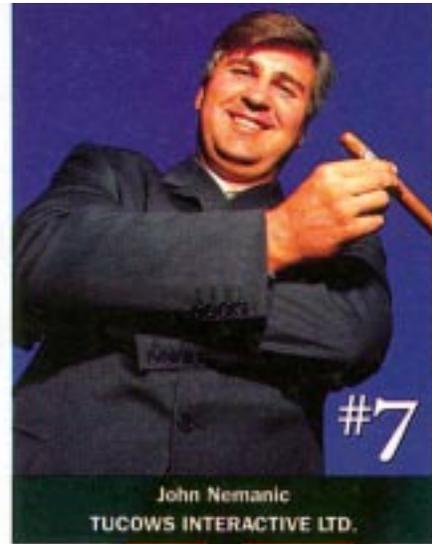
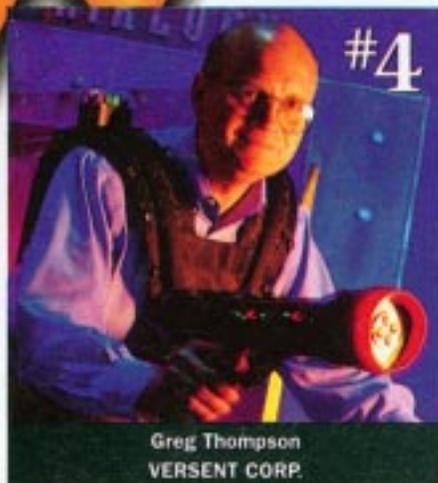
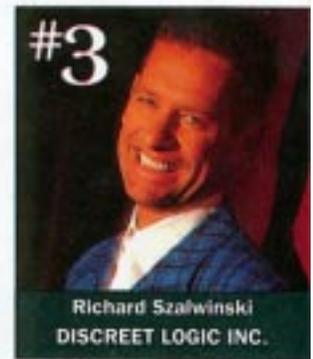


PROFIT 100

The Magazine for Canadian Entrepreneurs



CANADA'S Fastest Growing Companies



Who they are
Where they're going
Secrets of success

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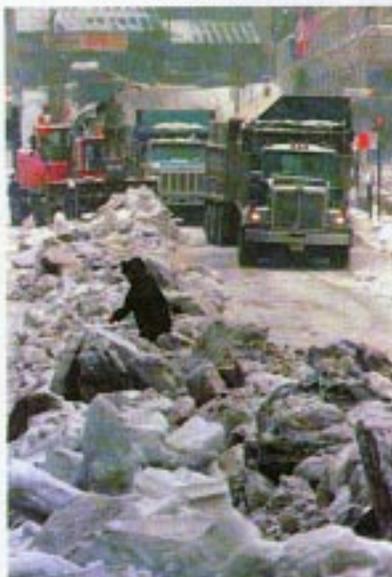


CANADA'S FASTEST-GROWING

FAST LANE

#13

AN ICE MOVE When freezing rain caused the office lights to flicker one January Friday at PEAK Financial Group, the Montreal financial-services firm closed early to protect its computer system from power surges. By late Sunday the now-infamous ice storm hadn't let up, and it was clear to president Robert Frances that PEAK wouldn't be opening on Monday — without a creative approach. So Frances and three colleagues took



MOSKOFF/STRETOUCH

computers and backup tapes to an employee's home in a neighborhood that still had electricity. While business the next day was light, Frances says PEAK derived lasting benefits from media coverage of the move in a local investment magazine and on the Internet. Still, the media interest surprised Frances: "We thought [staying open] was a necessity." Patricia D'Souza

