

Success Profile



Names: Sheila Ingram, Controller, and Barbara Laurens, Marketing & Communications

Company: Aquatic Sciences Inc.
St. Catharines, Ontario
905.641.0941
www.aquaticsciences.com

Year Established: 1987

Employees: 66

Description: An employee-owned, wholly Canadian, environmental consulting and engineering firm specializing in industrial water and waste water environmental management and technology. The company has earned an international reputation for innovative solutions in zebra mussel control and robotic underwater inspections. Its unique, Canadian developed technology includes a 10 km umbilical on its robotic vehicle used to penetrate and inspect tunnels, the only company worldwide with this ability. With annual sales in excess of \$5 million, ASI has a solid international client base.

Background: Sheila and Barbara are part of the ASI senior management team in what has been a non-traditional industry for women. The duo's involvement in international work includes everything from marketing to financing.

Export Sales: 30%

Export Markets: U.S., New Zealand, Finland, Chile, Peru and Dominican Republic

Export Goals: To expand business in Australia/New Zealand and the U.S., particularly targeting regions with water transport tunnels in areas servicing high population densities.

Help Accessed: Export Development Corp (EDC) products and services, including credit insurance, performance guarantees and specific transaction insurance "We've always used EDC since our early days to minimize our risks in entering new markets."

Benefits: "We couldn't have done it without EDC. They have been very supportive and have excellent knowledge of markets. Tapping into their experience was particularly helpful for us when we were breaking into South America as it significantly reduced our risk."

Biggest Export Challenge: "Being a SME company trying to work worldwide. With limited resources, it is a challenge to cover all potential markets without becoming fragmented."

Export Tips from ASI:

- *Market yourself internationally.* "Create a profile for your company by submitting papers to international trade journals and by attending conferences where you can network and make solid contacts."
- *Utilize the products and services offered by EDC.* "Make a good contact in the appropriate sector of EDC and get their input. We always do a credit check through EDC on potential clients, which is very informative, and also get their outlook on that market."
- *Read your contracts carefully.* "Make sure you can accept the clauses, or change them to be more beneficial to your company. Avoid signing quickly just because you want the job."
- *Access the various government programs available.* "Programs such as PEMD (Program for Export Market Development) can help offset the cost of exploring new markets and reduce your risk."
- *Conduct market reconnaissance in every new market.* "Meet industry representatives and local consultants in order to get to know people on the ground in the market."
- *Learn the cultural aspects of new markets.* "It's important to understand the customs and what is acceptable in doing business in other countries. EDC can be very helpful here."