



Taktik

Vol. 8 N°3

YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE SAINT-LAURENT

KEEP AND CIRCULATE



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Entrepreneurship: Turning Dreams into... Prosperity!



Entrepreneurs are key actors in the economic development of major cities. With their bold creativity, they transform ideas and innovations into opportunities, into businesses and, finally, into wealth for the whole community.

Business people help build the future and ensure prosperity for our community. For the last thirty years, local small to medium-size businesses (SME) have been instrumental for the growth of our territory. Today, companies having less than 200 employees represent more than 97% of all Saint-Laurent businesses and create the majority of new jobs within the territory.¹ According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), this phenomenon can be observed in nearly all industrialized countries.

Governmental authorities, whether at the federal, provincial or municipal level, are well aware of these fundamental issues. Over the years, the various levels of government have created a vast network to help and support business entrepreneurs. For example, DESTL (see p. 6-7) or the Economic Development Agency of Canada (EDAC) (see p. 8) offer programs to help Saint-Laurent businesses, large and small, get the financial, technical and counselling services they need.

Even with all these programs, Montrealers are still more reluctant to start a business than their counterparts in Toronto and Vancouver.² However, we have several examples of local entrepreneurs who believed in their dreams and who now enjoy great success. Examples such as Virage Simulation, 5N Plus, Maco Architectural Millwork and Genetech (see p. 4-5) are living proof that it is possible to succeed!

¹ Développement économique Saint-laurent, 2007 Survey.

² Nathaly Riverain, Cahier de recherche no 2006-17, HEC Montréal, 2006.



Alan DeSousa, FCA
Mayor of Saint-Laurent and member of the City
of Montreal Executive Committee, Responsible for
Economic Development and Sustainable Development

A Tribute to our Community Builders

What would Quebec be if Joseph A. Bombardier, Jean Coutu, Guy Laliberté and Jacques Lamarche hadn't had a vision, if these great men hadn't known how to create their own luck, if they hadn't had the strength to turn ideas into reality? Our history would no doubt be very different. These strong builders have changed, each in his own way, the face of our great province, making it more prosperous, prouder and more attractive.

An entrepreneur is someone who, from a simple idea or dream, can transform the world that surrounds him. In Saint-Laurent, we have a very dynamic business community made up of hundreds of men and women working every day to build a better future: A better future for themselves, for their friends and family, for their employees and, by taking advantage of the wealth they create, for the whole community.

The four companies featured in this edition of Taktik help demonstrate the creativity, boldness and perseverance of Saint-Laurent entrepreneurs. You will see how these SME owners were able to make good use of the different programs designed to help them. They reco-

gnized the value of such programs and took advantage of the new possibilities presented to them, demonstrating the qualities shared by all good entrepreneurs.

There are countless opportunities in Saint-Laurent: The presence of state-of-the-art industrial clusters, a skilled workforce and access to the main arteries provide endless possibilities for local businesses, and to help you take advantage of them, we offer a one-stop shop for all your business needs.

Saint-Laurent's business leaders can count on DESTL and its team of experts. Their goal is to provide businesses with everything they need to succeed, whether they have three employees or hundreds of them. Since each company can make a difference, allow me to pay tribute to all our bold innovators, to all the Saint-Laurent entrepreneurs: Our strong builders.

Enjoy!



Daniel Dicaire M.B.A.
General Manager
Développement économique Saint-Laurent

Entrepreneurship: A Collective Effort

Entrepreneurship has always been considered as a complex activity, and with good reason. Entrepreneurs often face several challenges. Some companies grow and enjoy success while others see their dream end abruptly. Unfortunately, more than 30% of Montreal companies close down within the first five years.¹

It's important to realize that every time an entrepreneur makes that difficult decision, the whole community loses. Entrepreneurship is not only about setting up new businesses and creating new jobs, it is also a way to ensure competitiveness and boost local development. That is why it is so important for organizations and professionals to provide help and support to those who want to start a business.

