

Small Business Success Awards 2004

NJSBDC Technology Commercialization Center

Winner: Peter Li

Business: Li Creative Technologies

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Peter Li was formerly with Bell Laboratories and became a victim of layoffs at Lucent Technologies. With a Ph.D. and a background in acoustics he was interested in applying to telecommunications and homeland security, Peter had to decide between pursuing his business ideas independently or going after a new job. Li contacted the Technology Commercialization Center in December 2002 and began to work with Leo Collins, one of the Center's SBIR consultants.

With the help of Collins and Technology Commercialization Director Randy Harmon, Li has won 4 Phase I and 1 Phase II SBIR awards totaling more than \$1 million. His Phase II contract with the Department of Defense involves developing a special microphone array and audio processing software that will enhance speech and filter out background noise in noisy environments. It will be incorporated into a PDA device for the military used for automatic language translation. Commercial applications include improved teleconferencing when speakers are several feet away from their phone as well as improved voice quality for cell phones, PDA's, and computers.

Li is now committed to pursuing a career in entrepreneurship and the DTC and the SBIR consultant are advising Peter on building his business. Peter is an excellent example of the former Lucent employees that the DTC has worked to reach out to by establishing a training partnership with local chapters of Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

"The NJSBDC provided the business knowledge and expertise that I needed as a researcher. NJSBDC's services were very important to my company's success in winning government research grants and planning the future of my business," said Li.



(from left) Jialin Zhong, Ph.D. with NJSBDC Success Award winner Peter Q. Li of Li Creative Technologies. Li worked with the NJSBDC Technology Commercialization Center, led by Director Randy Harmon (next to Li). Paul Frank (far right) presented Li with a membership to the New Jersey Technology Council.