

Sun Microsystems picks Quebec's Primetech as strategic ally for workstation manufacturing

After what the company describes as "a comprehensive global competition" Sun Microsystems Inc., of the United States has awarded a \$100-million contract to a Quebec-based corporation for the supply of components for Sun's leading-edge line of computer workstations.

The Canadian firm is Primetech Electronics Inc. of Dollard-des-Ormeaux near Montreal, Quebec — Canada's leading contract engineering company. Since its foundation in 1976, Primetech has established an outstanding track record as a strategic ally and supplier to large corporations — particularly in the integration of new electronic technologies into high technology industries.

Announcing the contract award, Everett Anstey, President of Sun Microsystems of Canada Inc., said the contract would make Primetech "the worldwide supplier for peripheral controller and interface boards used in Sun workstations."

Founded in 1982, Sun Microsystems ranks 222 on the Fortune 500 list and reported record earnings of more than US \$7 billion for 1996. Sun offers award-winning hardware, software, service and support solutions for building and maintaining network computing environments. The company's products hold the highest UNIX market share in three important categories: workstations, multiprocessing systems and database servers.

Among Sun's groundbreaking technologies is Java, generally recognized as the de facto standard platform for network computing. Designed from the ground up for the Internet and for corporate "intranet" computing, Java lets developers create small applications, called "applets" that, once written, can run on any platform.

Primetech opened its doors 21 years ago as a supplier and distributor of electronic parts and circuits on the North American market. In the 1980s, the company moved into contract engineering and the development and marketing of specialized products for a variety of consumer industrial markets. Primetech quickly built its reputation as a reliable partner in manufacturing collaboration with a galaxy of multinational corporations including Sun

Microsystems, IBM Canada, Nortel, General Electric, United Technologies, Newbridge and Apple Computer.

In meeting the evolving needs of these customers, Primetech developed capabilities that led the company directly into another service line: the design and development of new electronic technologies and their integration into the aerospace and other leading-edge industries.

In this area, the company's customer list includes names like General Electric Aerospace, Pratt and Whitney, Aérospatiale France, Bombardier and the Canadian Department of National Defence.

A quality environment

At a contract announcement press conference, Primetech President Jack McAllister said, "The obvious question is how Primetech, an anonymous company to many of you, could participate in a major worldwide competition and walk away with the first prize."

McAllister attributed his company's coup to two linked factors. First is a corporate mindset that emphasizes quality. "When we began manufacturing many years ago, for example, the first employee we hired was a quality manager." This insistence on getting things done perfectly made Primetech one of the first contract-manufacturing and engineering companies to achieve ISO-9002 certification.

Another competitive edge, said McAllister, is Montreal itself. The city and its environs have what it takes to support Primetech's quality standards and growth objectives: notably "a large, well-educated and motivated work force" and a strong supply and service infrastructure for the city's thriving electronics industry.

Putting the Primetech award into the context of Sun's long-term marketing goals, Everett Anstey said it was his company's "stated strategy to continue to pursue opportunities for investment in research, development and manufacturing within Canada, through alliances with Canadian companies." ♦

