

TRADE FAIRS AROUND THE WORLD

Good Opportunities at SOFTWORLD'96

According to preliminary reports, the latest Softworld Partnering Conference and Show attracted a record number of foreign buyers and specialists from around the world to Halifax.

This is the second time that the show, now in its sixth year, was held in Atlantic Canada, to the great delight of over 700 — 100 more than last year — senior information technology executives, entrepreneurs and investors from more than 30 countries.

Not only were they taken in by the superb Halifax hospitality and scenery — some went home raving about Canada and Canadian hospitality — but many came away with valuable business contacts and opportunities at this event designed to promote business investment in Canada and deal-making between technology firms representing the global marketplace.

Since the three-day event last September, a number of leads have already progressed to further talks and deal-makings between top-level executives of innovative foreign technology firms who attended and participated Canadian companies.

With the overall marketing effort for the show being coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)'s Market Intelligence Division and the International Trade Centre in Halifax, most of the company representatives from around the globe were accompanied — and had been recruited — by Canadian Trade Commissioners or Commercial Officers stationed in the corresponding country.

These Canadian experts were available at the *Team Canada* booth to offer advice to Canadian companies interested in country-specific information technology (IT) market intelligence.

Highlights

One of the highlights of the show — and highly appreciated by participants — was the Cyber Café, with access to E-mail and voice mail.

Many attendees came away with five or six important business contacts or potential business opportunities, giving high praise for the quality of the participating firms.

This busy spot allowed participants to send E-mail, surf and conduct business on the Web while at the show.

A *Buyers and Sellers Forum* also proved very popular with many showgoers, providing a great opportunity to hear what certain investors were looking for.

All in all, opportunities to contact prospective suppliers and to investigate new products and services were highly valued at the show, labelled as an effective networking forum for the participating firms.

Success

In particular, many attendees came away with five or six important business contacts or potential business opportunities, giving high praise for the quality

of the participating firms.

Commented one satisfied "customer" from Argentina: "I have attended other conventions (in the U.S.A.) where the number of people does not allow a second meeting with anyone during the show, and no other contact is possible except an exchange of calling cards. I felt very comfortable at Softworld."

A Canadian company was also slated to sign an agreement to acquire Argentine technology which will significantly strengthen its position in its primary market — the U.S.A. Other Argentine participants are exploring agreements to pursue projects in third countries with Canadian content.

Softworld'97

Organizers for next year's **Softworld** — slated for Vancouver — are hoping that more Canadian companies will take advantage of such a golden opportunity for very low cost, high quality international marketing, offering highly informative seminars and one-on-one contacts.

For more information on Canada's premier software event and next year's show, contact Robert Speers at DFAIT's Market Intelligence Division (TBS). Tel.: (613) 996-1908. Fax: (613) 943-8820. Or contact John Wiebe, International Trade Centre, Vancouver. Tel.: (604) 666-1436. Fax (604) 666-0954.