

Access Saskatchewan

Envista Technology Tastes International Success Through ITPP Program



The growth of environmental awareness and the need to collect and manage information about our impact on the environment led to creation of a spin-off company with a new software product. **Envista Technologies** was derived from Wayne Clifton's 22-year-old Saskatchewan - based engineering firm - Clifton Associates Ltd.

Envista's team of engineers, earth science majors, environmental scientists and information technologists consulted and researched to develop a software program that ensures consistent and complete data organization to bridge the gap between fieldwork and the office. They called it Envista.

The software went to market in 1997 and became especially popular in Panama and Colombia. In these countries, there are opportunities to create new and innovative products as the Environmental Authorities have begun to outline industry and environmental regulations.

As Envista Technologies was a brand new venture for Clifton Associates, funding programs were researched to assist with costs. One position in particular was immediately needed to market the product internationally.

Envista Technologies hired Cameron Rizos through WD's **International Trade Personnel Program** to overcome a deficit in marketing expertise. Rizos had completed two degrees from the University of Saskatchewan, a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Commerce. Rizos had previous international experience and speaks several languages including French, English and Spanish with some German and Japanese.

When Rizos started, he concentrated on completing a proposal for a World Bank project in Colombia for the design, development and implementation of an Environmental

Information Management System. From August to December 1999, Rizos made two trips to Panama and two trips to Colombia where he performed contract negotiations, developed an Envista work plan and worked on an Environmental Information System Design project with the Panamanian National Environment Authority. He also participated in an International Development Partnership Conference sponsored by CIDA in Ottawa last November

"The results from having Cameron Rizos working with Envista speak for themselves," said Darrell McClarty, vice-president of Envista Technologies. "We achieved first place through the international competition on the technical evaluation for the World Bank project in Bogotá, Colombia."

"We are extremely pleased with Cameron's performance and think very highly of the ITPP program, which made all of this possible," said McClarty. "The assistance we have received through our first ITPP position has led to \$2 million in international revenues, and we anticipate similar results from hiring more graduates under the program."

"The ITPP program has allowed me to pursue a career in international marketing and to remain based in Saskatchewan, two objectives that are usually not complementary," said Rizos. "ITPP helps employers, who are interested in committing the required resources to developing international sales, reducing the risk and initial costs associated with international marketing. This program also allows recent graduates, who don't necessarily have significant experience in international marketing, an opportunity to enter this field where otherwise, it would be extremely difficult."

For more information on the International Trade Personnel Program and other WD programs and services, call 1-888-338-9378 or visit our Saskatoon or Regina offices.



Barb de la Sablonnière, owner of Advantage Signs and Display Systems is shown in her 1999 show room with husband and business partner, Gaston de la Sablonnière (on her left) and sales consultant Phil Sali (on her right).

Women Entrepreneurs - A “Sign” Of The Times

Today’s women are getting ahead with the help of **Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.** W.E. can provide repayable loans to businesswomen who already have a bank loan in place, or to those who can’t access traditional financing because they have a higher risk business.

Barb de la Sablonnière, owner of Advantage Sign and Display Systems turned her 20 years of experience as a trade show consultant into a full time business. With the help of W.E., de la Sablonnière received extensive counseling, networking opportunities, resource information and overall moral support

to help direct her towards fulfilling her dream as owner of her own company.

Advantage Sign and Display Systems currently employ four full-time employees and two partners, all of whom possess excellent interpersonal and marketing skills. The company specializes in everything from trade show hardware, signage for point of purchase, digital printing, murals and are now, working with artists in development of digital fine art production from originals to canvas and watercolor papers.

Through the business, de la Sablonnière works actively with clients from across Canada and the United States. She is also willing to provide clients with free consultations. In the past three years, the company has tripled its sales and retained 98 per cent of its' clientele.

The success of the company has de la Sablonnière boasting about Women Entrepreneurs. "The organization has provided me with numerous opportunities to network through its lunch and learn program, as well as an open ear anytime I have questions."

Ms. de la Sablonnière has also been able to share her experiences with other women entrepreneurs and assisted the organization in revitalizing their trade show booth. "It is important for women to understand that, while an organization may have a lot to offer, women have to make the membership work for them. I feel that being a member of W.E. is a two-way street. You're consistently giving and taking advice."

She appreciates being able to phone W.E. with a situation because the officers know the members so well, they can tell her of someone else who faced similar issues. "Or, if I'm taking on a project, they can tell me who's done something similar."