In 2006, the City of Montreal set up an action plan entitled *Entreprendre à Montréal: l'urgence d'agir ensemble*. Based on the work and reflections of a group of specialists, this strategy aims at stimulating local entrepreneurship within its territory, while improving the chance for success for the businesses being created. Développement économique Saint-Laurent helped formulate this project, allowing us to work better on the day to day issues and to target our actions based on the type of entrepreneur (traditional, women and-or immigrants).

We strongly believe that entrepreneurship is a collective action. The economic future of our community mustn't rely solely on individual actions but on collective effort to promote and support business people. Développement économique Saint-Laurent has its role to play in meeting this challenge. We are committed to providing entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed. Our team is there for you. Please get in touch with one of our industrial commissioners!

¹Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), Riverin, 2000a.

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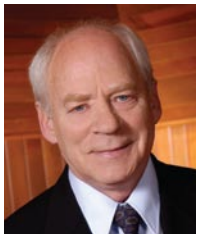
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"Having a great idea doesn't make you an entrepreneur!" says Alain Robitaille, Coordinator at the CLD Centre-West. As this former businessman explains,

conviction, perseverance and strong commitment are essential components of any successful business. "You have to believe in yourself as much as in your project, otherwise it will be impossible to face the challenges and obstacles along the way".

According to long-time business consultant Alain Robitaille, the entrepreneurship culture in Quebec is still very young, which is why we have to put in more energy and effort in order to see good results. "Of course, we have a lot of good entrepreneurs in Québec; that is not the problem. But our leadership and experience

in the matter cannot be compared to what we see in other countries. For instance, in the Middle East, people are practically born merchants", he says.

With strong ties in the business community for more than thirty-five years, Mr. Robitaille can easily recognize the most frequent errors made by first-time business owners. "It is very important for an entrepreneur to know the market, distribution channel and major issues related to the sector before jumping in. Unfortunately, entrepreneurs tend to overestimate their revenues and underestimate their expenses. This gap between dream and reality can sometimes have terrible consequences, especially when the business is facing cash flow problems", he explains.

The CLD Coordinator is convinced that entrepreneurs can avoid many errors by having good advisors to guide them; people who have strong

experience in their line of business. "Young entrepreneurs often tell me that they can't afford to hire a lawyer or an accountant. Which is why having a strong network of contacts and friends, and organizations such as DESTL's CLD is so important to the success of a business."

We all know that a company's first year in business can be critical; however, the entrepreneur is not necessarily out of the woods after that as far as problems go. "It is very important to stay connected with reality. Business managers must remain cautious, avoiding investments that may be too large and protecting liquid assets. Yes, one must remain confident, but it is also wise to be vigilant and be able to see what's coming! Because there will be times in the life of any business when the future is a bit more uncertain, like what we are seeing now", concludes **Alain Robitaille**.

In Saint-Laurent

Your projects forge ahead

Obtain unsecured loans of up to **\$150,000**





With the financial support of
Montréal

Customized Financial Assistance for Your Business Projects

Under the leadership of DESTL, the CLD Centre West offers unsecured loans of up to \$150,000, through joint funding from the Local Fund (LF) and the Local Investment Fund (LIF).

We can support your expansion and market development projects as well as your projects relating to products or processes, modernization, relocation or acquisition of equipment. The loan and interest must be repaid over a period of 5 years.

To be eligible, your company's main operations must be located on the territory of the CLD Centre-Ouest. Manufacturing and tertiary industries are given priority in Saint-Laurent.

For more information on our financial assistance programs, please call **Alain Robitaille**, Coordinator, at 514 855-6000, extension 4839, or visit our website at www.destl.ca.

Virage Simulation: The Winning Wisdom of a Businessman



Rémi Quimper, President

Walking in at Virage Simulation, you discover a 5½ apartment with small rooms and basic office furniture. The President welcomes you himself. "In a small business, the boss is the one preparing the coffee, cleaning the office and answering the phone", says Rémi Quimper.

This businessman breathes entrepreneurship and knows exactly where he is going. Within three years, he managed to develop and market the first car driving simulator in Canada. His product distinguishes itself from the competition by its advanced technology and the quality of scenarios presented to the drivers.

At first, this product was intended for driving schools, but the impressive device caught the attention of several research centers, among those were the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique du Québec and the University of Toronto. With sales in Norway, Greece and Canada, the president of Virage Simulation is seeing his dream come true. "I always dreamed of having my own company", explains the business man.

