



Canadian Trade Successes 01-06

THERMO: IT'S THE WORD ON WATER COOLERS

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Thermo Concepts

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Key Quotation:

“Knowing that there are people and organizations out there that will help us open doors is gratifying,” says Michel Truax. “But we recognize that we also have to stay in touch with the market if we’re to know what our customers expect from a cooler manufacturer. Figuring that out is part of the innovative mindset that drives our company.”

Story details:

When workers in Mexico gather around their office water cooler, they may just be sharing gossip over, and drinking from, a cooler made by a Canadian company. Thermo Concepts, a Sherbrooke-based company, has been making a splash in the water cooler world since it was created in 1987. The company’s attractive, easy-to-use bottled water coolers, in tandem with its worldwide customer and technical support system, have made Thermo Concepts a leader in what is a surprisingly competitive industry.

“We excel because we link quality, design and technology,” says Michel Truax, the company’s sales and marketing director. Thermo Concepts’ water coolers are attractive and functional. That combination has enabled the company to introduce and to sell its product successfully in both residential and commercial markets abroad.

In typically Canadian fashion, Thermo refuses to compromise when it comes to quality, says Truax. “Every water cooler we produce is rigorously tested and inspected before it’s shipped. Plus, we have UL (Underwriters Laboratories), CSA (Canadian Standards Association) and CE (Communauté Européenne) certifications. And we’re an active member of the Canadian,

International and European Bottled Water Associations, all of which are dedicated to establishing and maintaining the highest standards for the industry.”

Still, the people at Thermo Concepts are well aware that a superior product does not necessarily guarantee success in the competitive and often skewed international marketplace. “We’ve always known that we would need help to succeed outside of Canada. That’s why we were so pleased when we were contacted by a trade commissioner with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada’s International Business Opportunities Centre (IBOC), about an opportunity to do business in Mexico.” IBOC matches international sales leads, provided by the trade commissioners working in our offices abroad, with Canadian companies.

For Thermo, the result of this coordinated effort was a lucrative contract with Interlyz S.A. de C.V. in Atizapan de Zaragoza, Mexico State. The 2005 deal was worth just over US\$200,000 says Truax. Under the same deal, the total for 2006 is expected to grow to about US\$300,000.

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