

# Icefield Instruments Inc.

Whitehorse

Started: 1990

Contact: Erik Blake

Icefield Instruments designs and manufactures glaciology and geoscience instruments, such as ice drills, portable ice core analyzers and bore hole sensors. It also operates the specialized equipment in the field. The main competition for this globally competitive firm of one owner and two full-time employees is located in Sweden.



**Getting started:** While doing his doctorate in glaciology in 1990, Erik Blake began getting contracts related to his work on glaciology instrumentation so he founded Icefield Instruments Inc. In 1992, Erik moved to the Yukon and continued to build the company, using savings and retained earnings as financing. Geoscience instrumentation now accounts for about half of the business.

**Key to success:** Designing and engineering a portable ice core analyzer guaranteed Erik a niche in the glaciology field. As well, working in an area where people use the internet extensively to gather information made it easy to market Icefield's wares electronically. The continual reinvestment of resources into research and development in glaciology and geoscience instrumentation has helped Icefield maintain a lead in the field.

**Lessons learned:** Moving into a separate office helped Erik draw lines between his home and work life. This move was only possible because of the diversification of the business into geoscience instrumentation, a field that offered a much larger clientele base. Until then, the small number of glaciologists meant sales were sporadic and times often lean.

**Future of business:** Erik plans to market the geoscience component of the business through his website and ads in mining and oil and gas industry publications. Erik's long term goal is to develop a network of distributors and service people in key locations outside the Yukon.