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"It is literally an untapped and exciting market." The company now has a sales office in Beijing, since half of its business is in China.

Macro designs, manufactures and installs the machinery that makes plastic film which is used, for example, in shrink-wrap, garbage bags and plastic fencing. The durability, reliability and advanced technology of a Macro product keep customers coming back. "They like how we can specialize a product to suit their individual needs," said Planeta.

MED-ENG SYSTEMS INC.

The world is a little safer from terrorists' threats, thanks to Med-Eng Systems Inc. of Ottawa, Ontario.

Med-Eng designs and manufactures bomb disposal apparel and equipment used by police forces and the military in more than 80 countries.

"All of our products are geared toward the protection of bomb disposal specialists," said Richard L'Abbé, the company's president. "In a life or death situation, customers are opting for the best product. And that product happens to be ours."

Med-Eng's bomb disposal suits and helmets are considered to be the most advanced in the world. The 14-year-old company also manufactures telescopic, robotic manipulators and miniature-wheeled robotic vehicles.

A two-time Canada Export Award winner, Med-Eng's pursuit of excellence has paid off. Export sales grew by 60 per cent from 1992 to 1994, making up 98 per cent of the company's total sales.

SIMONS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

In 1944, Howard Simons started an engineering consulting company to service the Canadian pulp and paper industry. Today, Vancouver-based Simons employs more than 2,500 people, has diverse industrial clients all over

the world, and has just won its second Canada Export Award.

"Our first priority has always been to do the job properly," said Tom Simons, who assumed the presidency in 1968. "Our clients understand this, and as a result we have grown considerably over the years."

In 1994, exports made up 27.3 per cent of the company's business, up from 9.2 per cent in 1992.

An early user of computer-aided design, the company pioneered the extensive use of computers in Canadian engineering companies in the 1970s and 1980s.

"By keeping at the forefront of technology, we can offer our clients faster, more cost-effective and functional results," said Tom Simons. "And that's what you're looking for when you're building a multi-million-dollar facility".

SKYJACK INC.

Export success has been an elevating experience for Skyjack Inc., a Guelph, Ontario, company that designs and manufactures elevating work platforms for building construction, renovation, maintenance and retooling.

Exports jumped from \$41 million a year ago to \$73 million this year, and accounted for 93.2 per cent of Skyjack's 1994 sales.

Skyjack was conceived when Wolf Haessler, the company's president and founder, saw a scissor-lift platform being used on the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto. Realizing there was an untapped market for this type of product, Haessler built his own prototype in 1981 and production started in 1985. Ten years later, number 10,000 rolled off the line; in the next few months an additional 10,000 units will be manufactured.

Haessler says that Skyjack's elevating platforms are displacing older, more labour-intensive technology such as ladders. "They're a much safer and faster means of accessing high places."

STANDARD KNITTING LTD.

Unravelling the intricacies of exporting has been a cinch for Standard Knitting Ltd. of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In 1994, the 30-year-old company recorded a 425-per-cent increase in export sales from 1992. Exports make up 61 per cent of sales. The company employs 264 people, a 233-per-cent increase since 1991.

"The key to our success is quality and technological innovation," said Michael Wang, Standard Knitting's president and owner. "We offer distinctive designs, a myriad of colours and eye-catching patterns for our Tundra knitwear. We can hardly keep up with the demand for our product."

Widespread use of computer technology and state-of-the-art knitting equipment contribute to Standard's success.

"By using computer-aided design technology, our designers in-house and in Italy and New York can come up with patterns and colour combinations that are very unique," he said.

"Consumers are tired of the same old designs and colours. They want to buy something that reflects their individuality. That's where we fill the niche."

SURVIVAL SYSTEMS LIMITED

In 1981, Albert Bohemier survived a helicopter crash. One year later, he and a colleague, John Turton, founded Survival Systems Limited, a business dedicated to saving lives.

The Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, firm specializes in safety training for the offshore, marine, military and industrial sectors — and exports account for 52 per cent of total sales.

Survival's customers don't just sit in a classroom listening to safety lectures.

For example, aircrew receive hands-on experience in how to deal with a downed aircraft through its Modular Egress

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