

The e-mazing Scott Paterson

Before he came along, Yorkton Securities was bush league. He was the first to see the fortune to be made in high-tech stocks. No wonder the big boys on Bay Street look down their noses at him



Team Yorkton: Paterson has charisma. People are drawn to his energy, vision and ability to make deals. They are certain he's going somewhere—and it is almost certainly up

ON A WEDNESDAY EVENING IN MID-FEBRUARY, the huge, vaulted atrium of BCE Place is chockablock with more than a thousand aspiring high-tech investors, looking for the Next Big Thing, which is to say the New New Thing, about which more later. Just after 7:30, a big screen, and monitors along the walls, light up with a replay of an interview that morn-

ing on ROBTv, the cable business news channel. The subject is Scott Paterson, head of Yorkton Securities, the Bay Street brokerage firm that is putting on this shindig. But it doesn't sound like an interview; it sounds more like an infomercial. The fresh-faced, fair-haired Paterson speaks in perfect sound bites. Example: "...if you can succeed on the bleeding

edge, then you should be able to compete on the leading edge."

Exuding confidence, he mentions a number of potential high-tech high flyers Yorkton has brought to market, such as Book4golf, a company that offers on-line tee times, and potentially much more. Book4golf, says Paterson, is "the definitive golf portal, a multi-billion dollar property. This stock is going to \$100 a share." (It was trading at around \$21 at the time.) Of the market's broader potential, he says, "A lot of people think it's late days in the Internet. It's still very early days." That's the message the faithful—the sophisticated suits and the poor schmucks, the day traders in running shoes and the secretaries who have stopped by on the way home—want to hear: it's not too late to ride the wave.

That wave took the western-based Canadian Venture Exchange—where Canadian junior high-tech stocks are listed—up 60 per cent in the three months after its creation last November. And that's not just a few of the stocks on the CDNX, which has been dubbed Nasdaq North; it's the whole kit and caboodle. These days, high-flying stocks measure increases in the hundreds, if not thousands, of percentage points.

The tape ends, and Paterson himself steps up to the podium to give "a little bit of a Yorkton commercial." He introduces Mark Pavan, Yorkton's chief Internet analyst, who roams the stage with a mike at his mouth. His delivery is stand-up. He points out that this is Yorkton's fifth annual high-tech presentation. There were only a dozen people at the first one.