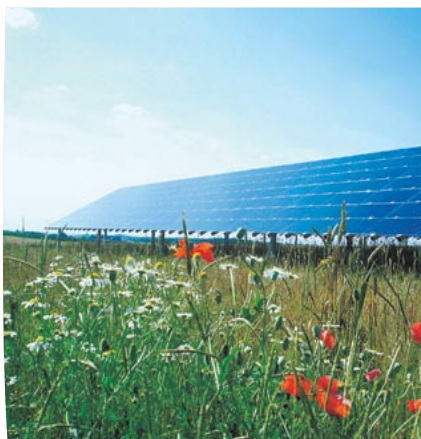
At the young age of 16, Rémi Quimper made his first business steps with a DJ Animation service. Having completed his studies in engineering, he joined CAE, where he started to climb the corporate ladder. "The last few years I was there, I was given the task of managing a SME within the company. We started off with a team of eight and five years later we had over 90 people working on the project. That's exactly what I did with this company. The main difference is that, at CAE, I didn't deal with the financial aspect of the company."

The first important step for Rémi Quimper was to find proper financing. But he has the knack of surrounding himself with quality people, first with his partners, his team, but also with the help of the CLD Centre-West, where he was able to find a \$75,000 unsecured loan.

"We were very much impressed by the project", says CLD Coordinator **Alain Robitaille**. "Besides being very innovative, the simulator will help train better drivers." A strong conviction shared by Rémi Quimper, who hopes to see his creation in the 400 Quebec driving schools within the next five years.

5N Plus, Where Purity Rhymes with Prosperity!

In 2000, mainly due to decentralization, four Noranda employees had the brilliant idea of starting a company called 5N Plus. Jacques L'Écuyer and three of his colleagues decided to leave Noranda and take over one of its divisions to start an independent business. Why 5N Plus? Simply because their specialty lies in the purification of metals, certified products that are 99.999% pure (five nines or 5N) and more!



"5N Plus is an important supplier of metals and compounds for solar panels."

These products can be used in several different fields such as medical imaging and infrared detectors. Recently, 5N Plus became an important supplier of metals and compounds for solar panels. "We're concentrating on renewable energies as we believe that there is huge potential in that field. It is also a way for us to increase our environmental commitment", says Jacques L'Écuyer, President and CEO.

« **WE'RE CONCENTRATING ON RENEWABLE ENERGIES AS WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS HUGE POTENTIAL IN THAT FIELD.** »

This interest for solar energy opened up new doors for 5N Plus; they decided to follow their biggest client, First Solar, all the way to Germany. "We needed to build a new factory in Germany to jump into this rapidly growing market, which means we also needed to find the financing! So, on December 20th 2007, we started issuing shares on the Toronto Stock Exchange. We were able to raise nearly \$35M", boasts Mr. L'Écuyer.

With close to 100 employees, business is going strong. And with the new German facility that opened in July, the company went from an annual turnover of \$4.8 million in 2002 to nearly \$31 million in 2008. "The spectacular growth of 5N Plus should be a model for any Saint-Laurent SME.", concludes **Joe Tuccinardi**, Industrial Commissioner at DESTL



MACO Architectural Millwork: Manufacturing Furniture with Finesse...

Three years ago Maco Architectural Millwork set up shop in Saint-Laurent. "I can still see this empty room and bare walls. The place looked so big! Everything was yet to be done" remembers co-owner Anna Mancuso. But the reality of the project quickly set in for this cabinet and furniture manufacturer. Now, the question is no longer if they will remain in business, but rather how will they manage the company's growth... Not a bad thing at all!

While developing their new strategic plan Anna and Domenico Mancuso became aware of the importance of rethinking management to meet the new organizational context. HR management and production planning are now the two main challenges. "At first, keeping our employees wasn't really a problem but now, in order to meet the demand, we need to attract and keep high quality employees. We also had to change our production schedule to add a night shift", explains the business woman.

