



PRESS RELEASE

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Leonard Felix, President

CID Bio-Science, Inc., Camas

Named Washington State Small Business Exporter of the Year

Celebration honoring winners on April 8th, Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Seattle Center

SEATTLE – The U.S. Small Business Administration's 2010 Small Business Exporter of the Year, has entrepreneurship as a mainstay in Leonard Felix's career, grounded in family tradition. Raised among two generations of self-starters in Long Island, N.Y, Felix joined the family business at age thirteen. Working at his father's insurance brokerage instilled values of commitment and initiative along with the important lessons on the day-to-day workings of running a business. These lessons later found fertile ground to grow into entrepreneurship which has highlighted Felix's career as an engineer, manager, and ultimately as president of his own company, CID Bio-Science, Inc.

CID began as Chen Instrument Design. The company grew steadily but after 16 years in business, though CID featured cutting-edge designs for botanical field research, it had difficulty translating that edge to the marketplace. Its original internal business controls were overwhelmed by the challenges of growth. In 2007, Leonard Felix - an engineer with experience managing teams and tailoring technical solutions at companies with multinational markets - leveraged his personal assets to purchase a 50% share of CID and take over the company's day-to-day operations. His goals were to refine the company's accounting and operating procedures, eliminate order backlogs and shipping delays, develop a U.S. sales distribution company, and expand solid international distributors beyond China and India.

SBA programs aided Felix when he consulted with Janet Harte at the Vancouver-based Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for help with evaluating potential business ventures and identifying funding sources. With a fresh set of eyes and ideas, within 18 months Felix injected new power into the company's market presence, launched two new products - a new laser leaf area meter and a plant canopy imager - and initiated a major redesign of a leaf spectrometer. Results were quick and profound; in 2008 CID experienced a 50% increase in revenues. An SBA loan from Fortune Bank in 2009 enabled Felix to acquire the remaining 50% of CID from its founder.

"Export markets are complicated. Overseas distributors face different combinations of challenges based on company size; the availability of capital; government regulations; the competitive landscape; and customary selling, order placement, and payment terms", said Calvin Goings SBA Regional Administrator. "Restructuring the loan by replacing CID's previous Line of Credit with an SBA Express Line of Credit had a tremendous impact on staffing levels and business expansion", says Nancy Porzio, SBA Seattle District Director. Staffing increased from nine to thirteen employees. It added new application scientist and a development engineer positions to design new products for future markets.

From its facility in Camas, Washington, CID now designs and manufactures the world's most portable and best-designed instruments for agricultural and environmental research, including laser leaf area meters, plant canopy imagers, digital soil profile and root monitors, hand-held photosynthesis systems and leaf spectrometers. Working closely with distributors all over the world, CID's portable field-ready solutions are now exported to scientists in over 40 countries.

When Felix took over CID, he identified key global markets with significant revenue-generating prospects and firmed up relationships with its existing distributors in India, Chile, and Italy. He replaced the underperforming distributors in important regions including China, Argentina, and Germany. New distributors have been recruited and developed for CID in Brazil and Europe.

CID accommodates distributors that use a manufacturer representative selling model as well as a reseller model. A manufacturer representative model enables the distributor to act as a CID agent to create a contract between CID and the end customer. CID fulfills the customer order directly and pays a commission to the distributor. This model most often benefits tariff exempt customers such as government agencies and universities. In less restrictive markets, the distributor can act as a reseller - importing then reselling products themselves - often receiving pre-pay discounts and bundling CID products with those of other vendors to meet large bid requirements. Flexible approaches have had a tremendous impact on enabling CID's distributors and smaller resellers in highly tariffed markets to compete and sell effectively.

CID fosters unique export trading relationships with other businesses. To help other companies enter the export market, Felix presents at local business networking meetings - describing CID's export business and stressing specific measures taken to grow foreign trade. CID has coached U.S. manufacturers in Seattle, Albany, Bangor, and San Diego in forming ongoing relationships with its existing distributors in Egypt, India, and China.

CID Bio-Science has the potential to expand business in these and many more countries. Leonard Felix's proven track record is an inspiration to others and is why he is SBA's 2010 Small Business Exporter of the Year for Washington State.