RANK	Company, City	Year Founded	Revenue		Revenue Growth %
			1992	1997	
1	Image Processing Systems Inc. Markham, Ont. Machine-vision systems Terry Graham; www.ipsautomation.com	1987	117,101	30,000,000	25,519
2	RTO Enterprises Inc. Edmonton Rent-to-own furniture and appliances Gordon J. Reykdal	1991	442,000	56,080,978	12,588
3	Discreet Logic Inc. Montreal Special effects software Richard Szabwinski; www.discreet.com	1991	892,000	101,923,931	11,326
4	Versent Corp. Mississauga, Ont. Laser Quest entertainment outlets F. Gregory Thompson; www.laserquest.com	1992	529,006	52,393,636	9,904
5	Equisure Financial Network Inc. North Bay, Ont. Insurance brokerages George R. Hutchison; www.equisure.ca	1987	820,800	56,800,000	6,820
6	G.A.P. Adventures Inc. Toronto Adventure tour operator Bruce Poon Tip; www.gap.ca	1990	140,866	7,838,255	5,464
7	Tucows Interactive Ltd. Toronto Internet services and shareware John Nemanic; www.tucows.com	1992	159,720	8,633,776	5,306
8	NTS Computer Systems Ltd. Maple Ridge, B.C. Specialty computers for school use Jim Tischer; nts.dreamwrite.com	1988	463,077	20,577,913	4,344
9	Newcon International Ltd. Toronto Specialty optical equipment Michael Beker; www.newcon-optik.com	1990	101,374	4,425,854	4,266
10	McGill Multimedia Inc. Windsor, Ont. Interactive training and marketing software Robert Whent; www.mcgil.com	1987	248,466	8,382,965	3,274
11	TRIMAX Inc. Markham, Ont. Retail transaction software David Thomas; www.trimax.com	1990	263,000	8,129,175	2,991
12	Media Express Group Montreal Call-centre services David Knafo	1989	317,657	9,809,505	2,988
13	PEAK Financial Group Montreal Financial-planning services Robert Frances; www.peakgroup.com	1990	122,263	3,714,000	2,938
14	Kee Transport Group Inc. Mississauga, Ont. Supplies drivers to trucking fleets Kieran J. O'Brien	1987	276,906	8,338,295	2,911
15	NewSys Solutions Inc. Ottawa Technology consulting Mark Quigg; www.newsys.com	1990	323,667	9,671,720	2,888
16	Avant-Garde Engineering (1994) Inc. L'Assomption, Que. Hydraulic-scaffolding manufacturer Jean G. Robillard; www.hydro-motile.com	1991	295,948	8,184,221	2,665
17	Online Enterprises Inc. Winnipeg Technology consulting Charles K. Loewen; www.online-can.com	1986	318,299	8,767,558	2,655
18	Venture Seismic Ltd. Calgary Seismic data services Brian Komin; www.venture-seismic.com	1985	1,377,540	37,223,607	2,602
19	Yogen Fr��e World-Wide Inc. Markham, Ont. Fast-food franchisor Michael Serruya; www.yogenfruz.com	1986	1,718,850	45,891,745	2,570
20	SLP Automotive Canada Lachine, Que. Automotive sub-assembly Terry Maxwell; www.slpauto.com	1973	414,992	10,871,184	2,520

Key to sources of financing:

1 = Owner(s)
2 = Friends and relatives

3 = Chartered banks
4 = Other financial institutions
5 = Foreign lenders/investors