What is the secret behind their success? "Clearly, it's a mix of several key elements. My brother and I have always had a knack for business. My father, a businessman himself, passed it on to us", she adds. "We're a great team. He handles production while I take care of marketing and business development." Although very passionate, Anna Mancuso admits that entrepreneurship has its load of stress and concerns. As she simply puts it, you have to like taking risks and surrounding yourself with good people.

Anna Mancuso was happy to be able to count on the support of CLD Centre-West and Emploi-Québec for both financing and creating an HR policy. "There are so many resources and tools available to support entrepreneurs", explains DESTL's Industrial Commissioner Michèle Caron, "These services are free and taking advantage of them certainly pays off!"



Domenico and Anna Mancuso, Owners

«... YOU HAVE TO LIKE TAKING RISKS AND SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH GOOD PEOPLE.»



GENETEC

Turning Creativity and Innovation into Security

Genetec sure has changed since it first opened in 1997. The company, which initially specialized in software research and development, now supplies solutions for access control, video surveillance and license plate recognition. What sets this company apart from the rest? The bold ingenuity of its President and Founder, Mr. Pierre Racz.

"A few years ago, based on intuition, we felt that traditional analog or digital telecom architecture would soon give way to point to multipoint network architectures. This led us, in spite of the initial scepticism within the security sector, to the creation of the first security system completely based on IP", explains Mr. Racz proudly.

The development of the Omnicast software brought on several new and prestigious customers such as the Paris Airport and IBM. The company has received several honours. Its 799% growth in turnover between 2003 and 2007, has placed Genetec 24th on Deloitte's Technology Fast 50 list.

The key of such success? "I had the good sense of surrounding myself with the right people at the right time. Once we reached 50 employees, I found an outstanding partner, Alain Côté, now Vice-president at Genetec for the last 4 years, he is also a tax attorney", says Mr. Racz.



Genetec has a corporate culture which concentrates on its employees. The company has been selected among the 10 best Montreal employers by The Gazette. "Here, we encourage communication, collaboration and more importantly, the right to make mistakes! We value customer care, ethics and community involvement", explains Mr. Racz.

With this philosophy driving the company, Genetec was able to position itself as a world leader in the security sector. "The success of a company such as Genetec often depends on the qualities of its founder. Entrepreneurship is first and foremost a question of passion, intuition and opportunism", concludes Joseph Tuccinardi, Industrial Commissioner at DESTL.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

MONTREAL'S CGDS HONOUR THREE INSTITUTIONS WITH THEIR **Leading Businesses in Sustainable Transport Award**

On September 22nd 2008, as part of Car Free Day, the Transportation Management Centers (Centres de gestion des déplacements - CGD) of Montreal awarded the Leading Businesses in Sustainable Transport prizes to CHU Sainte-Justine (1st prize), Saint-Laurent borough (2nd prize) and the Carrefour financier solidaire (3rd prize).

"The objective of this award is to highlight the efforts made by different organizations who are promoting alternate and sustainable transportation", says DESTL's CGD acting Program Coordinator Audrey Atwood.

Montreal Mayor Gérald Tremblay, Montreal Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Isabelle Hudon and AMT President Joël Gauthier, have had the pleasure of giving out the awards to this year's winners. "These concrete actions from our best corporate citizens contribute to the shift in mentality and behaviour towards a better environment and economic development", says Mrs. Hudon.

For more information about the Leading Businesses in Sustainable Transport Awards, please call **Audrey Atwood** at 514 855-6000, ext. 4828.



**LEADERS
EN TRANSPORT
DURABLE** 

Audrey Atwood, Joël Gauthier, Isabelle Hudon and Gérald Tremblay handing out the Award to Saint-Laurent Mayor Alan DeSousa.

DESTL Welcomes Seven Entrepreneurs and their Expansion Projects

On October 29th, DESTL welcomed seven entrepreneurs who attended an information session on industrial re-engineering. This workshop gave them new tools to help them plan their expansion, re-engineering or relocation projects. "It was also a great opportunity for entrepreneurs to meet key contacts who will help them with the planning and financing aspects of the project", states Marie-France Patoine, Project Manager for DESTL's Real Estate Services.

This event was planned in partnership with Progima, Investissement Québec, Ministère du développement économique, innovation et exportation (MDEIE) and the Economic Development Agency of Canada.

