

Quebec Company Wraps Up Sales with Team Canada

Wulftec International Inc. is not new to international trade and the benefits it brings to both the company and Canada. But participating in the 1998 Team Canada trade mission gave it a whole new experience not only in exporting but also in selling in its own backyard.

Wulftec's Executive Vice-President and CEO Alec van Zuiden's goals in signing on for the mission were modest: he hoped to develop a distribution network in Latin America for his stretch-wrapping machines.

He never imagined what would actually happen.

After signing a \$1.5-million agreement to open a plant in Mexico — a move that will create 30 new jobs at Wulftec's Eastern Townships plant in Ayer's Cliff — Van Zuiden was approached by another Canadian company that had recently signed a deal to finance the largest bottle manufacturer in China.

They wanted Wulftec to supply them with pallet wrappers for their Chinese contact. When word got out, this led to yet another opportunity with a local Argentine bottling and plastics company.

"Although both projects remain on the back burner," says Van Zuiden, "we are still very hopeful that they will soon come to fruition."

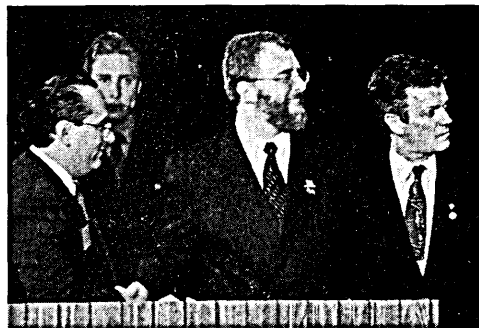
Contracts signed

According to Van Zuiden, the deal in Mexico has just led the company to acquire a building space that will handle a line of semi-automatic wrapping machines to serve the Latin American market.

"One of the biggest surprises on the trip was a distribution contract with Cross Towers Enterprise (CTE) in

Chile, an agreement we snatched from one of our largest U.S. competitors," says Van Zuiden with some satisfaction.

"We got the lead from the Trade Commissioners at the Canadian Embassy in Santiago," he recalls, "and it simply evolved from there, with



Alec van Zuiden (centre) of Wulftec International had only praise for last year's Team Canada mission.

CTE coming to us with inquiries."

And, of course, it didn't hurt to have Team Canada on hand.

"There is no conceivable way these deals could have taken place without Team Canada," Van Zuiden empha-

sizes. "The networking sessions, both in various countries and on the plane, were spectacular. The return on investment associated with the expenses of the trip has been incredible."

Preparatory work key to success

Van Zuiden is quick to point out that participating in such a trade mission takes a fair bit of background work. "But if you do your homework, you can't fail," he adds.

"We spent quite a number of hours contacting Canadian Trade Commissioners in each of the four countries that we visited, getting demographic details and other market facts."

Although Wulftec had reps in Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and Mexico prior to the mission, in addition to appointing one in Chile, Van Zuiden believes that it was time to visit them.

"It was nice to meet face to face," he adds, "and to make sure that everything was going smoothly. So this mission was very timely for us."

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