

CLIENT STORY: TIGHTLINE ANCHOR



A business anchored in practical innovation

When friends Greg Linton and Thomas Langton decided to build a better anchor for a friend's boat in Louisiana, they had no idea that anchor would spark a new business venture. Tightline Anchor, based in Antigonish, now exports to the United States, Europe, and other parts of Canada. In fact, 90% of its business is exports.

Greg is in charge of operations in Antigonish. Thomas, a Canadian working in the southeastern US, runs the warehousing and looks after sales and dealers. Both have backgrounds in manufacturing.

Their business story began when Thomas built a grapnel anchor for his boat. Although grapnel anchors work well, they take up a lot of space on the boat, so Greg modified the design to make the anchor collapsible. "The new version was strong and worked as well as the original," Greg says. "Friends and family encouraged us to make and sell it, but the start-up costs to build a big anchor were prohibitive, and we had no business background or experience."

Then Thomas noticed the growth of kayak fishing in the United States and proposed they build a small anchor for kayak anglers. In 2018, they created and trialed a small collapsible anchor. To gauge market interest, they took a booth at ICAST, a large sportfishing trade show in Florida. The positive response spurred them to line up subcontractors, build their own website, and start manufacturing the anchors.

In 2019, Greg moved from Ontario to Nova Scotia to attend university after 14 years in the military. In early 2020, most of the Tightline Anchor dealer network had to shut down because of the pandemic. "This turned out to be a silver lining, because we were running out of stock," Greg says. "It allowed us to pause and consider our future."





With the help of NSBI and Ignite Labs, Greg and Thomas reworked their goals. “NSBI’s Grow Export Program prepared us for a trade mission to the United States, with a year-long program that included workshops and personalized mentoring,” Greg says. “The Scotians program helped connect us with other successful business people from Nova Scotia who provided insight and mentorship. And the Digital Adoption Program helped us build our e-commerce store and move from a home-built website to one that is professional. Lynn Coffin has been awesome. Jessica McCall and Sean Meister were very helpful throughout the last year as well.”

They scaled up their manufacturing and had anchors available from a new offshore manufacturer in late 2020.

NSBI has been pivotal in their growth, he adds. “They have provided us with insight, connections, funding and more. The past year, since COVID-19, has been our best. Our best month was last month, May 2021.”

As the business grows, Greg and Thomas are reinvesting in it. “We want to be able to build this business in Nova Scotia and manufacture bigger anchors here,” Greg says. “We also want to explore other opportunities in the ocean environment. Thomas and I are nuts and bolts kind of guys. We like building things that are simple but innovative.”

You can see Tightline Anchor in action on their [YouTube](#) video at Halifax Harbour.



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GREG LINTON
Tightline Anchor