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David Cannington

Focus on US market niche; Firms told: do your research if you want to succeed

By Claire Hunter Business Reporter
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ACT companies needed to focus on a market niche if they were to crack into America's lucrative technology export market was told yesterday. Executive director of US-based Anza Technology Network **David Cannington** told business leaders at the US conference yesterday it was extremely difficult for Australian companies to break into the United States market. "Most of the companies here try to be all things to all people. Most of the companies here did their research and understood the principles of the American system. "It's always difficult for companies entering a new market,

but when you are crossing the Pacific it's even more of a challenge," Mr **Cannington** said. "I say Australia is from Venus, not Mars - it's that different in the size and complexity of the market. "Most of the companies here try to be all things to all people in the US you have to focus ... Owning a niche in the US is what businesses should be trying to accomplish." The conference opened in Canberra yesterday by ACT Business Minister Ted Quinlan, is part of the network's bid to provide a bridge between the New Zealand and US technology sectors. It aims to brief technology executives on the state of the US

market and to provide updates on the opportunities that existed for Australian tech companies. Canberra-based WetFinger interface technology for hand-held mobile computing devices, worked with the Anza Technology Network last year and had discussions with major US finance organisations and looking at the defence market. Managing director Dr Peter Mora said it was a good environment, and it's great to have that support. "It's helped us get into doors in Washington, Chicago and San Francisco. At the end of the day you've still got to fight the battle and you can't expect those things to

happen overnight. We're focussed and we'll get there and the support of others is absolutely crucial." Bob Quodling is the development manager of the Canberra-based management support system company TASKey which is also making inroads in the market after working with the network. "TASKey has been in the US market for a year and are just starting to penetrate the market," he said. "Don't kid yourself. You're not going to have sales within a week." Launching the conference program, Mr Quinlan said that the technology markets were an important driver of growth and development for the ACT economy.

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