facing the industry and the formation of Dover Fueling Solutions.

What is it like to have joined OPW as President the same year that the company marks its 125th anniversary?

Joining a company like OPW on its 125th anniversary has been an amazing experience. At the OPW tunnel you can see the evolution of the company from the founding, some of the initial ideas and products, to the innovation that goes on today. The people around OPW, the products, the innovation... To be part of an organization like this - particularly on the 125th year - is something really special.

You have been in the position for six months now. What are some of your short-term and long-term goals for the company going forward?

Short-term we are going to continue doing what OPW does best, which is focusing on the customer, on their needs, on the changing regulations in the workspace, and continue to innovate our products. Long-term, we are going to continue tracking those changes in the industry and the things our clients need to be successful, ensuring OPW's success for the next 125 years.

Based on your previous experience, what can you bring to this industry and OPW?

One of the things at OPW has been a strong management team with a lot of experience, so I am able to rely on that. I have a diverse background from various industries but retail fuelling is not one of them. So relying on a team and their strengths while bringing some additional ideas and tools of the other businesses I've worked in (is key). Maybe I can generate some new ideas but the OPW team is a strong, functioning team and we are going to leverage that for success in the future

By what you have learnt so far, what are some of the challenges that you see for manufacturers of forecourt equipment?

The opportunities we see coming from today's challenges evolve around the continued evolution of regulation, customer needs and changing behaviours from the end users. Things around ease of

access from a maintenance and inspection standpoint, safety, and fuel integrity are some of the opportunities we see going forward.

With all of the coverage in the news about the trend towards electronic vehicles, where do you see this going?

We spend a lot of time looking at electric vehicles. There seems to be a lot of variables at play, from government incentives to charging battery technology. Trying to predict where it is going long-term with the number of variables that we have is difficult for anyone. But I think there is some consensus short-term that we will see minimal penetration over the next 5 years, but as long as we continue to see advancements in battery technology and the support from governments, we would expect to see continued penetration. There are other challenges for EVs like electrical grid, how and where they are going to be recharged, the amount of time... But I expect to see a mixed offering: from electric vehicles, petrol, diesel, green energy to hybrid electrics. We expect to see a whole range of vehicles in the future.

What does the addition of Dover Fueling Solutions to the Dover portfolio mean to the market and your customers?

Dover Fueling Solutions and OPW operate as two separate companies within the Dover family and we would expect that to continue going forward. DFS has their customers and their go-to market and we are not going to change our strategy based on that. I think the real winner in the formation of DFS is that those companies have found a long term, key strategic partner in Dover.

Finally, what have you made of your first NACS Show?

It has been fantastic. From seeing a range of products from the competition, across to OPW, to interacting with some of our distributors and end users. It's a really exciting show and I am happy to have been part of it.