

# Sharing Trade Secrets

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filament, if he desires. As Mr. Corriveau says, "they are made-to-measure. This is one of the company's strong points."

## Price, Quality, Adaptability

To maintain this adaptability, Lippert constantly researches its products and its manufacturing machinery. Its products already have ISO (International Standards Organization) certification, guaranteeing its numerous foreign customers a high degree of quality.

The company has received assistance from various government agencies to develop new technology and new production machinery. "We have been working with the Quebec Industrial Research Centre (CRIQ), the Quebec Department of Industry, Trade, Science and Technology, the National Research Council of Canada and the Montreal Industrial Innovation Centre for six years."

The quality-price relationship is another advantage for Lippert. According to Mr. Corriveau, "it's one of the things that has enabled us to penetrate the markets of our 20 client countries so rapidly."

## Tricks of the Trade

Aside from being able to fully adapt its products to the customers' needs, and offering highly competitive prices, Lippert features rapid delivery — two weeks, or even a few days, depending on the customers' requirements.

Lippert discovers new markets by obtaining the names of potential customers through Canadian embassies and consulates in other countries. Increasingly, recommendations

are being made by existing customers who are highly satisfied with the products.

"Sometimes," says Mr. Corriveau, "big companies will even give us the names of their competitors, they are so satisfied with our products." One could hardly get a better recommendation!

Mr. Corriveau's approach to potential customers is:

- (1) Fax a description of the products;
- (2) Telephone, if the response is positive;
- (3) Determine the model of the product, and send a sample;
- (4) Pay an exploratory visit.

In the latter case, Mr. Corriveau recommends, for purposes of economy, visiting a number of possible clients in the same region,

Mr. Corriveau strongly recommends that the visit involve the company president and the managers of sales and manufacturing. "Many companies try to get by sending only one person on a visit; this is a waste of time and a cause of frustration," says Mr. Corriveau. "We always have a team of three, carrying one or two briefcases with samples. This has always resulted in an actual or promised order. In this way, we can make all the necessary decisions right there, because we have done our homework — checking the product preferences, the sizes, the materials, etc." Mr. Corriveau also feels that careful planning and punctuality go together.

"We also offer free samples, unlike many of our competitors, a tactic which always produces results." He recommends offer-

ing a small, typically Canadian gift — a bird carving, a small Inuit sculpture, etc., although he feels that the mere fact of being Canadian and having a Canadian passport opens many doors. "Even the occasional difficulties that can arise at Customs can be avoided if everything is checked out with the customer ahead of time, making sure that necessary documents, etc. have been translated."

## The Future

In addition to their use in conveyers — not only in the pulp and paper industry, but in mining, baking, shipping forklifts and waste water treatment — Lippert pintlepins are used in manufacturing teflon covers for stadium roofs, most of which are produced by large multinationals.

"With this wide diversity of products, markets (about 20 countries) and customers, there is never an inactive period in sales," says Mr. Corriveau. "Lippert is already considering getting into other products, such as the conveyor belt rings into which the pins are fitted, and of conquering other markets as well. We are aiming at reaching 40 countries within two or three years, including China, where we have not had many breakthroughs, mainly by way of Hong Kong."

With all these things in its favour, the company's future looks bright.

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