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Canadian security firm ranks tops with U.S. brass

Mobile Detect Inc. is a Canadian company that develops cost-effective counter-terrorism systems to protect airports, infrastructure and communities from radiation threats. Its products measure radiation, distinguish between threats and non-threats and send this information to security responders in real time.

Not surprisingly, Mobile Detect is in a growing industry sector these days and, according to company president Chris Clarke, the United States is a very important market. And the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service is helping them make their mark there.

Clarke and company CEO, Dr. Robert McFadden, met Janice Vogtle, a trade commissioner from the Ontario Regional Office in Toronto, at an industry event and were immediately impressed.

"We met numerous times," says Clarke. "Janice wanted to get a feel for our business and for our expansion plans into the U.S. She identified several key locations, put us in touch with Canadian trade commissioners there, and arranged for them to meet us when they were visiting Ottawa and Toronto."

This is how Mobile Detect established strong working relationships with Canadian trade commissioners in San Diego and Colorado Springs—both hubs for security companies because of the intelligence and military assets located there.



"It took a while but because of her persistence, understanding and energy, links were created and this is how we met our key U.S. partners."

Mobile Detect equipment is deployed on a street lamp as part of a City of Colorado Springs pilot program to detect radiological materials in passing vehicles that could be used in weapons or other radiological contraband.

One of the high points of their short company history was their participation at an event in 2006 called Coalition Warrior Interoperability Demonstration. Organized by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, it's an annual field exercise to test new and emerging technologies.

"Fewer than 40 companies were invited to take part in the event," says Clarke, "and Mobile Detect was the only Canadian company designated a top performer—I can't overstate the importance of the ranking."

McFadden says Sean Barr, a trade commissioner in San Diego, played an important role in creating such opportunities.

"Sean is so active in the business security field there. He sits on committees and helps organize industry summits—he is someone who reaches out and builds relationships so that Canadian companies can draw on them."

It was through such a summit that Mobile Detect met its key American partner, Cubic Corporation, with whom they are developing a proposal for another major initiative.

"Our proposal is stronger because the Trade Commissioner Service linked us up with Cubic. We are now able to draw in major corporations such as General Electric to partner and provide substantial power to solve problems."

The company has had similar fruitful experiences in Colorado. Nathalie Couture, the trade commissioner in Denver at the time, introduced them to contacts and invited them to attend the Homeland Defense Symposium. At the symposium, Mobile Detect received extensive American media coverage.

"This was, to a great extent, the result of the trade commissioner's efforts," says Clarke. "Nathalie made sure there was a strong Canadian contingent at the symposium and she directed traffic our way."

"We view the trade commissioners as an extension of Mobile Detect—they are our champions. They've taken an active role in helping us get established in the United States, and they have the market intelligence to get results."

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