



EMAIL INTERVIEW    SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

# C-COM: Leading the Way in Satellite Communications



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*In an exclusive interview with CanadianSME Small Business Magazine, Leslie Klein, Founder of C-COM Satellite Systems, takes us through the remarkable journey of creating a company that is now a leader in mobile satellite communications. Established in 1997, C-COM has revolutionized the way businesses in remote*

*locations stay connected by designing and manufacturing mobile satellite antenna systems that provide high-speed Internet in places with no terrestrial infrastructure.*

*From the groundbreaking iNetVu® product line to ongoing advancements in phased array antenna technology, Leslie shares the innovations that have shaped C-COM's success, including their partnership with the University of Waterloo. In this interview, Leslie also discusses how C-COM's satellite solutions are transforming industries such as oil & gas, military communications, and disaster recovery and offers valuable advice to SMBs looking to leverage satellite technology to enhance their operations.*

*Leslie Klein is the founder of C-COM Satellite Systems Inc., which was established in 1997 with the intent of designing and developing a system capable of delivering high speed Internet over satellite into vehicles and transportable structures. With the rapidly growing demand for Internet services worldwide, and with a need to make satellite connectivity transportable, C-COM designs, develops, manufactures and sells its proprietary iNetVu® Mobile Satellite Antenna Systems which make it possible to deliver high speed Internet services, voice over IP and video over satellite into locations where no terrestrial infrastructure exists. The company has over 10000 of its antenna products deployed in more than 106 countries around the world.*

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***Since its establishment in 1997, C-COM Satellite Systems has been a pioneer in mobile satellite communications. Can you share the story of how the company was founded and the key milestones that have shaped its growth over the years?***

I started the company with my colleague Bilal Awada who is our CTO. The purpose of the startup was a dream to deliver high speed Internet into vehicles over satellite. That was 28 years ago and we were slightly ahead of the times but the technology we developed to do this caught up with the times and the business became a reality.

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***Your iNetVu® product line is known for its reliability and ease of use, particularly with auto-deploy technology. How has this innovation changed the landscape of satellite communications, especially in remote areas?***

With our antennas and the technology we developed, it is possible to connect to a satellite and be online as fast as 30 seconds just with a simple press of a button. Previously in order to connect an antenna to a Geostationary satellite would require the skill set of a satellite engineer with expensive test equipment and at least an hour or more to accomplish the same task. Mobility was out of the question as the antennas would need to be precisely assembled, connected, pointed to a satellite and then disassembled and moved so mobility was not practical. We designed a robotic antenna that would be transportable in cases and assembled without tools in minutes and connected to a satellite in seconds by a simple press of a button, so anyone could operate this system without knowing anything about satellites and be connected to a satellite from anywhere on the globe. These we call Flyaway and Manpack antennas. We have also designed vehicle mount antennas which would be deployable from the roof of the vehicle at a press of a button, connect to a satellite within a few minutes and then with another press of a button they would stow and be able to driven to a new location where the process would be repeated.

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***C-COM serves a wide range of industries, from oil and gas to emergency communications. What are some unique challenges these sectors face, and how does C-COM tailor its solutions to meet their specific needs?***

Our antennas are deployed in over 100 countries and in markets such as Oil and Gas, Telemedicine, Cellular backhaul, Military Communications, Ambulances, Mobile Hospitals, Mobile Banks and Disaster Recovery, just to mention a few. In order to reach this many verticals in this many countries we rely on over 600 reseller and integrators in those countries and on our extensive inventory from which we are ready to ship antennas in days when disaster strikes or when there is an urgent need to set up remote communications in parts of the world where no terrestrial infrastructure exists and where communications becomes essential and only possible over satellite.

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***With ongoing developments in phased array antenna technology in collaboration with the University of Waterloo, what future advancements can we expect from C-COM? How will these innovations impact your product offerings and market strategy?***

Our existing technology of over 11000 antennas deployed in over 100 countries is called On-the-Pause communication. This means that in order to use this technology you have to be stationary and can only connect to Geostationary satellites, which are stationary vis a vis one's location and do not move. With the advent of Low Earth Orbit and Medium Earth Orbit Satellite constellations which constantly move and there are hundreds and thousands of them constantly flying overhead, we have designed an electronically steered antenna system that electronically tracks the moving satellites and connects to each of them as they pass overhead. This technology is called On the Move Communication. These antennas called (ESA's) are capable of tracking these satellites while the antenna is in motion so it can be deployed from the roof of a vehicle, a boat, train, an aircraft or a drone. The project was started at the University of Waterloo by C-COM working with a team of Ph.D. students under supervision of a professor and with funding from the Government of Canada and C-COM. These students are now C-COM employees and working out of our office on the campus of the University in Waterloo. The antennas are presently undergoing final satellite testing and should be available to selected customers for testing by mid this year and in mass production by early next year. C-COM is also developing Radio Frequency Integrated Circuits, called the Analogue Beamformer IC (BFIC's) which are the chips used on ESA antennas to track and communicate with moving satellites. Up to 2000 of these IC's are used per antenna. They are also used in 5G and 6G cellular communications and will provide C-COM with another source of revenue when they become available later this year.

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***As a leader in satellite technology, what advice would you give to small and medium-sized businesses that want to enhance their operations and connectivity through satellite communications?***

The key to our success was the ability to identify the need for a problem which was delivering connectivity to areas unserved or underserved world wide with a complex technology that we made simple for end-users to use. The ability to recognize that this will be a worldwide market, approaching it using distributors rather than going direct was also a key factor in our success. The company has been profitable for most of its 28 years and has paid out over \$25million in dividends for the past 10 consecutive years.

We are publicly traded on the Toronto Venture Exchange (TSX: CMI) and on the US (OTCQB: CYSNF) exchange. The company, with a total of 30 people, has been self funding and other than raising \$5 Million when we went public, has never borrowed

money and it has over \$24Million in working capital. Having your own funds and not relying on other sources for funding makes life easier for a small business to operate. In addition, having as low an overhead as possible and good margins will assure survival and allows for experimenting with new technology by investing millions of dollars over many years and getting ready for the next phase of satellite communications. Cooperating with educational institutions and the government to get assistance with funding to develop new technologies is a win-win strategy as well.

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