Ms. de la Sablonnière encourages women to join the Regina office "cell" groups. "Women from a variety of businesses meet to network and discuss solutions to business problems they might be encountering on a day-to-day basis, such as personnel, financing and suppliers.

"We have to use lessons from other women's experiences," she explains. "We have to learn from negative experiences as well as positive ones. Sharing is important. What's wrong with saying to someone, 'I made a mistake, but I learned this....'"

Women Entrepreneurs currently has more than 570 members across the province and encourage a two-way relationship with all of their members.

"Barb de la Sablonnière has helped other women within our organization through her knowledge and we have helped make her business flourish," said W.E. Executive Director Laura Small.

Women Entrepreneurs have offices in Saskatoon and Regina. There are also chapters located in Arborfield, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Swift Current and North Battleford to provide women in business with access to their services.

W.E. membership is open to any Saskatchewan resident. There are two levels of memberships. For an annual fee of \$75, full members receive access to insurance benefits, a membership directory, advertising and reduced rates on all W.E. conferences, programs and services. Associate members pay \$25 and receive advertising, invitations to the annual general meeting and other conferences and programs as well as the membership directory for a fee.

For more information call W.E. toll-free at 1-800-879-6331.



Software Program Puts Technology at Truckers' Fingertips

Bringing new meaning to the information highway, **I.COMM Communication Systems Inc.** has joined with SaskTel Mobility Services to bridge the gap between truck drivers, customers and companies by creating a software program with Internet access for trucks.

The new program, Load Track, was developed when Garrett Teriann and Dan Ambrose, owners of a Moose Jaw trucking company, recognized the need for better communications between truckers, dispatchers and customers.

"We wanted to connect our truckers through an easy-to-use communications tool," said Ambrose. "Garrett and I decided the best way to do that was through some type of network. That is when we contacted SaskTel for its assistance."

SaskTel acts as a server for I.COMM. "It has been a great help," explains Ambrose. "When clients approach us, they don't have to worry about paying extra for a server as that link is already in place. This makes our service cost-effective and easy to use."

How does the Load Track system work? It consists of an Internet-hosted service offering Global Positioning Satellite-based vehicle tracking and real-time messaging. This includes: direct e-mail messaging with all trucks, pallet management, accurate digital maps, automatic positional update every 72 minutes, detailed information on direction, time, production of relevant reports and accurate statistics.

Before the entrepreneurs went full force with their business, they asked South Central Community Futures Development Corporation about funding and business advice. South Central CFDC, with offices in Moose Jaw and Assiniboia, is one of 13 CFDC's across Saskatchewan that can provide a wide range of business information, counseling and training as well as financing to existing businesses or potential entrepreneurs. CFDCs are funded in part by Western Economic Diversification.

Marcel Thorhaug, manager of South Central CFDC, is pleased to have had the opportunity to assist Ambrose and Teriann with their idea. "Dan and Garrett have taken two major industries

and tied them together. I definitely feel that this company will be a great success and we're happy that we could help."

"There has always been a need for truckers to communicate with each other, their clients and their employers," said Ambrose. "For smaller trucking companies, paying for your own server and technical components can get extremely expensive. Through Load Track, we are able to fulfill all of those needs with SaskTel bundle packages and reasonable rates."

The incentive to bring truckers information faster and easier has already begun to pay off for I.COMM clients. Co-owner Teriann explains: "Just the other day a trucking company phoned us for help because one of their trucks broke down on the highway. We immediately used our satellite tracking system to contact one of our guys to stop where the truck was broken down and retrieve the load it was carrying. Without our system, that trucking company would have been late with its shipment, causing serious problems down the line."

Load Track provides other benefits. Customers can easily locate their load through the system. It allows drivers to communicate clearly with one another while being able to use the system to organize their data and dispatch times.

Integrating computer technology within the trucking industry was a big step for Ambrose and Teriann. "Bringing computers into the trucks made some of us a little uncomfortable as computer usage can seem a bit overwhelming with Internet access and e-mail, however, these trucks are our offices and nowadays who has an office without a computer?" laughs Ambrose.

The partners are optimistic about their new business venture and are pleased at how well it fits into their primary passion – the trucking industry.

For more information on CFDC programs and services, call your local CFDC office or Western Economic Diversification Canada at 1-888-338-WEST (9378).