



Canadian Association of Business Incubators
Advancing Business Incubation Coast To Coast
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CABI News

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Editor's Note

Welcome to our first text-based e-mail version of CABI News, in all its simplicity. This new format allows us to reduce production costs, publish more frequently in the future, and distribute the publication to a wider stakeholder audience for the same cost as distributing it to members only. But these benefits come at a cost. To keep this format reader-friendly for all recipients, regardless of their computer software and hardware, we must avoid multi-colored and multi-sized text, fancy layout and images. Will this format work for you? Tell us what you think? Reply to incubation@innovacorp.ns.ca.

Another change you'll find in this edition of CABI News is that Sarah Morris is no longer editor-in-chief. Our team at InNOVAcorp's Business Incubation Group said goodbye to Sarah in late March when she accepted an exceptional career opportunity with AMIRIX Systems, a fast-growing Halifax company in the telecommunications industry. While we miss Sarah and wish her well, in her absence InNOVAcorp's team will continue to manage the editing and distribution of CABI News. Send us your stories and comments via incubation@innovacorp.ns.ca.

Top CEO in Our Midst

Congratulations to Johannes Larsen, executive director of Miratech Inc. in Miramichi, NB. Larsen was included in Atlantic Business Magazine's third annual listing of the Top 50 CEOs in Atlantic Canada. Copies of the magazine were distributed in the Globe & Mail in mid April.

Nominations for this prestigious list come from the magazine's readers - our business peers and colleagues. Larsen was nominated for his personal leadership skills, creativity, enthusiasm, innovation, steadfast dedication and exceptional business success. The magazine article describing Larsen's success highlights the fact that he attracted three U.S. companies and one Irish firm to set up shop at Miratech. It also describes his goals of creating more jobs and companies in the advanced training and technology sectors, as well as his theory that a successful CEO must have patience and passion and "work the process, not the results."

On-Line Incubator Directory

The Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) has created an on-line directory of companies offering incubation and business acceleration services to emerging information technology companies. The directory lists over 45 companies from coast to coast offering resources such as office and lab space, admin and technical support, management expertise, venture capital, marketing and public relations assistance, business planning, human resources counseling, and executive recruitment and IPO preparation services.

"Our study on barriers to growth for emerging IT companies indicated that the second largest obstacle (after access to capital) emerging IT companies face is access to business expertise," says Gaylen Duncan, President and CEO of ITAC. "The role incubators and accelerators play in providing this expertise in a timely, cost-effective way has proven to be critical to the growth of many IT companies. Having a list of companies in the business of building businesses simply makes it easier for emerging companies to find the help they need."

The directory is accessible from the ITAC website at www.itac.ca, using the Emerging Sector button near the top of the home page. ITAC is the voice of the Canadian information technology industry. Together with its partner organizations across the country, the association represents 1300 companies in the computing and telecommunications hardware, software, services, and electronic content sectors.

ITAC will refresh the information in the directory regularly and will accept entries from companies not identified in its preliminary round of research. For further information, contact Lynda Leonard, lleonard@itac.ca.

PUSHing Forward at TBDC

The Toronto Business Development Centre (TBDC) recently celebrated the graduation of another client company, PUSH Inc.

PUSH began its life at TBDC in the person of its principal, John McLachlan, a talented freelance graphic designer. Over the years of his residency at the facility, McLachlan's business flourished with the counsel and guidance the Centre provided in areas of planning, cash flow management and proposal development.

From the early months in shared accommodation, PUSH first expanded into one large suite and then annexed into the adjacent suite. The success of a proposal to a major national retail chain for its in-store marketing materials brought further growth and subsequent graduation from the incubator.

"From survival to growth, TBDC played a major role in the success of our business. The counsel, guidance and support was right on the money and always there for us," says McLachlan.

Just more proof that business incubation works!

Fore! New Golf Resource Headed Your Way

Despite the lingering cool temperatures, it won't be long before the Nova Scotia golf season is in full swing. Now a new local product is making it easier to get into the popular sport.

(AD)Venture 1 is a new interactive, multi-media CD Rom that promises to teach "everything you ever needed to know about the game...except how to swing." The CD features broadcast quality full-motion video and sound.

"It's simple to use. Just pop it into your computer's CD drive, sit back, and click your way to all the basic info needed for beginners getting into the game or seasoned golfers wanting to discover golf's corporate side," explains Peter Field, one of the principals of RP Golf Ventures Inc., which created the new product.

Topics covered on the CD include check-in at the course, warm-up, divot and ball mark repair, safety, cart management, corporate golf, using the term 'fore', the golf course color coding, and more. In addition to the valuable information provided, users will be charmed by the accompanying full-color video shot at Glen Arbour Golf Course in Hammonds Plains, NS last fall.

Aspiring golf pros won't be the only ones benefiting from this new learning tool however. The CD can be customized to prominently display a golf course's corporate identity, with the company's logo appearing on all packaging as well as on screens throughout the CD. As a result, the product will make a great give-away "thank you" to clients or a promotional

item to attract new customers.

