

Susan Mey: persistence pays off

by Harold Mandel

Like a true entrepreneur, Susan Mey did not hesitate to open up the door when a good opportunity came knocking. Arriving in Hong Kong in September, 1991, she and partner Julie Lyons wasted little time in establishing their own company - InfoImaging Services Limited.

The establishment of a new company in Hong Kong in fact capped a busy few years for Mey. Graduating with a business degree from the University of Ottawa, Mey attended law school at the University of Toronto and was called to the bar 1989. She then practised commercial law with Smith Lyons Torrance Stevenson & Mayer in Toronto.

Mey married husband Mark in July, 1991 and began what was to be a one-year honeymoon travelling around the world. While in Russia, the couple received word that Mark had been offered a position with Hongkong Telecom. The newlyweds ventured to the territory in September, 1991.

Mey and Lyons, who knew each other from Toronto, recognized that the expense and shortage of space in Hong Kong presented a unique business opportunity. Together, in December, 1991, they established InfoImaging Services Limited which advises clients on the most efficient way to use the state-of-the-art imaging technology. This technology creates a highly efficient way of storing images of paper files, forms and other documents onto an optical disk which can subsequently be read, amended and printed from a computer within a few seconds. The result is that companies can keep the "CD" sized disks in the office and send the bulk of their paper files offsite to less expensive storage areas, allowing Hong Kong's high-priced office space to be used more productively.

When this company was up and running, Mey looked for other opportunities to test

her entrepreneurial abilities. About one year ago, another new high-technology product called the Photophone caught her imagination. The Photophone is a high-definition still-image transmission system. Incorporating a video camera which can be used remotely, images can be transmitted over regular telephone lines from one personal computer to another.

The system can be used for special applications such as forensics, fingerprint analy-

The Photophone also has a unique niche in the manufacturing industry, which Mey plans to pursue. The system's video camera can be used to capture images of products at a factory in China and transmitted back to quality control personnel, designers or buyers in Hong Kong or other countries for approval. With a zoom capability of up to 120 times (usually used for pathology purposes), specific parts of products can be viewed closely overseas.



Susan Mey shows off her latest venture - the Photophone - a high-definition, still-image transmission system.

sis, travel document verification, medical film images and product quality control verification transmission.

Mey has had considerable success with her new venture. The Commission for Canada and the United States embassy are currently using the Photophone at Kai Tak Airport to verify the authenticity of travel documents. Using the Photophone, the Commission and embassy staff are able to analyse documents in their office which are being presented at the airport. The Photophone provides voice and data transmission for fully interactive communications.

Mey currently targets hospitals and doctors who can use the system to transmit patients' medical film images from a hospital to a specialist in another hospital in Hong Kong or overseas.

Considering her qualifications as an entrepreneur, Mey was a natural when it came to forming and chairing the Entrepreneurs Committee at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. The committee, an evolution of the Women in Business Committee, has been providing successful "How To" seminars to members considering establishing a business or requiring tips on operating current businesses for the past two years.

Another brainchild of the committee is the annual Trade Show/Open House scheduled for March 25 and 26 at the Century Hong Kong Hotel. The Trade Show/Open House allows Chamber members to showcase their products and services to the general public in an informal environment.

Mey's advice to others considering establishing a business is two-fold. She says: "Firstly, you have to know and believe that you have a good product/service, and secondly you need to have persistence....If you are prepared for the inevitable ups and downs, then you can succeed."

Mey, who has made time for a family (she and Mark had a baby girl one year ago), continues to grow her business and is currently planning on expanding her operations into other countries. ♦

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