6 = Venture capital
7 = Informal investors
8 = Government programs

9 = Public stock issues
10 = Bonds
11 = Commercial paper

WING COMPANIES 1998

Profit (Loss)		Employees		Exports as % of sales	Sources of Financing	Inside Track	R&D
1992	1997	1992	1997				
(586,992)	(1,000,000)	11	225	85	1, 2, 3, 4 7, 8, 9, 13	Good stuff: IPS systems help assure quality for TV makers and beer bottlers (see p. 108)	1
37,000	(11,066,000)	16	770	0	2, 3, 7, 9 13	On top: Recent acquisitions make KTO Canada's leader in rent-to-own retail (see p. 116)	2
114,000	(6,755,975)	55	280	100	1, 9	Clean sweep: All nominees for 1998 special-effects Oscars used Discreet's software (see p. 118)	3
(229,000)	2,845,000	3	721	62	1, 3, 6, 9	Challenge: Must overcome perception of its adventure game as child's play (see p. 120)	4
136,512	2,300,000	2	1,158	0	3, 9	Net profit: Firm bought an ISP to design its websites and run corporate intranet (see p. 137)	5
(32,918)	548,677	3	64	82	1, 2	High flyer: Founded G.A.P. Air last year to package flights with its adventure tours (see p. 139)	6
(12,010)	1,300,000	3	161	20	1, 3	Moo: Name derives from The Ultimate Collection of Winsock Software (see p. 140)	7
16,485	2,041,609	5	121	93	1, 2, 8, 9	Back to school: Supplies custom laptops to schools around the world (see p. 142)	8
3,918	30,208	2	17	90	1, 2, 3, 5 12, 15	Long view: Makes night-vision binoculars ranging from \$300 to \$5,000 in price (see p. 145)	9
7,863	762,435	4	57	74	1, 3, 7, 8	Next wave: Watch for multimedia systems incorporating screen-making machines (see p. 146)	10
97,000	1,604,000	5	89	85	2, 6	Globetrotters: Its point-of-sale software is used by 150 retail chains in 18 countries	11
(15,000)	511,603	25	644	43	1, 3	Accolades: Won gold medal RSVP award from Canadian Direct Marketing Association	12
10,671	153,000	5	90	0	1, 3	Origins: Frances was a mutual fund salesman who started his own company	13
33,000	176,000	8	190	0	1, 3, 16	Advice: "Read everything about HR and people. Figure out what makes people click"	14
1,692	187,460	5	125	15	1, 2, 3, 9	Graduating: IT consulting service went public in March on the Alberta Stock Exchange	15
(559,727)	391,222	11	64	75	1, 3, 8 13	Business tip: Robillard says his managers "must manage people, not paper"	16
51,928	156,282	21	117	17	1, 3, 4	Track star: Loewen heads the technology committee for the '99 PanAm Games	17
(107,268)	1,995,796	50	300	41	1, 2, 3 9	Groundbreaker: Only supplier of wireless seismic-data acquisition services in Canada	18
218,475	9,936,939	20	675	87	2, 9	Expanding: Developing co-branding deals with an airline and fast-food chain	19
(379)	242,272	7	100	93	1, 2, 3 13	Second gear: Second-stage GM manufacturer turns out souped-up Camaro SS sportscars	20

12 = Employees
13 = Suppliers

14 = Customers
15 = Barter

Alphabetical index on page 109

For direct links to PROFIT 100 companies, visit www.profit100.com

FAST LANE



#15

THIS JUST IN CJOH-TV Ottawa is hoping to document the birth of yet another high-tech powerhouse. This winter the CTV affiliate began a series of five-minute reports chronicling events at NewSys Solutions. The first of the four spots, slated to air quarterly on the six o'clock news, showed the NewSys team designing a new corporate logo, recruiting freelance consultants and celebrating its recent IPO on the Alberta Stock Exchange. NewSys president Mark Quigg hopes the exposure will raise the company's profile among corporate clients, investors and potential employees. So far, the biggest response has been a flood of résumés, triggered when the report showed Quigg's pregnant wife filing in at reception.

#20

START YOUR ENGINES Hot-rod manufacturer SLP Automotive Canada derives 90% of sales by custom-assembling muscle cars for General Motors. So in an effort to diversify its revenue base — and satisfy president Terry Maxwell's passion for sportscars — the company is designing its own V8 roadster. Calling it "a direct shot at our customers' hearts," Maxwell says the two-seater is aimed at men 35 to 60. With an estimated sticker price of \$75,000, the car could generate annual revenues of \$50 million within five years of its expected 2000 release, says Maxwell. But until then, "it's a work in progress." RD.