(AD)Venture 1 is the first of a series of educational CDs from RP Golf Ventures Inc., a client at InNOVAcorp's Technology Innovation Centre in Dartmouth, NS. For more information, call 1-888-743-8476.

President's Corner

by Lorne Ross, CABI President

About eight years ago when I became manager of the St. Albert Business Development Centre (BDC) I set a personal challenge of raising its profile. I joined a number of organizations and started building a presence, ensuring everyone knew who I represented and what the BDC did. I undertook a publicity campaign that included television and radio appearances as well as the distribution of many public service announcements and press releases about our activities. I thought I had done a good job, and only occasionally would have to explain what BDC was about.

Well, we just completed a feasibility study in conjunction with our new Five Year Strategic Plan and it clearly shows a number of economic development movers and shakers are still unclear about what a business incubator is and what significant impact it can have on a region's economic development. This is a great disappointment to me for I know I have done a good job. I also know that no matter how well I think I have done the job, the job is never done.

An incubator's story must be told time and time again. Our successes must be frequently pronounced loud and clear to a variety of audiences. Hopefully my job will become easier as CABI grows and business incubation becomes a more widely-accepted economic development tool across the country. I urge you all to continue to raise your organizations' profile and to spread the good word about your successes both inside and outside the industry. Do what you can to promote your program and further the development of a strong business industry in Canada.

NORCAT Residency Program

by Stephanie Charette, NORCAT, Sudbury ON

The first years of any new business are tricky ones. Competing interests, low start-up capital funds and market pressures are only some of the forces entrepreneurs must face. While traditional incubators offer help to fledgling companies in the form of mentoring, marketing and advice, sometimes the companies' needs are much more concrete.

The Northern Centre for Advanced Technology Inc.'s (NORCAT) experience with small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) demonstrated a common need in smaller communities. When budgets are tight, it can be hard to decide what gets priority -- setting up the necessary infrastructure or financing the development of prototypes in the early stages?

To address this need, NORCAT developed its Residency Program, designed to provide low-cost, temporary solutions to start-up companies. Clients are offered a variety of tools they can access as their needs demand, including office space, lab areas, development materials, office support, computer equipment, high-speed Internet access, access to testing facilities, and more. The goal is to help entrepreneurs maintain their momentum by focusing on the product, thus getting it out to market as quickly as possible.

Why does NORCAT use this approach? When entrepreneurs have the chance to develop their product without sacrificing either money put into development or money to invest in traditional office infrastructure, they have a better chance at making it. The Residency Program is aimed at newcomers who need a chance to prove their prototype and their business before taking on the bigger financial undertakings. For more information, please contact NORCAT at 705-521-8324 or info@norcat.org.

Board Update

The CABI Board has been meeting via monthly conference calls to work on plans for two major upcoming activities. The first activity is to create a significant CABI presence at the 2001 NBIA International Conference in San Jose, CA, May 19-22. To that end, CABI will share a booth with the Toronto Business Development Centre, host incubator for the 2002 NBIA Conference, to help market both the 2002 conference as well as incubation activities throughout Canada. A number of CABI members will assist with booth coverage, distributing marketing materials and answering questions conference attendees have about Canada. The next CABI News will include a report on these San Jose efforts.

The second activity is the next annual CABI Conference, happening in Ottawa, October 11-12, 2001. The Board has set up a CABI Conference Committee consisting of three Board members: Jean Jacques Ledoux, Manager, Industry Partnership Facility (NRC) - the host facility for the conference, CABI VP Marie Lussier, Manager, CRC Innovation Centre, and André Lafreniere, Economic Development Officer, City of Kawartha Lakes.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend in October. A block of rooms has been reserved at the CHIMO Hotel in Ottawa at special CABI Conference attendee rates. Make sure you reserve your room(s) early and mention the conference when you do so. The main conference dinner and networking festivities will be at the CHIMO Hotel on Thursday evening, October 11.

The Conference Committee promises a first class event with various plenary sessions that will be of interest to both incubator professionals and novices. We encourage you to attend. This conference will mark the first time CABI will run a "solo" conference. In the past CABI has tied in with other organizations to gain economies of scale, forfeiting its own independence to plan the date, location and other details. More than ever, we need your support to help make this event a success and advance incubation and entrepreneurial activities in Canada.

The CABI Board has also set up a committee to review CABI's mission and its future direction. Committee members include David Jackson, London; Judy Sander, Thunder Bay; Jim Hughes, Calgary; and Ed Hobbs, Toronto. This committee will update CABI members on its activities at the October conference.

Make sure you regularly check the CABI website at www.cabi.ca to keep abreast of the CABI Conference 2001 plans and activities.

On the Shelf

(Publications that may be of interest to CABI members and their clients)

Davidson, Alistair. 2001. "Turn Around!"

Check out "Turn Around!", a free e-book at www.eclicktick.com/turnaround.pdf. It's a brief guide to starting, growing and turning around a software or Internet company. The book addresses issues of staffing, software strategy, product management, marketing, launch and sales strategy, the economies of the Internet, measurement and performance, how to create value, and more. You can also read about common problems in software teams and how to resolve them.