



**JOSEPHINE AND DANNY CIMON
DANMAX COMMUNICATION
YELLOWKNIFE**

NOMINATED IN: Specialized services.
ESTABLISHED: 1987. Danny is the sole remaining founder and Josephine has joined the team as vice-president.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF HIS

PARTNERS: "The transition began in February, so their retirement is still fresh. It's been an adjustment, but it brought the mean average of the company to a more youthful outlook. Hopefully that will give fresher ideas, and carry us for the next 20 years." **BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:** "Down south, we would be strictly a radio shop, or strictly an alarm shop, or strictly a phone shop, because typically you'll have a larger customer base. Had we done that we probably wouldn't have survived 20 years. So the good news is we're very

dynamic, and flexible. We get about 20 calls in a week that are for systems that we sold five, 10, 15 years ago. We do not drop our customers. If a customer wants to wear out his phone 'til until it's disintegrated, we'll support him as far as we can. Our customers gave their commitment to us and we give it back." **ON FUTURE GROWTH:** "We're happy with our size. We're looking at maybe growing up to 15 people, which would be a manageable size. One thing we don't want to see ourselves do is grow so large that we're at the mercy of the marketplace. We've been lucky. We haven't had to lay off or fire and we're still going gangbusters. We grow carefully, but we continuously upgrade and keep ourselves as a strong core."

ideas. By this month, Guerrier hopes Carrefour will have a proper place to call home, but until then, "It's really not the best situation for us." In the meantime, however, he'll have the power of a growing French population and the help of his counterparts in the Yukon and the NWT – the three directors teleconference at least once a month – to help convince funders that the economic-development agencies are beneficial.

IF FRENCH ENTREPRENEURS share any of the same concerns as the development agencies of being pigeonholed, it doesn't show. Indeed, when Belgian import Bob Daffe is asked about challenges, there is an audible click as his mouth pops open and shut: "You mean from being francophone as opposed to any other regular business?" The founder of Whitehorse-based Tatshenshini Expediting adds that if anything marks his business from the rest, it's only in advantages. The company, which was founded in 1983 with "a van, a raft and a case of beer," has grown to be wildly successful, accommodating rafting groups from all over the world. And those people, says Daffe, "like to be spoken to in their own language."

But Ol' Man River, as Daffe is affectionately dubbed, says it's not only francophones who appreciate a trip around la belle langue. A French phrase often becomes a souvenir of the trip – "c'est chaud," for example, after a guide picks up a too-hot coffee. "Then it becomes the norm and anybody who touches something that is hot will say 'c'est chaud' instead of saying 'it's too hot,'" says Daffe. "So it's comical, and it's all in good fun."

Being bilingual can also help form business connections. Husband and wife team Danny and Josephine Cimon, owners of Yellowknife-based Danmax Communications, agree speaking French can help put francophone customers more at ease. "It just gives you that extra connection," says Danny. "Business is about relationships." To that extent, he adds, being bilingual can also give Danmax (or any other French business), an edge when making connections with other francophone businesses and potential clients. For a business that's been around since 1987, this is not a case of stick-together. "It's a brutal world out there and you don't count on that," Cimon says, "but it's a nice perk."

Both Danmax and Tatshenshini have a core group of Francophone employees – and in Daffe's case, hiring Yukoners is con-