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The Most Powerful Name in Corporate News



Assistive Technology Products and Services Distributor

About Aroga Technologies Ltd.

A Canadian company headquartered in Toronto ON with additional offices in Vancouver BC, Edmonton AB and Gatineau QC with representatives in Regina SK, and Halifax NS making Aroga Canada's largest independent distributor of Assistive Technology products and services. Aroga recently established a presence in Costa Rica with the goal of providing additional access to markets in Central and South America.

Aroga's technologies and products help individuals with various physical, sensory and cognitive issues perform daily tasks they would otherwise be unable to accomplish. Over the years the technology, assistance and training provided by Aroga as an end to end solutions provider has proven to assist individuals, families and businesses in both private and public corporations.

For the past 3 decades, Aroga has helped its clients attain independence and enhanced self-esteem. Through strategic partnerships with leading internationally recognized developers and innovators, Aroga provides skills and tools to ensure that individuals reach their maximum potential.

More information about Aroga's products and services can be viewed at its website at www.aroga.com

Interview with: *Grove Bennett* - CEO

CEOCFO: *Mr. Bennett, would you tell us the focus at Aroga?*

Mr. Bennett: We provide services, products and technologies to those with disabilities that change people lives every day.

CEOCFO: *What is the range of the offering?*

Mr. Bennett: We provide products and services to people with low vision or blindness challenges, augmentative (mute) communications, including people with physical disabilities as well as individuals with learning challenges from Kindergarten to grade 12, post secondary students and all academic institutions.

CEOCFO: *How do most people in that vision challenged community typically purchase products and services?*

Mr. Bennett: Many clients that need to use these services will visit assessment centers, community groups and or not for profit associations including CNIB. Additionally there are many rehabilitation clinics that have support systems in place, such as Holland Bloorview (Kids Rehabilitation Hospital), Thames Valley Children's Centre and Hamilton Health Sciences to name a few. As the individual goes through the assessment process at these facilities they are exposed to the many products and services that Aroga has to offer. Upon completion of the assessments, Aroga affords them products as they are deemed a necessary component to improving the quality of ones ability to interact and communicate with society as a hole.

CEOCFO: *Would someone come to you knowing what they need or asking for help with a specific problem?*

Mr. Bennett: Yes. Many are returning customers who know what they need. Others come in looking to see what new technology we have or what technology might better fit their current needs. Additionally we provide many in home and work place assessments to help identify their current needs versus future requirements based on daily activities so that we can recommend and provide equipment that improves their workplace, home or school environments.

CEOCFO: *How do you make the decision as to what items to carry or offer?*

Mr. Bennett: Its customer driven based on needs and analysis. Products have to fit an individual both in requirement and comfort. Products have to be easy to use as the people who need them already encounter enough challenges in their life. The products have to be rugged, affordable but most importantly dependable, and at Aroga, we only carry the best.

CEOCFO: *What is the breakdown between technology and the more physical such as a desk or chair?*

Mr. Bennett: The majority of users are Low Vision, Blind or Augmentative Communication users. So I would say its 95% technical vs. 5% physical.

CEOCFO: *Do you maintain an inventory of products or are you able to get them as needed as a distributor reseller?*

Mr. Bennett: We carry a wide range of inventory and we order as required.

Aroga is the exclusive Canadian distributor of the number one selling products in Low Vision, Blindness, Augmentative Communication and mobility walking canes.

CEOCFO: *Are most of your sales necessary items or is there a large market for enhancements?*

Mr. Bennett: Absolutely necessary. People not only need the equipment to purchase now but they need it more frequently and faster. In Ontario, individuals are able to turn their equipment over every five years via a government program, however in many instances five years is just not fast enough, it should be every three years at a minimum and open to all Canadians with disabilities across the country and not just in Ontario.

CEOCFO: *Is there any move to changing that?*

Mr. Bennett: I believe the demand on the government's funding to support those with disabilities is intensifying every year. As our population ages the pressure on the government to continue the funding at current levels will intensify. At Aroga, we want to increase our profile, increase sales and in turn reduce manufacturing costs therefore making the technology more affordable and readily available.

"Aroga is Canada's largest independent distributor of Assistive Technology products that has positioned itself for Global penetration." - Grove Bennett

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach?*

Mr. Bennett: Our reach is global. We started in Canada 28 years ago, we distribute into the USA, Australia and New Zealand and more recently opened an office in Costa Rica to cover Central and South America.

