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A cross-country profile of Canadian job shops



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Quality Canada

Running in the Family



Jean Proteau, seen here and his brother Yves run APN.

Diversification is key to second generation chip shop's global success

It's no understatement to say that Quebec City chip shop Atelier de Précision Neufchâtel (APN) has come a long way from its start in 1974. Launched by Claude Proteau in the basement of his family home, the shop long ago emerged from the underground and now has spiffy new headquarters that are being recognized for their architectural merit.

Not only that, but the company is running three shifts daily. And, in the midst of a pounding recession, it's doing \$4 million in annual business and is still growing.

Named after Neufchâtel, a Swiss town known for its precision work, the machine shop is also making a name for itself in Europe. And 35 years after its debut, the business remains firmly in family hands with the second generation now in command and a third on its way.

APN is now run by brothers Jean and Yves Proteau. Jean has been with the company since 1974, while Yves joined the firm in 2004, after obtaining an MBA and running his own business. Jean is in charge of sales, technical support and methods, and applications, while Yves is in charge of management, R&D, financing, training and implementation of software systems like JobBOSS.

The company is doing solid business in a variety of fields including aerospace, automobile and military ballistics. "Despite the gloomy economy, our diversification is allowing us to pull our weight," says Jean Proteau.

Big-name clients include General Dynamics, Olympus and, by way of sub-contractors, Bombardier and Pratt & Whitney. Most clients are Canadian, but exports now

