

'Tis The Season to Savour Success!

By Chantal Gosselin, Co-Op Student

When Studio Artéfact of Brossard (near Montreal) sets up a Christmas scene in a shopping centre, the results are outstanding.

Specializing in the preparation of large-scale displays, this company uses an original flexible polyurethane foam process to create life-like scenes and mythical characters.

Villages, castles and dragons come to life, captivating young and old — not only in Canada, but as far away as Australia!

Studio Artéfact attributes much of its growing reputation and success to its ability to offer long-lasting, sculpted and moulded displays that accurately reproduce original conceptual drawings. The company's integrated operations enable it to design all models, install displays and provide customers with after-sales service — while still being able to maintain quality control throughout all aspects of production.

Since 70 per cent of the company's activities occur around Christmas, its payroll triples in early autumn.

In business since 1986, Studio Artéfact has only recently taken an interest in exporting. The firm now is committed to exploring this venue.

In June 1992, while participating in one of the world's largest retail trade fairs in New York (organized by the National Association of Display Industries), the company exhibited its product range — and met with an unexpected degree of success. As a result, prospective clients now include buyers from Australia, Brazil and Europe.

In January 1993, Studio Artéfact was awarded its first foreign contract from the Australian firm Mei & Picchi. With offices in Melbourne and Sydney, Mei & Picchi is a leading distributor of displays to shopping centres throughout Australia.

According to Studio Artéfact president, Alain Lauzon: "One important reason for the com-

Product: large-scale displays

Employees: 25

Sales: \$1.8 million (1993)

Exports: 10 per cent

Markets: Australia

pany's breakthrough in Australia is the similarity between our philosophies and culture."

In an effort to improve its competitive position on the international market, Studio Artéfact now is finding ways to reduce transportation costs and delivery times for its products. Such improvements will help double company revenues by 1995.

"We feel that we must improve our techniques and find more advanced methods of production and distribution. With this in mind, we are investing five per cent of our revenue back into research and development. We are also committed to providing advanced technical training to our employees in order to meet the increasing

challenge of world competition," Lauzon says.

While Studio Artéfact is currently negotiating projects with major shopping centres in the United States, it continues to receive serious inquiries from around the world.

AGENDA

Montreal — February 1, 1994; **Toronto** — February 2; **Winnipeg** — February 3; **Vancouver** — February 4 — A seminar series on **Doing Business in Vietnam** will feature presentations on such key areas as: the current status of projects and lending by international financing institutions; making and sustaining business relationships in Vietnam; and market entry strategies. The East Asia Trade Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will be co-sponsoring the seminars with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. Please check the January 17, 1994 issue of **CanadExport** for contacts, venue, hours and registration details.

Miami Consulate

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