

# SHARING TRADE SECRETS

## Strength in Numbers Needed to Sell in Russia

*Although formed barely a year ago, Construct Québec is already tasting success in Russia.*

The Montreal company, which consists of 20 Quebec manufacturers of construction materials—a Winnipeg company and a Toronto company are also interested—won contracts amounting to \$500,000 the first time it took part in last year's annual BATIMAT-MOSCUBUILD fair in Moscow.

On the strength of these early successes, Construct Québec opened an office in Moscow, where its booth was again a very busy spot during this year's fair, which just ended last month.

So successful was the Construct booth that a Hungarian company decided to display it in Budapest for a week, after which it will return to Moscow for an exhibition in St.Petersburg.

The promotion and the success being enjoyed by the company have not come easily. In the words of President Carole Robert, "it took us four years of arduous negotiations with the Russians to reach this point."

Mrs. Robert, who is also President of the parent company Stratégie-Communications Canada/Europe de l'Est, also carried out lengthy market studies, travelled throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and spoke to numerous Russian retailers and builders before being able to claim victory.

"The whole Canadian government, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Industry Canada, the Canadian Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate General in St.Petersburg, gave us a good deal of help and support," she

said, "in creating this strategic alliance concept and generating the Team Canada spirit."

According to Mrs. Robert, one also needs patience to sell in Russia, because the paperwork can be daunting, covering certification, customs clearance, packaging, methods of payment ("the merchandise is paid in full before leaving Canada"), and transportation ("up to 27 days per shipping container"). But this is precisely the strength of Construct Québec, which allows companies, assembled under the same banner, to derive the most out of marketing their products and Canadian technologies, and to compete with

the European products, on the markets of Eastern Europe.

Having succeeded in this initial venture, Mrs. Robert knows that Canada can compete with Europe. "There is no lack of opportunity," she affirms, "we are planning on extending our markets to other countries in the region, such as Croatia, where we just finished taking part in a trade mission organized by Foreign Affairs and International Trade."

For more information on Construct Québec, please contact President Carole Robert, tel: (514) 849-0757; fax: (514) 849-0511.

## Fast Food Service *(Continued from page II)*

and special children's ambassador, Ronald McDonald, is also active in charity work in Russia, helping to improve the quality of life of children with special needs.

### Standards of excellence and technology transfer

McDonald's attributes its success around the world, and in Russia in particular, in a large measure to its rigid specifications and high standards.

"Since 1989," says Cohon, "we have been sharing our technology and business practices with people from across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)."

McComplex, MM Food Service and Distribution Centre just outside of Moscow,

supplies MM with locally-sourced food products prepared from raw ingredients purchased from Russian and CIS suppliers and processed in a strictly-controlled, state-of-the-art environment.

As for the staff, the initially North American-trained Russian personnel are now responsible for training new Russian restaurant recruits to the same high standards that they received from McDonald's.

For more information on Moscow-McDonald's or the company's operations in Russia, contact Director of Communications Maureen Kitts, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited, in Toronto. Tel.: (416) 443-1000. Fax: (416) 446-3443.