



Claude Le Bel forms connections to fuel innovation

Claude Le Bel connects people and possibilities.

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For me, everything is possible. You just have to find the right person for the job," says Claude Le Bel, president and founder of Sollertia Inc. in Montréal, Quebec, Canada. Appropriately named Sollertia—which is Latin for ingenuity—the company serves as a consulting firm specializing in tensile fabric architecture and event planning.

Le Bel was educated as an electrician and started the company in 2000 after working as a technical director and tent master for Cirque du Soleil and as an independent contractor doing construction. He draws from his wide variety of interests and experiences to solve problems that arise in the business. "Doing so many different things gives me a different point of view when I'm looking at a problem," he says.

Three-and-a-half years ago, Cirque du Soleil asked Le Bel to find a way to clean tents on-site in a manner that would be both effective and safe for the fabric. Normally, cleaning tent fabric when it's not in use isn't a problem, but cleaning a tent when it's erected is more of a challenge. "I found that the solution was to use low-pressure steam, though at the time there was no machine like that on the market," Le Bel says. "There was high-pressure steam, but [without the pressure] what you had was just hot water." Le Bel looked outside of himself and outside of the industry for help. He contacted Maurice Morin, who had some experience working with steam, and the two collaborated to find a solution.

Le Bel is also committed to investing in the education of others. In November 2008 Le Bel and others from Sollertia traveled to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in West Africa to install a circus school for the city's youth. Le Bel and his team volunteered their time to do the drawings, foundation and project design for the site, then located a used fabric structure and installed it.

Currently, the Sollertia crew is working on plans for the interior, including dressing rooms, restrooms and offices. The third phase of the project will include an outdoor playground for both students and the community.

Comments

There are not yet any comments.