

Milton Means Business

Milton company listed among the country's 'hottest startups,' says PROFIT magazine

By RICHARD VIVIAN
The Champion

Two Stage Innovation of Milton is among the hottest new companies in Canada, according to PROFIT magazine.

PROFIT recently recognized the company's efforts by ranking it 22nd in a list of "Canada's Hottest Startups."

Rankings were based on sales growth between 1998 and 2000. Two Stage Innovation was founded in February 1998.

"We're obviously very proud of that (ranking)," offered company President Terry Sharp.

"As you're going day to day it's good to sit back and take a look at what you've achieved. It's kind of a stamp of approval for our employees' hard work. It's just good for business."

Since Two Stage Innovation first started in the automation and robotic design and creation field, sales have increased 752 per cent — reaching beyond \$2.4 million in sales last year.

"Canada's Hottest Startups is the definitive list of this country's most dynamic new businesses and exciting entrepreneurs," PROFIT Editor

Rick Spence stated in a press release.

"As a group, these aggressive companies are pioneering new levels of innovation and customer service. They are focused on unique new niche markets and they're targeting the world."

In addition to sales growth, Two Stage Innovation has grown in employees, bumping up staff levels from eight to 17 in the same two-year period.

"The (sales and staff) growth is primarily from repeat business and the company's reputation being spread to others through word of mouth," Mr. Sharp told The Champion.

"In addition to that, there's a big demand for automation and robotic systems and good quality suppliers."

Certification has helped

Certification of their management system by the International Standards Organization's QS9000 program has also been a contributor to their growth, Mr. Sharp added.

"Particularly in the automotive industry, companies demand that certification."

But with the automotive sector suffering in the recent economic slowdown that has meant some

slower growth in recent months.

"That's been offset by some of our involvement in environmental (markets)," Mr. Sharp continued. "But I guess time will tell I suppose."

New technology patents are also expected to support the company's desire for sustained growth. The company is currently awaiting comment on its patent application for robotic tape application technology for use by major vehicle manufacturers.

"That's a brand new technology that's being received quite well by our customers," Mr. Sharp said, adding the technology would be used to apply two-sided adhesive tape to side-body moldings of vehicles, a practice currently done by hand.

The fanfare of being named as one of "Canada's hottest startups" also bodes well for the future, Mr. Sharp said.

Since the award was presented on September 9, the company's public profile has expanded significantly, he said.

"This is kind of a milestone for us. Now we're getting invites out to different associations and such — of which we're going to take advantage to help with networking."

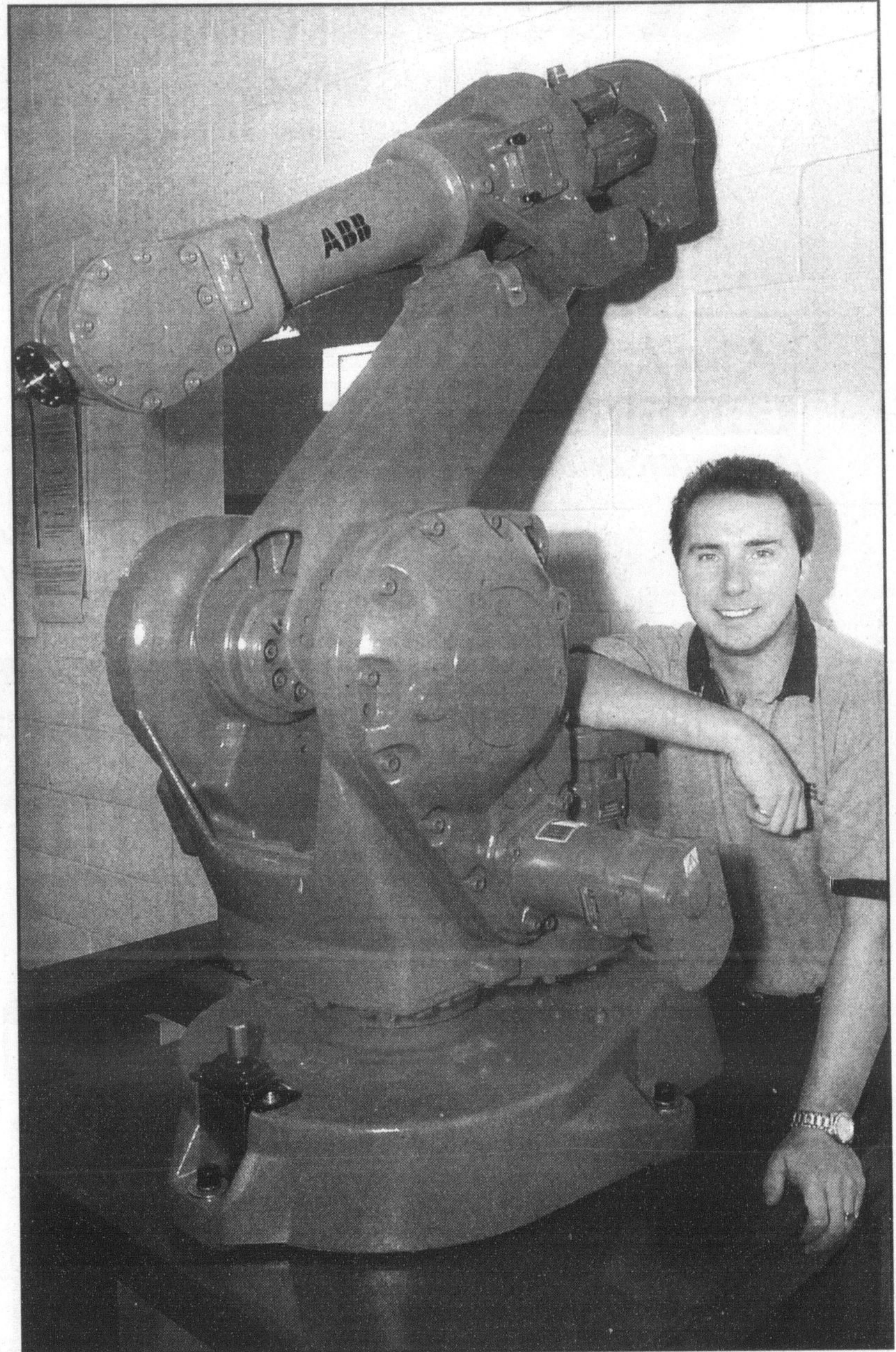


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Two Stage Innovation president Terry Sharp stands by one of the company's robotic tape application cells, used to apply two-sided tape to car body side moldings.

TV station opens Halton bureau

Hamilton-based television station CH officially opened its Halton News Bureau Monday.

It was the first Halton Bureau to be established by a television broadcaster in this market.

Based in Oakville, Halton Bureau reporter Lisa Saunders will report live on the issues that embrace and affect the towns of Milton, Oakville, Halton Hills and

the City of Burlington.

"We're excited about our new programming initiatives," said Mike Katrycz, CH news director. "Opening the Halton Bureau was an imperative step in covering the Hamilton-Halton-Niagara area like never before and complements our long-standing Niagara Bureau."

In addition to Ms Saundser's reporting, a live camera mounted

on the bureau's rooftop will have the capability to capture pictures 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In February, CH underwent a re-branding, commencing an aggressive local news programming regime, introducing new concepts in local on-air reflection and expanding its number of local programming hours.

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