

Newbridge's product software interfaces are multi-lingual. In selling to the French PTT, Newbridge had Alcatel make the presentations in French, with Newbridge's French speaking staff available to answer technical questions. Newbridge has also made good use of a couple of its Russian speaking staff members in developing its operations in the USSR.

Mr. Gibson had the following advice for companies interested in entering the European market for the first time: go to the target country and spend a week there; talk to as many people as you can, including potential clients, regulatory officials and other government people, your competitors, service providers, potential agents, etc. He also advised that you talk to other Canadian companies that are already in Europe. He recommended participation in trade shows as part of the External Affairs and International Trade Canada booth as one good way to establish a base of operations, but stressed the need to get out and do a lot of digging and prying on your own.

Mr. Gibson advised other companies to expect the worst; that way, you will not be disappointed. He also cautioned against getting too dependent on one distributor. It is Newbridge's policy to stay away from exclusive arrangements. He conceded, however, that it may not always be possible to stay away from exclusive agreements, particularly in the case of a smaller company trying to introduce a new product into a new market.

Mr. Gibson mentioned that Newbridge has a market researcher based in Europe, whose main responsibility is to gather market intelligence about emerging opportunities. Newbridge has quite a bit of information that it would be willing to share with other Canadian companies, but it has not been asked for help or advice so far.

7.8 Conclusions

Newbridge Networks Corporation is a relatively new firm that in a very short time has become one of the leading companies in the world in the area of high-speed digital networks. Founded by entrepreneurs with considerable experience and several contacts in Europe in related business areas, Newbridge established a subsidiary company in the UK and tackled this market in parallel with its early thrusts in the North American market and in other parts of the world.

Newbridge's success in Europe and elsewhere will be difficult for most Canadian companies to emulate. Nevertheless, there are valuable lessons to be learned from its experiences in dominating the niches for its products in all of the world's major markets. Newbridge appears to have tried many approaches in parallel and found the ones that worked the best for its particular circumstances.