



Wanda Michaels (left)
and Sandra King



Two of a Kind

Calgary sisters rethink your business

By Stephanie Sparks

■ **ALL IT TAKES IS A FRESH PAIR OF EYES** to point out the obvious. In 1985, Wanda Kogawa, a recent bachelor of commerce graduate from the University of Calgary, accepted a temporary position with Alberta Social Services, integrating computers into the workflow of 52 district offices. Wanda began diagramming models of office procedures to keep track of what everybody did and how their work fit together. She quickly spotted the redundancies. >

Her commitment and the costs she saved the department prompted a boss to joke, "Too bad there isn't another person like you."

Also a recent graduate of the U of C's commerce degree, twin sister Sandra was brought on shortly after. A hiring freeze prevented the Kogawa sisters (now Wanda Michaels and Sandra King, and both mothers of four kids each) from becoming permanently employed with the government, but they were advised to form a consulting company so the government could hire them on as contractors; they had mastered process modelling, and it was making the government more efficient.

"We started the company, but it's all our consultants that make Kogawa."

"We weren't intending to have our own company, but it's just something that had to happen," explains Michaels.

Kogawa Consulting Ltd. incorporated in April 1985, and through word-of-mouth other government organizations began asking for King and Michaels. Because process modelling requires that they make diagrams of workflow procedures, they hired four computer graphics people to help them keep up with their work redesigning and improving business processes.

"Our main role as a consultant is we won't come in and say we

know how to do your business better, but we'll help facilitate the whole project," says King.

Using their copyrighted Structured Work Analysis Technique (SWAT) methodology, King and Michaels help their clients with facilitation in group sessions, project management, strategic planning and information systems planning, and thanks to their start with the Alberta government, they've worked with some major players in the province's corporate scene, including Enmax Corp., Syncrude Canada Ltd. and Telus Communications Co. among others. Companies typically come to Kogawa to become more efficient or effective in how they function, or learn to function following restructuring.

Working with such big-name clients requires a reliable team of consultants (up to 16 now), a team that Kogawa has built up carefully over the last 10 years.

"The people in Kogawa are who Kogawa is, not just Wanda and I," says King. "We started the company, but it's all our consultants that make Kogawa."

And while larger management consulting firms have sought to buy Kogawa's methodology, the sisters have no intention of selling it because they worry the interpersonal skills won't transfer smoothly from their business to others, nor are they interested in merging with another firm. Kogawa just wants to avoid the process issues that many of their large clients face.

"We like our size because the structure is simple," says King. "And when it gets too large, an organization [has] too many layers, too many rules."

Timeline | Lilydale Flies the Coop

■ **WHEN IT COMES TO THE STORY OF LILYDALE Inc.**, there's no question: It's the egg that came first, hatching what would grow into a tough old bird of a multimillion-dollar poultry processing industry. But after all its growth, innovation, reinvention and setback, the company sold in February to Ontario-based supplier Sofina Foods Inc. Here's a bird's-eye view of its seven decades as an Alberta-based company. — *Scott Messenger*

1940

Alberta Poultry Producers Ltd., precursor to Lilydale, forms to **UNITE A FRAGMENTED POULTRY INDUSTRY** in the effort to ship eggs to wartime Britain.



1956

A shift to meat production leads to expansions to accommodate **50,000 BIRDS** on the company's Edmonton-area farm.

1972

The company **CLOSES ITS LAST GRADING FACILITY** to focus entirely on meat production, raising as many as seven million chicks a year.

Following the **OPENING OF A \$1.4-MILLION PROCESSING FACILITY AND HEAD OFFICE** in Edmonton, the company purchases a share in a plant, hatcheries and farms in Calgary, adding to properties it already owns in British Columbia.

1967

The company officially changes its name to **LILYDALE CO-OPERATIVE LTD.** after the Saskatchewan hometown of a former general manager.

1976