



September 16, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Small North Carolina Technology Company Finds Growth in Australia

High Point, N.C.—Instead of being weighed down by the sheer volume of bad news about the souring economy, some U.S. small businesses are taking the advice of the old adage about what to do with the lemons that keep falling from the tree: They are making lemonade, but with a distinctively exotic, foreign flavor.

Solatech, Inc., a software company specializing in the windows-fashion industry, is one of those small U.S. companies. The High Point, N.C.-based company is tossing its hat into the global economy in search of growth.

“I’ve been hearing from experts for years that small businesses should think outside the box,” says Solatech CEO, Ray Soltis. “Well, we started thinking outside of the box and realized we didn’t even like boxes. Forget boxes! The world is round!” exclaims Soltis. He says the company’s first foray, sans box, was a major homerun deal with Kresta, the largest window coverings manufacturer in Australia and New Zealand.

“We knew we couldn’t simply settle or pull up the drawbridge and hunker down. We had to change. We didn’t experience a mere market shift—it was a shift in everything we know all at once—a global disruption felt locally. So we began to think globally.

“We originally met Kresta at a trade show in Nashville, TN. They are the largest player in Australia and New Zealand, so we did our best to explain our manufacturing control, business management, and point of sale products for manufacturers and retailers while we had them in front of us. They listened, thanked us and went back to Australia. The more we thought about them, the more certain we became we would be ideal partners, so we began an all-out push to help them understand that. In fact, we were so confident in Kresta and their market, we packed our bags and traveled 32 hours to Perth for a sales call,” quips Soltis.

“We were especially drawn to Australia because their economy hasn’t been as negatively affected as our economy. In fact, they are one of the few countries in the developed world to avoid recession.” According to recent statistics, Australia's economy has grown faster than that of any other advanced country in the past year. The country’s economy expanded 0.6 percent (June) in the three months over the preceding quarter while the global economy grew at only 0.2 percent.

“The box we lived in before the economic crisis confined us to the top and second-tier players in the U.S. market: Hunter Douglas, Lafayette, Graber, Levolour, Comfortex and others. That approach certainly helped us grow over the past 10 years, but in current leaner times, when everyone here is contracting, it limits opportunities for growth. While we’ve done business with companies in Canada, Mexico, and the Philippines, doing more global business certainly wasn’t in our short-range plan until the economy changed.

“Our new global, box-less approach means we can go after major window fashion manufacturing and retailing leaders in any country. It doesn’t matter that we’re small or that we’re in High Point, we’re a scalable technology company so we’re better well-resourced and positioned to do business anywhere in the world.”

Tass Zorbas, Kresta’s managing director, says his company’s relationship with Solatech is a great fit. “We of course knew of Solatech from their work with Budget Blinds, the largest blinds retailer in the U.S., but we were quite surprised by how well we got along. Our initial conversations were via email and phone, of course, and we found them highly competent and knowledgeable about our products and markets, and far ahead of the curve with technology for our industry. We didn’t care how large or small they were, or where in the world they were headquartered because they presented us excellent, time-tested, industry-leading software and hardware solutions.

“We were certainly impressed when Ray and his staff came to Australia. We found we were even more alike: We share the same customer-centric values and demand for quality and service excellence,” says Zorbas. “Solatech brings a unique next-wave technology expertise that will help Kresta grow and give us a definite competitive advantage as our home economy continues to brighten.”

Soltis agrees about the fit, “Sure it’s been hard work, but we’re building a relationship with a company in a country over 7,000 miles or 12,000 kilometers away. I mean who else around High Point is talking in kilometers?” jokes Soltis. “Now that we’ve been through the process, we’re ready to continue it regardless of where in the world it may be.”

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Solotech began designing, developing and marketing software for the window fashions, window coverings industry in 1992. The private company is headquartered in High Point, NC. Ray Soltis, the company's founder, serves as CEO. Solotech's manufacturing software for fabricators provides complete process and management control and reporting. The retail software provides for simplified measuring, pricing and ordering control. When combined with a hardware tool package, the software gives salespeople everything they need to display, measure, price, configure and order directly from the customer's home. For more information please visit: www.solotech.com.