CEOCFO: *Why did you choose those two markets recently?*

Mr. Bennett: There is a tremendous demand for learning and the educational market sector within Central and South America. Some of the largest government funding and community support for learning and particularly for learning with those with disabilities is coming from these locations.

CEOCFO: *Are people from Central and South America coming strictly through your site or do you see a retail presence at all?*

Mr. Bennett: We see an expansion for Aroga Technologies to be located in both of those regions through offices and retail capabilities and working with all of the institutions that support both the learning and the education markets.

CEOCFO: *Do you find the institutions welcome you with open arms?*

Mr. Bennett: Absolutely, we make continued education for those with disabilities a far better experience than it would otherwise be.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you as the company has grown?*

Mr. Bennett: I'm surprised by the level of support we receive from local and federal governments in bringing the technology to market as well as the number of people who know or have a family member with disabilities that want to help Aroga in providing more efficient, more affordable solutions to the market.

CEOCFO: *Are there items that you offer that you find people are not using as much as they should?*

Mr. Bennett: Yes, many products are available now through conventional methods, however due to high prices remain unaffordable to many that need them. We anticipate significant change over the next three to five years as Google are investing 1 billion dollars in education which will see the development of free for use products making it affordable and accessible. We see many recurring licensing fees removed in the future.

CEOCFO: *Are there many companies manufacturing into this space or tech companies working on solutions?*

Mr. Bennett: No, it is a specialized market to be in. The ability to understand the true requirements is extremely difficult versus the mass production of products for main stream applications that are currently available; making it accessible to

those with singular or multiple disabilities is the key challenge. The number of companies out there providing support or manufacturing for these market is not as high or competitive as it could be, we are always looking for new partners and opportunities to increase our product range and expertise.

CEOFCO: *Are there areas you have seen that are not being addressed where there should be a solution?*

Mr. Bennett: We can improve on them all.

CEOFCO: *How is business?*

Mr. Bennett: Business is great and we are growing. We are expanding, adding new support and customer representatives, increasing our internal and external skill sets and always adding new product lines including more recently our New Music Division

CEOFCO: *What is the key to managing growth successfully?*

Mr. Bennett: Managing it in a timeframe that makes sense. The last thing you want to do is actually grow too quickly. Although it is a wonderful problem, at the end of the day we still need provide products and services to clients that need them today and making sure that we can continue to deliver is our priority.

CEOFCO: *Are you typically working together with the people involved or family members; what training do your customer service people need to deal with that population?*

Mr. Bennett: It is multitasking. We work with the assessors, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, school educators and business professionals daily. We work with them to identify the appropriate products, technologies and assist in their demonstration and end user training. Our representatives need to understand our products and how they affect the end user. Our entire team includes experienced school teachers, health care workers, technology specialists and business professionals.

Having a background in these areas is paramount to understanding the end user needs and requirements. But above all they are compassionate and have a desire to see one succeed at the simplest of tasks.

CEOFCO: *Do people tend to come back repeatedly for products?*

Mr. Bennett: Yes absolutely! Repeat business and our customer loyalty base is exceptional.

CEOFCO: *What surprised you as the business has grown and developed?*

Mr. Bennett: Just the openness and willing for people to accept new technologies but also how slow the new technologies are actually being accepted into the government institution for approval so that end users can get a hold of them. Unfortunately a lot of that multiple disability users are not at the same rate of getting new technology as a normal client would be purchasing equipment from large retail store.

CEOFCO: *What is ahead for Aroga?*

Mr. Bennett: Aroga is growing, locally, nationally and internationally. Aroga is partnering with new partners such as Vizzeco providing Aroga with Global Reseller rights to represent, market and sell Google Applications specifically into the education market. We have opened an office in Costa Rica to better serve and support those with disabilities in Central and South America. We are supporting those with perceived special needs in allowing them to communicate at the speed of thought through new communication devices developing intellectual property that can be distributed globally.

Aroga has started the Aroga Academy, this will bring distance learning to those that cannot get to a school, or need special assistance or want to learn at there own pace with others in similar circumstances. Aroga is bringing people with disabilities closer together and through this community we will increase awareness, create opportunities and improve everyone's quality of lives.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOFCO Magazine

BIO:

Grove is an entrepreneur specialized in leading edge businesses that are technology based. Grove believes in a strategic vision, collective intelligence and the execution of such visions. Having run private and public companies, from operations, manufacturing, business development, finance and customer relations, Grove has the skill set, dedication and determination to see Aroga become the number one globally recognized Assistive Technology company, providing products, services and solutions to those with special needs.



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