

# When Meets TECHNOLOGY REAL ESTATE

**With a superb location in the heart of downtown Montreal, E-Commerce Place is a real-estate project specially designed for high-tech companies. In this dedicated environment, innovation and cutting-edge solutions reign supreme.**

**The mission of E-Commerce Place is clear:  
to provide new-economy leaders with adaptable and user-friendly space.**

BY CHANTAL CANTIN

It's been a great year for Quebec's construction industry. You just had to wander through the streets of downtown Montreal during the spring and summer of 2002 to know it. Among the major works-in-progress on the city's construction sites is E-Commerce Place. Promoted and developed by the Mouvement des Caisses Desjardins, and with the Quebec government providing tax support to tenants, E-Commerce Place, with its cutting-edge innovations, is in a class of its own.

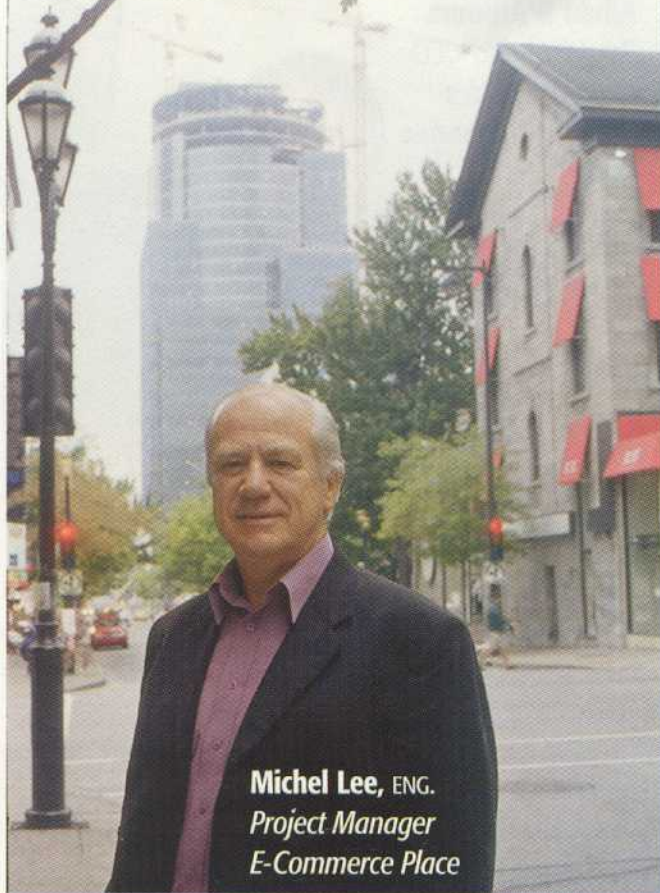
Located on the west side of downtown Montreal, Phase I of the project is rapidly taking shape at the corner of René-Lévesque Boulevard and de la Montagne Street. Its doors are slated to open in January 2003 to its first prestigious tenant: CGI, Canada's leading information-technology consulting firm. Phase II of the E-Commerce Place project, located at the corner of René-Lévesque and Lucien-L'Allier Street, will be open for business in early 2004, welcoming industry giants Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) and IBM. The first brick of Phase III will be laid as demand warrants.

Naturally, an undertaking of this magnitude requires a high-calibre workforce. Phase I of E-Commerce Place will generate over 300 construction-related jobs and close to 1,000 indirect jobs. All three phases will result in the creation of 1.5 million square feet of office space, representing a total investment in the order of \$300 million, a substantial sum for a Montreal real estate project.

*The Place for Innovation:* E-Commerce Place is highly innovative compared to other Montreal buildings. To meet the needs of technology firms,

its creators have focused on making the space as flexible as possible (an extremely important consideration in this rapidly evolving business sector), as well as offering a high-quality work environment for occupants.





**Michel Lee, ENG.**  
Project Manager  
E-Commerce Place

**H**ow has E-Commerce Place managed to increase the population of its buildings by 33% while reducing rental space to 130 square feet per person from 200 – and while remaining comfortable and functional for occupants?

With a solid background in erecting prestigious landmarks in downtown Montreal, such as the National Bank and Bell Canada buildings, as well as 1000 de la Gauchetière ten years ago, Michel Lee has been in

explains. "The air rises from the floor, thus reaching a higher temperature more rapidly (62°F, compared with 55°F in conventional systems where the heat comes from the ceiling). So right off the bat, companies are saving 7°F automatically."

Then, thanks to the raised floor's removable panels, it is possible to reconfigure occupants' vital systems without specialized assistance, to make their environment more comfortable. Manually controlled diffusers installed on the floor about a metre from the occupant are also easily accessible and can be adjusted to meet individual work environment needs (air conditioning and heating). No more complaints to building maintenance personnel about air temperature fluctuations.

"For us," says Lee, "it's clear that this system promotes productivity and significantly reduces employee respiratory problems and absenteeism. Researchers from the University of California have proven that raised floors greatly improve air quality."

*Indirect lighting system:* At E-Commerce Place,

# Comfort and Adaptability for Technology Companies

**"The basic premise of our planning and implementation was to build a space for the user's well-being."**

charge of preparing and implementing the E-Commerce Place project. Lee, who has over four million square feet to his name since starting in his profession, points out that Montreal goes through 10-year cycles for major office space construction.

Inspired by visits to buildings in Vancouver, and with the collaboration of André Dupras from the consortium Pageau Morel/Dupras-Ledoux, Lee made E-Commerce Place significantly different from other downtown buildings. For example, one of the challenges faced by the creators of E-Commerce Place had to do with ventilation: the more individuals there are in a building, the more fresh air needs to be produced to ensure their comfort. Aware of this reality, Lee, in collaboration with the Toronto supplier Camino Modular Systems, sought the optimal solution, which turned out to be a raised floor. By allowing companies to easily adapt the facilities, and adjust their vital systems such as voice-data (telecommunications) and heating/air conditioning, a raised floor permits better air circulation.

"With the raised floor, the air is swept up, rather than mixed," Lee

space is rented (if the tenant so desires) with 11 feet of free vertical space without suspended ceilings to allow for maximal window space. Extremely large windows have been chosen to let in natural light. The project is also equipped with a new fluorescent indirect lighting system, specially designed for high-tech companies. It is basically a natural lighting system with a sufficiently reflected indirect light flow to provide a muted, anti-glare effect. Extremely multi-functional in design, the Linea™ lighting system can be adapted to a variety of needs.

*Additional benefits for occupants:* "Not only are we located in Montreal's business district, close to all transportation services, our occupants also have access to a covered pedestrian walk and a commercial space (a Montreal-style atrium) that will ensure them a protected link between all of the project's phases," notes Lee. "An underground parking area with a capacity of 205 vehicles will be available in Phase I (increasing to 272 vehicles by Phase II). The parking will also be accessible from de la Montagne Street." □