

Canada's beauty seals deals

Last year, EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. of Edmonton faced a challenge common to all companies doing business in Canada's booming West. Business was literally rolling through the doors, fuelled by enormous demand for engineering skills on consulting and construction projects.

The company's 550 employees in 10 offices were being stretched thin. Company president Paul Ruffell knew he needed an innovative solution to attract more experienced engineers. He looked back on own experience.

Mr. Ruffell had emigrated to the Canadian West from the United Kingdom, drawn by its breathtaking beauty and the opportunities for a young engineer. If he could capture the powerful emotions that had drawn him to Canada in a campaign targeted at British engineers, his staffing problems would be over.

His goal was to recruit at least two British engineers. Mr. Ruffell turned to Avatar Brand

Management Inc., a nine-year-old company that had served EBA well in the past by creating effective recruitment and corporate branding programs for trade shows. For the past three years, Avatar's specialty is what creative director David Betke calls dimensional advertising, combining traditional and non-traditional forms of marketing and innovative materials to deliver campaigns with a powerful emotional content.

Since its initial foray into dimensional advertising, the small Edmonton boutique has won four national awards, Mr. Betke says.

"We began the process by talking with Paul about his own experience, what motivated him, what persuaded him to give up his home for a new job in a new land," he says. "We knew from the start that the decision to come to Canada would be a family one, not that of an individual. These were things we had to take into account."

The result of those conversations, research and a large dash

of inspiration was a beautifully crafted leather photo album that captured the spirit of the Canadian West while providing all the background information necessary to understand the company, the land and to make the move.

The album was so successful that EBA was able to recruit three new engineers and add another four to its list of future candidates.

For the success of that campaign, EBA was named Employer of Choice Marketing Award winner in the Job Fair/Recruitment Event category in the awards, sponsored by working.com.

"We understood from the beginning that the campaign had to be as unique as EBA was as a com-

pany," Mr. Betke says. "It also had to be a reflection of the company's core values such as a strong belief that reputation is paramount, that individuals matter most, that success comes from teamwork, taking ownership for your work, being innovative and a commitment to improving communities."

On the plus side all, of EBA's offices are in Western and Northern Canada, in communities surrounded by some of the world's most breathtaking natural beauty.

The idea of a hand-crafted, photo album seemed a natural to agency and client alike: It reflected a commitment to quality and personalized

the experience.

"You go to most recruitment interviews and they give you

throwaway brochures," says Mr. Betke. "The album showed that EBA cared about each candidate as a person, not as just another potential hire."

The album cover showed a sepia-toned photo of a long Western road that wound into the mountains in the distance. It represented wide-open opportunity and invited candidates to travel that road, says Mr. Betke..

Inside were pages of the West and of the three main cities the candidates were likely to live in. The back page included a USB computer memory stick containing all the information needed to understand the immigration process, professional registration, getting settled and testimonials from three employees recruited from abroad.

The results were impressive. A dozen people applied and seven were flown with their families to Canada and offered jobs. Three accepted.

One of the candidates later wrote: "The EBA photo wallet was the first thing I showed my wife to get her really interested in the whole idea of moving to Canada. She is primarily a visual person and so the wallet was perfect."

A photo album extolling Canada's beauty worked for EBA.