DESTL RECEIVES THE "Outils du 21^e siècle" Award from the APDEQ

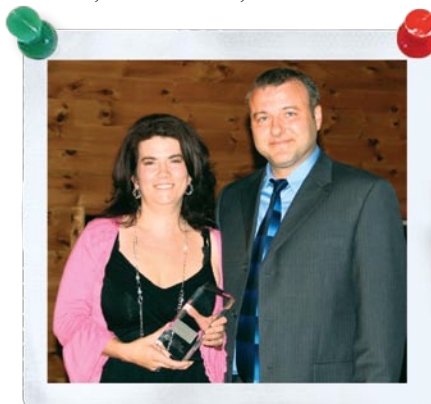
On October 10th 2008, at the Association des professionnels en développement économique du Québec (APDEQ) annual conference, Développement économique Saint-Laurent (DESTL) was awarded the Outils du 21^e siècle (Tools of the 21st century) Award.

This award highlights the originality and utility of the eForum launched by DESTL in 2007; a first in Québec for economic development organizations. Intended for the members of the Table des professionnels en ressources humaines, this forum allows members to discuss various topics. The forum contains over 40 different topics

Twenty two files, submitted by different organizations from all over the province, were considered by the APDEQ jury. According to APDEQ Executive Director Patrice Gagnon, "The eForum developed by Développement économique Saint-Laurent encourages and favours networking efficiency, an important component of the 21th century".

"We are very proud of this achievement", says Daniel Dicaire, Managing Director at DESTL. "This new tool provides concrete support for HR professionals and is now a model for other organizations.

For more information on the eForum and the Table des professionnels en ressources humaines, please call **Michèle Caron**, Industrial Commissioner at DESTL, 514 855-6000, ext. 4835.



Michèle Caron receiving the Outils du 21^e siècle Award, with Mr. Stéphane Meloche, Regional Sales Director at Les Affaires.

Three new clients for DESTL's CGD

Miranda Technologies, the CSSS Ahuntsic Montréal-Nord and Loblaws have set-up allégo programs with the CGD to improve the accessibility to their premises for their employees. Congratulations to these organizations who are showing great care for the well-being of their employees and the environment!



NEWSFLASH

SME, You can become an "Employer of Choice"!

DESTL, in collaboration with Emploi-Québec, has created a program to help business owners and directors better manage human resources. "Given the current workforce shortage, businesses must make themselves more attractive and visible on the market in order to attract and retain qualified labour. It is no longer a choice, but a necessity", says Michèle Caron, Industrial Commissioner.

Emploi-Québec is financing 50% of the program, which will help participants acquire knowledge on the best HR management practices and come up with specific working tools. The workshops, designed for groups of 10 SME at most, will be supervised by human resource experts.

For more information on this program, please call **Michèle Caron**, DESTL Industrial Commissioner, at 514 855-6000, ext. 4835.

An Office in Paris? Why Not!

As part of the Aquitaine-Québec partnership agreement, the Centre d'affaires de la Maison Aquitaine in Paris is offering preferential rates on office space or conference halls for Saint-Laurent entrepreneurs wishing to extend their markets in France. Located in the heart of the City of Lights, it is a great opportunity to hold meetings, seminars, presentations or product launches.

For more information, please call **Lina Samaha** at 514 855-6000, ext. 4821 or visit the Maison Aquitaine Website www.paris.aquitaine.fr.



In Case of an Emergency, We're Ready. Are You?

Saint-Laurent Borough and the Comité mixte arrondissement-industries (CMAI) have launched a vast communication campaign about hazard risks that will culminate next spring with a safety and security show.

The campaign's objective is to inform the community on what to do in emergency situations caused by a natural, environmental or industrial disaster. Several communication tools will be issued, such as a citizen's guide, to help promote a public safety culture based on trust, information transfer and transparency.

One of the first steps towards a safer community was taken by several members of the CMAI; companies who have published documents detailing their level of risks within the community. Not only did this initiative increase their level of preparation in emergency situations, it also helped strengthen their image as corporate citizens.

