

Search For...

Business News

Bigger | Smaller | Send Story to a Friend

advertisements

-  **JOBS**
-  **MOTORS**
-  **PROPERTY**
-  **BUSINESS**
-  **MONEY**

## Satellite links help put sales into orbit

**Hi-tech Bradford firm cashes in FRONT-line troops and embedded journalists relied on the skills of Ventura Rufino to get their message across during the war in Iraq.**  
**Greg Wright**  
 Deputy Business Editor



Space-age business: Ventura Rufino, managing director of Novella Sat Coms Ltd, Bradford. Picture: Bruce Rollinson.

Images such as the toppling of Saddam's statue might never have reached our living rooms without the "clever stuff" provided by Bradford-based Novella Satcoms. The company designs and manufactures radio equipment for satellite earth stations, including those used by TV reporters and the military. It's now helping to develop an automated system which should make it easier for correspondents to send pictures from dangerous places.

Novella was founded in 1997 by Mr Rufino, the firm's managing director, and chief engineer Bill Dransfield, who between them have more than 40 years' experience in electronics and satellite communications.

Perhaps the most visible side of their work involves satellite news gathering. Novella's equipment is supplied to major news organisations, such as the BBC, ITN and BSkyB.

Mr Rufino said: "SNG vans and trucks can be seen regularly during outside broadcast occasions such as football and other sports events, local, European and general elections, royal and political events, natural and man-made disasters and other newsworthy occasions.

"An SNG van is equipped with a satellite dish, which can be folded back and collapsed into a transportable case or package. It also includes transmission and reception equipment, cameras, microphones, simple mixing and editing desks, which allow news organisations to send live news to central studios. These pictures and sound are often relayed up again to another satellite to be broadcast to their area of coverage.

"Another application is the tactical transportable terminal used by the military. They are compact earth stations which are assembled in all-terrain vehicles such as Land Rovers and Humvees used in war zones."

Over the last year, Novella has worked with SIS Link, a UK-based SNG services provider, to develop the uPOD, a more flexible, automated way of getting images back from remote places. It means TV crews won't need to take a satellite engineer with them and it could be carried in a boat or a car.

"SIS Link have been recently awarded a major multi-million contract by a leading UK broadcaster for the supply of SNG vans using their latest uPOD platform. Novella's share of this work is likely to be between £250,000 to £500,000 of equipment in the first year alone."

Mr Rufino is the controlling shareholder with his wife, Cecilia da Costa, who joined Novella full time two years ago after 20 years in the retail industry. They are Portuguese expatriates and have lived in West Yorkshire for 25 years. Their company employs 15 staff, and has two non-executive directors, Colin Glass and Chris Maslen, both chartered accountants.

"We grew the business from zero to the present level without any Government or local authority grants or handouts, and with minimal support from the banks," said Mr Rufino. "The overdraft was secured personally by the roof over my head. Luckily, the business is now strongly cash positive and profitable."

Sales rose from £200,000 in 1998 to £1.5m in 2003, and the target for 2004 is £2m. Last year 68 per cent of sales were exports.

greg.wright@ypn.co.uk

19 July 2004

### Search Our News Archive

Enter Search Text

Search Type

[Advanced Search](#)

### Google Ads



to boost their cash flow



CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

...click here to learn more



Simply Click Here to Search and Register

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION




Click Here



3iGroup.com

[XML](#)

[Disclaimer] All rights reserved © 2003 Johnston Press New Media. [Click here for full details.](#)