



THE U.S. CONNECTION

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New Brunswick Makes its Mark in Los Angeles

By the International Trade Centre, Moncton, New Brunswick

If you ask one particular participant how he felt about being part of a 16-member group of organizations in the New Brunswick pavilion at a recent trade show in Los Angeles, you'll get an unequivocal glowing response.

"We came back with over 200 solid leads, compared with the 10 or 20 leads we get at most shows," says Mark MacDonald, Marketing Director for BKM Research and Development, a 40-person low-bandwidth training development firm located in Dieppe, New Brunswick.

"We were inundated with people interested in our product. And even if we didn't have the exact product they were looking for, we could refer them to another firm in the group. It was a great feeling to be able to keep the sale in New Brunswick."

Participation pays off

From October 17 to 20, 16 New Brunswick firms and organizations involved in advanced learning technologies participated in the OnLine Learning '99 Conference and Exposition in Los Angeles. Headed by the province's Minister for Economic

Development, Tourism and Culture, Peter Mesheau, the mission was put together by the province of New Brunswick in co-operation with Industry Canada and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (through the Canadian Consulate General in Los Angeles).

Several companies signed partnership deals worth millions of dollars, and most came away with a good list of leads.

For the Business & Technology Training Institute, a 12-

person firm based in Fredericton that offers on-line professional development and training programs, the L.A. mission opened its eyes to the export potential for its products.

Says Managing Director Robert Didiodato, "This was our first foray into markets outside Canada, and it has resulted in a psychological shift for our company. We always knew there was potential for us in the U.S., but I don't think we

would have got there on our own. After the show in L.A., we know we can compete with the best in the world, and there's no turning back. We'll be there, talking to the other Canadian consulates to take advantage of their knowledge."

Adds Didiodato, "The New Brunswick pavilion gave us instant credibility. The people coming to our booth were focused on our product, instead of asking questions about how long we've been established or how big we are, which can sometimes be the case if you're on your own."

For Terry Wood, President of Glacier Software, a 10-person firm located in Miramichi, the first word that comes to mind to describe the mission is "excellent." Says Wood, "In terms of what we got out of this, the trip far exceeded my expectations. We had companies in Budapest, Hungary and in Israel interested in distributing our product internationally. And an Oklahoma company wants to distribute it in 29 states."

Continued on page 7 — New Brunswick



Corey Stephen (left), explains Certify Online.com's products to Canadian Consul General in Los Angeles, Kim Campbell, accompanied by Tom Palamides (centre), Business Development Officer at the Consulate.

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