

The Rise of The Dutch Market

Since 1987, Charles Huls has been building up [The Dutch Market](#) to become the major European imports giant it is today. Charles, the son of Dutch immigrants, is a visionary who has not only contributed to a business succession story, he has also seen the potential for his business to grow, and has created opportunities for many others in Chatham-Kent.



Did You Know?

The Dutch Market is much more than just a retail store. Retail operations are just a small part of the business. For years, The Dutch Market has been a major wholesale distributor of European imports to nearly 100 stores in Ontario, and has been serving customers online, where 75% of sales come from the US. As far as retail goes, this longstanding Chatham-Kent business has expanded to include an in-house bakery, and in 2005, The Dutch Market also opened a branch in Sarnia.

The Beginning

The story of The Dutch Market begins in the 1950s, with a man named **Dick Kranenburg**. Living in Chatham-Kent with so many European immigrants, Dick recognized a market for European products and began a business through door-to-door sales. Soon he opened a shop on St. Clair Street, Chatham, under the name "Dick's European Imports."



In 1984, Charles Huls, the son of parents from Holland, began working for the store as a delivery man. This was the same year, the name changed to The Dutch Market. At this time, he did not envision a career devoted to running a business, but within three years Charles became passionate about the idea of expanding the business to become a major distributor of European products. In 1987, Dick and Charles began the process of planning for business succession, and Charles became the owner of The Dutch Market.

Inspired Thinking

When Charles first took over The Dutch Market, the store had three employees, him included. Now, he employs 25 workers, and the distribution component of the business is bigger than ever. Charles had a vision of what the store could become, and found a way to get it there. Today, The Dutch Market is still growing, continuing to attract new customers, and Charles has still has innovative ideas to maximize the opportunities for himself and others in Chatham-Kent.



One way Charles contributes to a better Chatham-Kent is by hiring skilled European workers, mainly bakers, to work for the store for a year. This has rendered great results for the store, these workers, and Chatham-Kent. Local staff members have the opportunity to learn skills from authentic teachers, which enhances the product and service found at the store. The bakers and other workers who come

from Holland are given the opportunity to test drive life in Chatham-Kent, which has enticed some to immigrate here. Ultimately, these experiences and opportunities bring skill and investment to the area, enhancing Chatham-Kent with a diverse array of offerings and people who appreciate the high quality of life enjoyed here.

You may not have the time or money to visit Europe, but you can visit The Dutch Market. Discover coveted specialty European goods, and celebrate this component of Chatham-Kent's unique heritage.

The Dutch Market

6 Indian Creek Road East
Chatham, ON N7M 4H1