



What do foam Walk-a-Pets, firefighting equipment, industrial cooling systems, interactive educational software and TELEtranslators have in common? They are all products of smaller Canadian companies that are finding new buyers in Latin America — thanks in no small part to the latest Team Canada trade mission.



James Marchbank (left) of Science North in Sudbury promoted his company's technological, interactive exhibit design and object theatre production to museums in Latin America.

For many companies, the benefits of participating in January's Team Canada 1998 trade mission to Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile were dramatic. Victoria-based TCC Communications Corporation, a company employing only 15 people, signed two deals totalling \$24 million.

"Latin Americans have great respect for their political leaders," says TCC Communications CEO John Grayson. "So when they see us with political leaders from their country, they're very impressed. Having our leaders standing on stage with us, as one unified group, speaks very powerfully."

"It saved us maybe six to nine months of confidence building," Grayson adds.

For this small company, that political presence helped to seal deals to supply both Brazil and Mexico with 40,000 TELEtranslators, devices that automatically provide Spanish subtitles for English movies and television shows.

For other companies, like foam toy maker Darnos Enterprises International Ltd. of Cornwallis, Team Canada meant

unprecedented access to potential buyers.

Philip Darnos never dreamed that eight years after emigrating from Poland with \$100 in his pocket he would be accompanying the Prime Minister of Canada on a trade mission.

"This is really big for me," he says. "It means that I am accepted by my peers and colleagues. Anywhere else I'd have to know someone to be part of something like this. But in Canada, if you work hard and if you're good at what you do, you can succeed."

Darnos didn't sign any contracts on the mission, but he isn't disappointed. He made the trip to develop new contacts, and that's exactly what he did.

"This is a long-term process for us, and we've got several things in the works for supplying amusement parks and their distributors," he says. "If they come through, and I think they will, we'll be hiring about 50 people back in Cornwallis." That's close to a 70% increase in employees for the Nova Scotia maker of Walk-a-Pets.



Team Canada: unprecedented access to potential buyers