

ACCESS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Extreme Success

by Cassandra Chowdhury

Successful entrepreneurs share a talent for bringing light into dark places. In Jack Gin's case this is the literal truth. His Burnaby company, **Extreme CCTV**, developed innovative improvements to surveillance camera technology, producing cameras that see farther into darkness while using minimal power. These "Integrated Day-Night" cameras emit infrared light and utilize the latest in sensor technology. The company has also brought to market the world's first wireless high-impact proof dome camera from their WhizKid Division.

Extreme CCTV's success speaks of the need for the technology they develop. Grossing \$41,000 in their 1997 start-up year, the company's sales jumped to \$416,000 in the second year, and by 2001 had reached \$5 million. In 2001, Gin received the award for Advancing Technology from the Canadian Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association.

This rapid growth is due in large part to the international marketplace. Gin recognized early that real opportunities lay beyond domestic borders, and successfully applied to Western Economic Diversification Canada's **International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP)** to assist him in hiring export-trained graduates. With this talent to draw upon, he



Jack Gin (c) receives the 2001 B.C. Export Award for Advancing Technology from Donald Leitch, Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise (L), and Frank Eichgruen, Acting Director of Client Services for WD – B.C. Region (R).

Photo by Brian Dennehy Photography

concentrated his efforts on exporting his cameras to the United States and overseas.

"I don't really seek specific skills in selecting recent graduates, but rather an ability to think and communicate, and the desire to work and succeed," says Gin. "I have asked our ITPP

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Vancouver's Glas Aire

by David G. Morgan

Vancouver's **Glas Aire Industries Group Ltd.** has just crossed a new threshold. It has evolved to a higher form of manufacturing with the acquisition of a high-tech machine product and the assembly line equipment to build it. All it needed to do was come up with the international marketing plan to sell it in American markets...with a little help from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD).

The product is an industrial polishing machine which Glas Aire added to its growing range of products for the automotive industry. Glas Aire also designs, manufactures and markets high-end vehicle components and accessories, such as wind deflectors, hood protectors, air deflectors and door visors.

Glas Aire Chief Operations Officer Omer Esen said his company is gearing up to manufacture the computer-aided polishers, used on aircraft and up-scale automobiles at its Vancouver plant, following the acquisition of a Denver-based company, including the technology and patents. Production will initially employ 12 highly skilled labourers, with potential for expansion as export markets develop. "This will be good for the region and good for Canada", he said.

According to Esen, Glas Aire is the first company in Canada to manufacture this technology, and they can do it more efficiently than companies in the U.S. This is because Glas Aire is quality certified with the ISO-9001 and QS-9000 designations and has a highly skilled engineering department.

Business is "skyrocketing" – it has doubled since 2000. The company currently sells its products in the U.S., Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Esen indicated that he expects Glas Aire will consult with WD to develop marketing and export plans to sell the high-tech polishers in the lucrative American market, continuing a relationship started in 1995 when the company first approached WD for help in penetrating the Japanese market.

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At the time, Glas Aire lacked staff with knowledge in marketing, engineering and design. WD stepped in with the **International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP)** which pays a portion of the salary of a recent graduate with knowledge in international marketing. Glas Aire capitalized on the program and hired several graduates who worked out designs and specifications with Japanese business partners such as Toyota and Nissan.

"Our Japanese success has been very largely due to WD," said Esen. "They helped us with the ITPP, and it paid off very well." The highly skilled graduates also helped raise the knowledge and ability level of other employees. Prior to the ITPP help, Glas Aire had no qualified engineers in research and development.

WD also assisted Glas Aire in overcoming the challenge of increasing the cost-effectiveness of its products. WD worked

Polishes Up Its Future

hand in glove with Glas Aire through its **First Jobs in Science and Technology Program**. Similar to the ITPP, it provides funding to hire science and technology graduates. This program enabled Glas Aire to hire graduates to develop and install quality assurance systems and train other employees in their use.

Brian Reimer, a Client Services Officer with WD's Vancouver office, has worked with Glas Aire through the various phases of its growth. He explains that WD's services are more than the sum of its parts. "What we do is help grow capacity in a company by working with it on a long-term basis through all its business cycles. When we help a company to build capacity, we are also building capacity in the economy by adding depth and diversity."

Many companies like Glas Aire approach WD for help in developing export strategies. In fact, WD is an excellent source of ideas to help a company get ready to export during that critical phase between research and entering the export market. WD offers the following services for potential exporters:

- export and business counselling;
- information presentations on export readiness which include market research, developing an export plan, border brokerage, distribution, pricing, financing and marketing;
- business self-diagnosis;
- analysis of market research;
- evaluation of business and marketing plans;
- assistance in accessing international marketing and negotiating skills;

- liaison coordination with other export specialists;
- consultations to help develop and implement market entry strategies;
- building awareness of the concepts of logistics and distribution channels;
- assistance in accessing information of legal and financial implications of doing business abroad; and
- consultation on payment methods for receivables.

WD's goal is to help western Canadian companies make a smooth transition from domestic to international markets. WD will assist your company by working with other partners such as the Canada Business Service Centres, International Trade Centres, Canadian Consulates and Embassies abroad, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Export Development Canada, and many others.

WD has played an important role in Glas Aire's growth and diversification over the last six years and looks forward to maintaining this relationship as the company continues to evolve. Helping small and medium-sized businesses like Glas Aire reach their goals is what WD is all about. To find out what WD can do for you, call 1-888-338-WEST (9378).*





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graduates to work with persistence, and to be undaunted by what may have seemed to be huge challenges in the export marketplace...the grads consistently made small wins on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.”

Extreme CCTV's Web site, www.extremecctv.com, provides a hint of the philosophy that sets them apart: “If it can be said that: ‘Necessity is the mother of invention,’ we suggest that ‘Intensity is the father of finish.’”

The intensity and determination of Extreme CCTV's team has paid off handsomely. Today, 70 per cent of the company's sales originate from the U.S., and the remainder from Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Taiwan. The company recently absorbed Derwent, a similar company based in the U.K. with an established foothold in the European market.

Extreme CCTV's systems have a range of uses within and beyond security. The UF500 Infrared Illuminator is used for night surveillance of areas ranging from school zones to water supply reservoirs, while the REG system captures license plate information for parkades and tollbooths. Integrated Day-Night cameras were used in the production of reality television shows such as Big Brother and Survivor II, as well as the Wahlberg Eagle observation video by Michael Rampf. Other adopters of this technology include the Secret Service and the Drug Enforcement Agency, as well as several other government departments in the U.S.

For more information about the ITPP or other Western Economic Diversification Canada programs, please call 1-888-338-WEST (9378).✻

The International Trade Personnel Program

The International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) provides support for eligible companies to hire recent graduates from related academic programs. Whether your business has one employee or 100, the ITPP can help you employ qualified graduates to work on international trade development projects.

Administered by Western Economic Diversification Canada, the ITPP is one of a wide range of initiatives and programs that help small and medium-sized businesses in B.C. to prosper.