

Daniels Electronics expands its market

The maker of rugged radio gear adds products and lands strategic marketing deals

LEE GUILLE
Contributor

Longtime Victoria-based builder of emergency radios Daniels Electronics is getting aggressive.

It's expanded its distribution network to reach more customers especially in the U.S., and augmented its

complete solution. Without those kinds of partnerships there's no way Daniel's could pursue those sales opportunities."

Daniels Electronics now has 12 manufacturer representatives to pitch U.S. federal and state governments and over 100 dealers for city and county business. Under these agreements Daniels products can be resold by affiliated companies but retain the Daniels branding.

"The overall trend is growth," says Wight. "A lot of our business is dependent on the government which means we are subject to variations in budgets. A lot of money is being spent in public safety and on the natural resource side of things, there is a lot of equipment that's due for replacing." Wight expects a 60-percent growth from

2006 to 2011.

The major selling point for Daniels Electronics products is the low power consumption. "Our products were designed originally in the mountaintop solar-powered application and that is still very much a niche for us," says Wight. "Our products have the lowest power consumption of anybody out there. Everybody will turn to us when they say 'I've got a mountaintop, I need you guys.'" The harder it is to service the equipment, the more desirable it is that it bear the Daniels name.

The main product is a modular base station repeater which can fit six types of modules. Customers are able to customize units to be radio repeaters, base stations for movable operations, satellite telephone interfaces, or ground-to-air

communications. Each module is "hot swappable," or capable of being removed and replaced while still in operation.

"Basically we make a nineteen-inch rack which will talk to anybody's handheld or mobile in order to provide them with repeater coverage over a large area from the top of a hill," says Wight. "We branched out into every customer in North America that had a requirement for this type of radio repeater on a mountain top that had to run on solar."

According to Wight, standard two-way walkie talkie radios used by emergency services personnel have a two-to-three mile effective range. Having those radios fed into a nearby repeater increases that range up to 100 miles.

Recently, Daniels Electronics began a portable version of the repeater for search and rescue or other operations which do not have a fixed location.

The most recent product released by Daniel's Electronics is a T-Band Ultra High Frequency radio. This new version capitalizes on the newly opened 470-512 (470-520 in Australia) MHz frequency band. While there is no technical advantage to the higher frequencies, the newly opened bands provide a larger user capacity. "We've already received a number of orders, we're in the process of shipping as we speak," says Wight. "We expect that this will probably be a 10 percent increase in our sales."

Daniels Electronics is a family-owned, Victoria based business which arrived in Victoria in 1962 from Prince Rupert. The company was forced to evolve from marine radio by a depression in the fishing industry in the early '80s. The shift to the solar-powered mountain top repeaters which have become the company's stock in trade started with a contract from the British

staff and upper management. Final assembly, testing, and integration are all done in Victoria before being shipped to customers via FedEx unless otherwise specified.

"It's a good place to do business," says Wight. "There's easy access to the U.S. and it's easy to recruit

people to a place with such a high standard of living."

Wight says that the next big market for Daniels Electronics products is likely Asia, but is expecting an increased amount of business from Canadian public service and natural resource agencies looking to replace aging equipment. **BE**



DANIELS' WIGHT & REPEATER
If it's on a mountain top, it's a Daniels.

product line.

In the past, Daniels Electronics mainly supplied public service and natural resource agencies, gaining business by making bids on public tenders. It left the firm without the tools to make and maintain direct sales to smaller organizations and local governments.

Now Daniels Electronics has entered into partnerships with such suppliers as Kenwood, EF Johnson, Rehn, and Glentel. These partnerships give Daniel's Electronics access to a larger customer base and give the new partners a more diverse product portfolio.

Says Gerry Wight, Director of Marketing at Daniels Electronics, "If we provide our products to Kenwood, for example, they can go to a state or municipality and say, 'I will provide a

Columbia Department of Highways.

Currently, Daniels Electronics employs about 60 people including the sales

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