

Many Canadian companies have already built partnerships -- partnerships of all kinds -- to enhance their competitiveness.

Take, for example, the DMR Group Inc., one of Canada's most successful companies in computer consulting services. Founded in Montreal 18 years ago, the company now has 2,200 employees throughout Canada and the U.S. as well as Australia and Europe. A large part of its business and growth strategy involves active "partnering" with several other companies, both Canadian and foreign.

With sales in 1990-91 of \$200 million -- of which nearly half were made outside Canada -- DMR offers a range of professional services in information and technology management. Last year it launched an ambitious, four-year, \$38-million R&D partnership project.

This partnership -- involving 15 public and private-sector partners -- is developing the "macroscope," a high-tech means of identifying the methods, software tools and training programs required for effective management of information technology. DMR is also a major participant in the European Advanced Software Technology project.

As Pierre Ducros, Chairman of DMR, explains it: "Partnership and participation -- these are among the key ingredients of our competitiveness, and growth."

So let me throw out the challenge to you directly:

- How many of you or your clients discuss problems and solutions extensively with your staffs?
- How many of you develop your new services and approaches with the full co-operation of, and in consultation with suppliers and clients?
- How many of you have formed strategic alliances with foreign companies in a distant market to share a technology or build a new market?
- How many of you have enlisted the support of the colleges and universities in your communities in developing new training programs and in tapping into new ideas?
- How many of you travel to other countries to meet with companies in your industry or potential suppliers/customers to hear what is going on there that might help your business, and therefore, your competitiveness.