

Tiger Optics in Top Half of Fastest Growing Companies

BY PAUL NESDORE

For 4 out of the last 5 years, Inc. Magazine has named Tiger Optics LLC to its list of 5000 of the fastest-growing private companies in the United States. On the Inc. 5000 list, Tiger Optics ranks 76th among the U.S.-based private manufacturers, based on its percentage revenue growth from 2008 to 2011, the magazine said. Among all of the businesses on the Inc. 5000 list, Tiger—at 2,285—ranks in the top half.

Tiger Optics manufactures laser-based gas analysis instrumentation that has many applications from metrology labs to environmental air monitoring. The technology, Cavity Ring-down Spectroscopy (CRDS), is on the cutting edge, and the company manufactures all of its products in the US, with over 50% of its sales occurring in foreign markets. Its 2011 revenue of \$10.3 million rose 110 percent from its 2008 revenue of \$4.9 million.

A record like this is impressive in its own right. But to have this occur as the U.S. recovers from an historic recession and with a number of EU countries in economic difficulty, is impressive. Curious as to how

they managed to accomplish this, I talked with Lisa Bergson, Chief Executive at Tiger Optics. It seems Tiger's success has to do with both technological savvy and excellent business practices.

"We combine really innovative technology with an industrial heritage and a basic commitment to good business practices, such as positive cash flow, consistent quality, linear shipping and transparency with regard to our employees and business partners."

This, she explained, has allowed them to both scale rapidly and deal with macroeconomic jolts. But this is only half of the picture. The other half is knowing the technology intimately and always staying on the technical forefront of spectroscopic analysis. I asked her what it was about the need for gas analysis and accurate, dependable instruments around the world that allows Tiger Optics to maintain this growth. Her response was "timing and technology".

"Just as science and industry seek more precise gas analyzers that are also affordable and easy to use, Tiger Optics is set

to meet that need. As such, we are part of a vast paradigm shift that is basically changing the way measurements are conducted. Analyzers that were once met with skepticism and viewed as too good to be true have borne out their promise and then some."

Laser-based instrumentation, pioneered by Tiger Optics, has numerous applications, and a vast potential to meet the demanding challenges of gas measurement.

"We see wide-ranging, indeed, almost limitless, prospects for our technology. On the one hand, very few so-called incumbent technologies can address the new, more stringent emissions and greenhouse gas release standards triggered by growing public concern with global warming and human health, such as bioaccumulation in children. On the other, industry's pressing drive to automate, to improve margins, and to reduce waste, as well as the greater sensitivity sought by select markets, like semiconductors and High Brightness LEDs, make the practical advantages of our technology all the more compelling."