

software industry has applied creative solutions for tapping into markets and expertise all around the world. As you succeed, so do others. Your product innovations have helped other companies compete. Your products and services are revolutionizing all sectors of the economy.

Here in Vancouver, Nexus Engineering makes radio frequency communications products for satellite and cable television. Nexus has used information technology to reduce its manufacturing cycle to a fraction of what it was before. That is the kind of difference in productivity that has helped this company, established only nine years ago, win a 1990 Canada Export Award.

Down the road, in Burnaby, CREO Products uses computer-aided design, manufacturing and resource planning to build optical tape recorders that can store the equivalent of 15,000 pages on a linear inch of optical tape. Software applications have not only revolutionized the so-called "high-tech" companies. Innovative applications are turning the forestry, mining, and fishing industries in British Columbia and across Canada into high-tech industries as well.

Your companies design, produce and sell products and services that enable business to keep pace with the Information Age. Stephen Bingham, President of Alias Research, describes your role very nicely: "Our clients," he says, "view us as the *solution* to their competitive problems."

But your industry cannot rest on the achievements of the past. It must still face significant challenges. Among these are:

- how to improve market awareness;
- how to find and form strategic alliances; and
- improving the availability of venture finance.

Other challenges include:

- developing and applying new technology;
- developing managerial and business skills; and, finally,
- developing techniques for managing technological change.

The Softworld Conference will give you the chance to tackle these and other issues in depth.

I have already mentioned that improving market awareness is one challenge you face to your competitiveness. Your continued success can only be assured if you compete in the global marketplace. Many of you have learned for yourselves the tough lessons of global competitiveness: