

SHARING TRADE SECRETS

Global Going Global Through Joint Ventures... in Israel

Global Furniture (Canada) started selling to Israel some 10 years ago through its subsidiary, Teknion, after successfully bidding on a \$1-million contract for the installation of open office screen / panel systems.

Most of the components for that order came out of the company's Toronto plants.

A couple of years later, a Teknion joint venture in Israel led to production there and subsequent exports to the European Community (taking advantage of the Free Trade Agreement between Israel and the EC) and the East European market (on account of Israel's geographic location and its special ties with the region).

"With the upcoming implementation of similar free trade between Canada and Israel," says Global Chairman Saul Feldberg, "we will be able to compete on an equal footing with European and U.S. exporters to Israel, as well as have better access to those markets through joint ventures with Israeli companies."

The Israeli market

According to Feldberg, the Isra-

eli market is not easy to penetrate — it's a different culture — but with a little bit of patience and hard work, it can be done.

"First of all," he advises, "you must find a good and reliable partner who can show you references and knowledge of international trade."

Second, people should not rush into that market.

"Go step by step," Feldberg suggests, "and with a slow approach and a good partner, most companies succeed."

He also points out that good help is available both in Canada and in Israel where people are anxious to do business with Canadians.

"Canada has a good name," says Feldberg, "and the Canadian Embassy's Commercial Section in Tel Aviv is one of the best and most active in the world.

"You can get good advice there,"

he suggests, "and soon you will be ready to go on your own."

How does he know? He speaks from experience.

With exports to South America, the Far East (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore), the U.K. and France, as well as Russia (where the Parliament and Moscow City Hall are totally equipped with Global furniture), Feldberg has seen them all.

"On our first venture to Israel 10 years ago," recalls Feldberg, "the Canadian Embassy helped us with our initial contact."

Future prospects

Up till now, Feldberg considered the Israeli market too small for direct exports, and too pricey, with some tariffs still as high as 20 or 30 per cent.

"But that will all change," he says, "with the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, and Canadians can start preparing for that right now."

Feldberg is also quick to point out that the business community in Israel is waiting for Canadian products. "Most Canadian ventures in Israel are successful," he says.

He himself hopes to be shipping components to Israel once most of the tariffs have been removed.

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