For more information, please call **Cécile St-Pierre**, DESTL Communication Coordinator, at 514 855-6000 ext. 4832.

The Montreal Fire Department is looking for ways to reduce the number of false alarms

To ensure the safety of its citizens, the City of Montreal Fire Department will be enforcing a new regulation aimed at reducing the growing number of false fire alarms.

The regulation, effective December 1st 2008, will impose fines ranging from \$100 to \$2,700 for building owners whose alarm will have been falsely activated more than once within a 12 month period. According to the available data, 15,000 of the alarms the Montreal fire department responded to in 2007 - nearly 29% of all calls, were false alarms.

The main objective of this new regulation is to promote awareness within the community, as residents tend to reduce their vigilance when hearing a fire alarm. This initiative should also prompt building owners to maintain their alarm system and ensure that the fire department is available to answer real emergency calls.

For more information on the new regulation, please call **Annick Boismenu**, DESTL Development Officer and Head of the corporate sub-committee on safety and security, at 514 855-6000, ext. 4838.





Four Common Myths on Patents

Is innovation your strength, then make sure you protect your inventions. A patent of invention can offer you this peace of mind. Équinox's Shirlée Biron demystifies some of the myths surrounding this time-tested protection tool.

MYTH NO. 1 **A PATENT WILL PROTECT MY INVENTION INDEFINITELY.**

A patent is a national monopoly granted by the government for the use, sale and manufacturing of an invention over a period of 20 years only.

MYTH NO. 2 **A PATENT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS!**

A patent is only one of several steps leading to commercial success. Several other factors must be considered in order for any product to sell millions! The price, production quality, targeted market and financing are also very important aspects that will influence your final results.

MYTH NO. 3 **A PATENT WILL PROTECT AN INVENTION ALL AROUND THE WORLD.**

A patent protects the rights to an invention in the country where it has been issued. However, through The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), you may apply for patents in 139 countries at the same time for a predetermined period of time.

MYTH NO. 4 **IT'S POSSIBLE TO TEST THE MARKET BEFORE APPLYING FOR A PATENT**

Yes and No. If an invention has been publicly revealed, Canada and the United States will grant a 12 month period to file an application for a patent in those countries. However, in most other countries around the world, you will lose the right to file for an application because they require that the product be an absolute novelty.

For more information on patents, please call **Shirlée Biron** at EQUINOX: Intellectual Property Management and Advice, at 514 739-6770.

Leaders, don't forget your employees!

Entrepreneurs are often out of the actual business premises, trying to find financing, partners and new contracts. With the present workforce shortage, however, they must pay close attention to their number one strength: their employees.

According to Monique Deviard, Ombudsman and Training officer, one of the main complaints of employees has to do with difficult work relations. "Relationship issues are very frequent in the work environment. These conflicts undermine the working climate and have a direct impact on the company. Employees who are unhappy are less productive and have a higher rate of absenteeism", she explains.

A solution? Prepare, before you have to repair. Mrs Deviard reminds us that "Many problems can be avoided if you have the right strategies and the human resource skills needed to integrate new employees, prevent harassment and settle problem situations such as relation issues and generation or cultural gap."

Mrs Deviard admits however that HR strategies don't guarantee 100% success, which is why it is very important to establish a complaints management and mediation process. "Establishing such processes will help settle conflicts before they escalate and spread to the whole team", she concludes.

For more information, please contact Mrs. **Monique Deviard** at 514 270-5734 or visit her Website: www.moniquedeviard.com

Canada Economic Development supports Montreal SMEs

Through its consultancy services and financial assistance programs, the Île-de-Montréal Business Office offers support to enterprises seeking to engage in innovation, develop new export markets and enhance their productivity.

One of these programs, Business and Regional Growth, aims to help enterprises improve their performance by providing assistance in the form of interest-free repayable contributions with flexible terms of reimbursement.

Entrepreneurs are invited to learn more about the programs Canada Economic Development has to offer, which cover a multitude of economic sectors. Advisors from the Île-de-Montréal Business Office will be pleased to answer any questions entrepreneurs may have, discuss their projects to determine eligibility for financial assistance and guide them in their undertakings.

 Développement économique Canada Canada Economic Development

Canada

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