

"It takes patience"

A Canada Export Award winner looks back

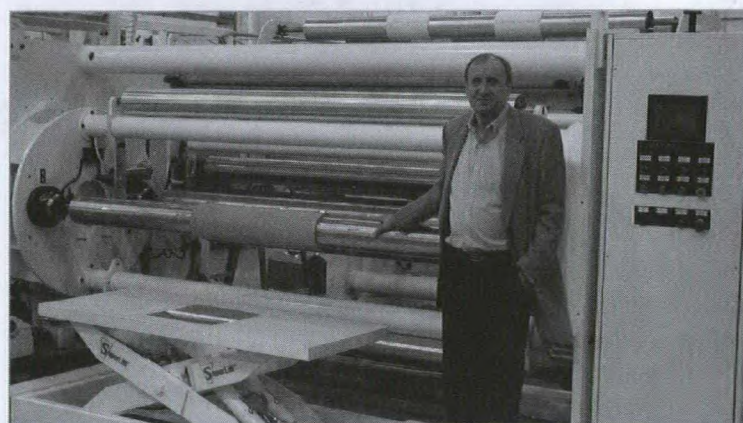
When Czech immigrant Mirek Planeta arrived in Canada in 1974, he was overwhelmed by the generosity of his new colleagues and friends in Burlington, Ontario. Even the plant manager where he first worked loaned him a car to get around. "I wish everyone immigrating had that experience," says Planeta. Now President of Canada Export Award-winning **Macro Engineering and Technology**, Planeta is an example

of an entrepreneur who succeeded by expanding into foreign markets.

Planeta graduated from the University of Prague in 1969 as a chemical engineer, and worked in Czechoslovakia before moving to the United Kingdom and then Canada. "It was not an

He found opportunities in Korea, Japan, China, then Europe, and is now moving into Russia and the Ukraine. He offers some advice for would-be exporters: "Don't get discouraged with the export market. It takes time; you have to be patient. You can't expect to get orders right away. Get a good agent who knows that market."

That approach has been successful for Planeta and his company, which employs 100 people and earns more than \$20 million annually. In Macro's boardroom, the 1995 Canada Export Award is displayed; he says "it impresses people from abroad when



Canada Export Award winner Mirek Planeta, President and founder of Macro Engineering and Technology, at his Mississauga, Ontario, plant.

easy time for me and I did not speak English well then." In 1978, he started Macro Engineering and Technology, now a world-recognized designer and manufacturer of advanced extrusion systems and components for barrier and specialty films.

Although Planeta has received over 30 patents, he downplays his accomplishments, suggesting that in the early days "we went to the customers and asked what they wanted and then built it." He had been relying almost exclusively on U.S. and Canadian sales until tough times hit in 1987, and began looking into exporting overseas. "I thought that if one area of the world is down, there must be another where the economy is up."

they learn we won it." As one of 200 award winners, he is definitely in good company.

The **20th Canada Export Awards** will take place in Toronto on **November 24, 2003**, as part of the **Canadian Exporters Conference**, organized by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (www.cme-mec.ca).

For more information, contact Andrew Caddell, Team Canada Inc Trade Liaison Unit, DFAIT, tel.: **(613) 944-0118**, e-mail: andrew.caddell@dfait-maeci.gc.ca or check the Canada Export Awards Web site: www.infoexport.gc.ca/awards-prix/menu-e.htm.

UBC takes technology transfer program to Seattle

The Canadian Consulate General in Seattle collaborated with three local sponsors—Silicon Valley Bank, Grant Thornton Accounting and the law firm of Gray Cary—to host "Tech Transfer: Primed for Evolution," a biotech CEO breakfast program.

The idea came from the critical role that technology transfer programs from local universities play in getting new ideas, science and technology into the market. At the University of Washington (UW), this role has suffered of late, while the **University of British Columbia** (UBC) model is a shining beacon of success, albeit little known in the Seattle biotech community.

The program featured Jim Severson, Vice Provost, Office of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer from UW, and Angus Livingstone, Managing Director, University Industry Liaison Office (UILO) at UBC. Both set the stage for the process, track record and positioning of each university in their tech transfer offices. A panel discussion then involved two companies—one from Seattle and one from Vancouver—that were formed around university technologies.

By collaborating on this event, the Canadian Consulate General in Seattle was able to build greater awareness in the Seattle area for the UBC UILO office and its outstanding record of commercialization and licensing in the area of life sciences—a worthwhile initiative since UW has come under scrutiny from the local business community for not commercializing a proportionate amount of its research.

UBC's UILO has been instrumental in the creation of a majority of British Columbia's (B.C.) biotechnology companies like **QLT**, **Angiotech**, **Inex Pharmaceuticals** and **Xenon Genetics**, to name a few. Without the UILO's support and guidance for these companies—among many others in their early stages—B.C. would simply not have the biotechnology industry it has today.

At this event, UBC was also able to showcase its leadership position and research and development capabilities and, hopefully, stimulate interest in collaborative research from the local community. More than 60 participants, including company representatives, venture capital firms and the Washington State governor's Executive Policy Office, attended this cross-border event.

For more information, contact Jane Shaw, Business Development Officer, Canadian Consulate General in Seattle, tel: **(206) 770-4081**, fax: **(206) 443-9735**, e-mail: jane.shaw@dfait-maeci.gc.ca.

For more information on UBC's UILO, go to www.uilo.ubc.ca.

Sanctions lifted in Iraq

Reconstruction opportunities for Canada

With the adoption of resolution 1483 on May 22, 2003, the United Nations (UN) Security Council lifted most sanctions against Iraq—with the exception of the arms embargo—while the purchase of oil from Iraq is subject to some conditions under that resolution. Canada is undertaking measures to implement resolution 1483.

Opportunities

Reconstruction efforts in Iraq are at a very early stage and are currently limited to U.S. government-funded contracts, most of which are administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). However, subcontracting for U.S. government reconstruction contracts offers opportunities for Canadian companies. The Canadian Embassy in Washington is following developments closely with U.S. officials and has prepared a Web site to help Canadian exporters pursue potential opportunities (www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/sell2usgov/iraqusaid-en.asp). U.S. officials have confirmed that Canadian bidders are welcome.

California-based Bechtel Corporation has been selected by USAID to lead the design, rehabilitation, upgrading and reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure. Details are available at the Bechtel Web site at www.bechtel.com/iraq.html.

Canada's role

On May 14, 2003, Prime Minister Chrétien announced that Canada will allocate a further \$200 million to meet humanitarian and reconstruction needs in Iraq, bringing Canada's total contribution to more than \$300 million, and demonstrating Canada's ongoing commitment to the international effort underway to assist the people of Iraq.

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