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The Institute is a private, non-profit research organization, with a national mandate to support Canadian industries in developing the potential of optical technology. As such, the Institute can help Canadian entrepreneurs position themselves to take advantage of the market opportunities this kind of joint research venture will create.

Dr. Lucky Lakshmanan, director of Ortech International, in Mississauga, believes people are the key to technology transfer. "One thing is technology," he says, "the second is how you work with people to get the technology across... creating a comfort level. People keep saying, dealing with Japan and consummating a deal with Japan is difficult... but once you get to know these guys, and they trust what you're doing, they trust what you're saying, it makes life easy, it makes it easier for things to happen."

Ortech, formerly the Ontario Research Foundation, is one of the largest institutes of technology transfer in Canada, and has a historical relationship with the University of Toronto, and a network of clients and contacts who are primarily from industry.

JSTF funding was used by Ortech and U of T to introduce the Ohno Continuous Casting process to Canada. The process improves the quality and enhances the properties of cast metal by making it cool off from the inside out, rather than the usual outside in. The technology was developed by Professor Atsumi Ohno at the Chiba Institute in Japan, and the Canadian team that is refining it is led by Professor Alex McLean of the University of Toronto, an internationally renowned expert in the area.

"I believe this is a good opportunity to bring technology from Japan and it offers us an opportunity to export material from here," says Dr. Lakshmanan. "We are pretty

enthused over the whole thing."

And Dr. Lakshmanan captures the essential spirit of the JSTF adventure when he says, "What we are working on could not have happened without the joint efforts and understanding of all the partners, who all have a similar vision that here is an opportunity for developing Canadian technology. That's the important thing. We also see a window of opportunity for the export of Canadian technology. But there needs to be commitment."

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able in the Asia-Pacific region.

Canadian firms interested in conducting business in this region should strive to increase their capabilities in Asian languages and intercultural communication for more effective co-operation. As Bronwyn Best of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF) office in Toronto notes, "When you have acquired some competency in an Asian language and culture, business and personal interactions become easier".

The APF administers the Corporate Asian Language and Awareness Training Program — a key component of the Pacific 2000 Asian Language and Awareness Fund — on behalf of External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC). Funded about 50 per cent by EAITC and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the APF receives the balance of its revenues from private companies and provincial governments. Headquartered in Vancouver, the APF has offices in Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo — and in Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal. Among the wide range of activities in which the APF is engaged, providing businesses with training in Asian languages and business cultures is perhaps the most vital.

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Practicality is the core of the APF approach. "We definitely have no desire to create Asian specialists," says Ms. Best. "For example, those who chose as adults to learn Japanese have had to devote a tremendous amount of effort in learning to read, write, and speak that language. You don't have time to develop the rest of your character or the rest of your skills: what use are you going to be to a company? The Foundation is interested in creating Canadians who are knowledgeable about Asia and who have other skills, not super Asian specialists."

That business-like approach begins with the selection process for APF language training. Explains Best: "Each application has to be made before the course starts, and it has to be made by whomever is the immediate director of the person who is applying. This means that it doesn't matter that an employee wants to study Korean, but that the corporation wants to become more effective by having its employees study Korean."

Throughout the training process, business-friendly Foundation personnel concentrate on what company personnel need to know, and what companies want to pay for in terms of skills acquisition. It can add up to a rigorous program.

According to Dr. Jan Walls, director of the APF-funded David Lam

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