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Design 1st and Fidus Systems exemplify Canadian innovation

BY LOUISE RACHLIS

When California-based Pliant Technology needed to get their Enterprise Flash Drive (EFD) right the first time, the company turned to Fidus Systems and Design 1st's expertise to create their product.

That was "exactly what we needed as a start-up to be successful," says Pliant Technology president Mike Cheney. "To date, as the product comes to market after three years of development, there is nothing like our high performance EFD on the market."

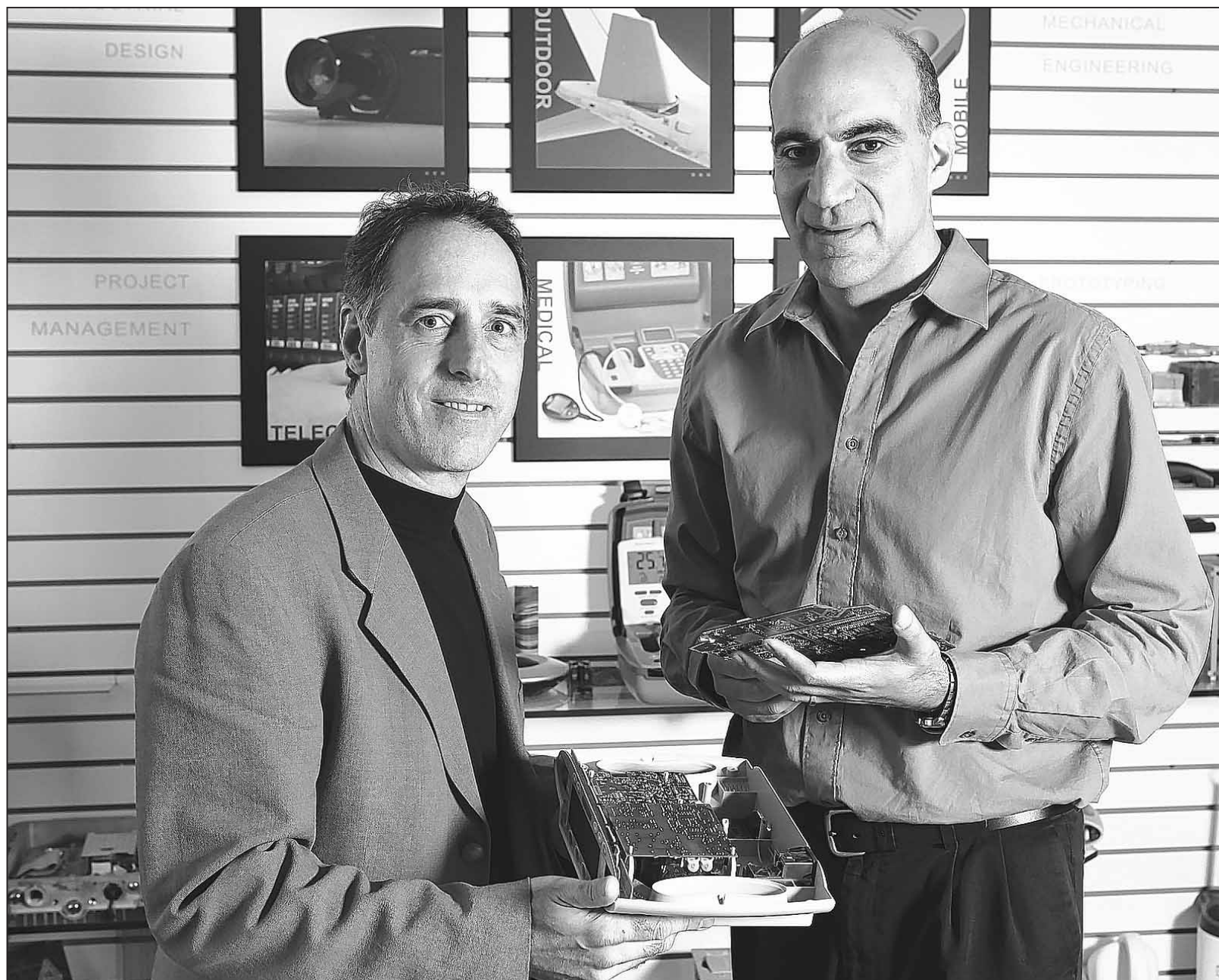
So why are companies like Pliant coming to Ottawa for their product development? Innovative companies like Pliant seek the wealth of talent and entrepreneurial spirit located here. The diversity of funding available also makes Ottawa a very desirable location for research and development.

Kevin Bailey of Design 1st and Michael Wakim of Fidus Systems have shared a friendship for over 25 years which started during their first years at Nortel and they now share a business relationship creating products for clients worldwide.

The two companies are good examples of the exciting innovation present in Eastern Ontario. Working together they provide a full spectrum of product design, mechanical and electronic development services.

Founded in 1996, Design 1st is a product design team of Industrial Design and Mechanical Engineers who understands how to make a product's design look great and operate the way you expect it to. In every product there is the outside that you see, touch and interact with. They are experts who understand physical product design. Their role is to take keys, controls, displays and casings and bring them together in an exciting overall package that fits closely with what a user expects.

Equipped with in-house



Kevin Bailey, (left) Founder and President of Design 1st with Michael Wakim, Founder and CEO of Fidus Systems.

— John Major Photography

machining, finishing and part prototyping facilities for fast turnaround, Design 1st can create finished models, first parts and assemblies – providing one stop for physical design engineering services. Clients rely on Design 1st to turn a napkin sketch into compelling images and then design well engineered product solutions.

"Our team has 25 years in new

product development and has worked with hundreds of manufacturers and their processes worldwide. We help select materials, specify components and resolve part designs to meet production requirements and cost targets," says Kevin Bailey, Founder and President of Design 1st. "Product design, development and prototyping are a complicated sequence of decisions and stages that can

cost much more than necessary. Clients require assistance with early stage component, prototype and product cost estimates as well as pre-production part approval and supplier support."

Fidus Systems was founded in 2002 and specializes in high-speed electronic product development. Fidus is an engineering powerhouse providing extensive design experience in end-to-end product development and technology knowledge in System Design, Architecture, Wireless, Signal Integrity, Hardware, PCB layout, FPGA/ASIC, Software and Mechanical Design. As a trusted design partner, Fidus addresses clients' development needs, starting with a product concept and finishing with a ready-to-manufacture electronic product

design.

"We offer our clients greater flexibility and capability in their product development through access to the right combination of expertise, process and tools," says Michael Wakim, Founder and CEO of Fidus Systems. "We focus on developing long-term relationships with clients built on integrity, quality and open communications."

"Both companies share a philosophy of transparency and a deep level of mutual trust," says Veronica Farmer of TrueCourse Communications, who works with both companies with their marketing efforts. "This is the base on which their design partnership stands and is required given the high risk that technical issues will arise during complex product development."



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