

## The free trade advantage

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“There is excellent growth in emerging markets like Peru and Colombia,” explains Trade Commissioner Catherine Jollymore. “In the emerging markets, we’re seeing a growing middle class and greater wealth, which bodes well for Canadian exporters and investors. They offer business-friendly environments and they are pursuing policies to facilitate greater trade. There is also growing recognition of the quality of Canada’s products and services.”

While large firms in traditional industries such as mining, oil and gas exploration, and financial services are often first in the door, Canada’s free trade partners offer excellent potential for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

“SMEs often follow on the heels of larger Canadian companies already in the market, accessing subcontracting opportunities available through them,” says Jollymore. “Others will enter the market on their own after identifying a need for a product or service. In niche areas, such as education and high-tech, our smaller firms often leap into the market when an FTA comes into force.”

If you’re thinking of doing business with Canada’s free trade partners, Trade Commissioner Elizabeth Clarke suggests the following:

1. Work closely with the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS). They can help you better understand the agreements, offer you free valuable advice and connect you with local contacts.
2. Get in touch with the local chambers of commerce in-country. Some FTA partner countries, such as Peru and Colombia, have chambers in Canada as well. It’s also an excellent way to connect with other Canadian companies in the market.
3. Participate in seminars, trade shows and missions organized by your industry association, provincial governments and the Government of Canada.

Leaping into new markets requires careful planning. It’s expensive and the time commitment to develop relationships is huge. As seasoned business women point out, consider every aspect of the opportunity, right down to time zones and ease of doing business.

For more information about Canada’s free trade agreements, visit [international.gc.ca/yournextmarket](http://international.gc.ca/yournextmarket).

### Connect with us online!

For the latest international trade news, events and information for women entrepreneurs, visit us at [businesswomenintrade.gc.ca](http://businesswomenintrade.gc.ca).

### “ Sound advice

“When you enter a new market, get a local partner. We were able to accelerate our presence and reputation in Colombia with a trusted local partner. We would not be where we are today without that relationship. The Trade Commissioner Service is extremely well-connected. They are a fantastic resource!”

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## Where to from here?

The Canadian Business Women in International Trade is a fountain of information when it comes to everything you need to know about exporting. We offer information on opportunities, professional development, trade missions, events, financing and awards such as the eBay Fashion-preneur Award presented to Tina Kastana of Fashion à La Carte in Ottawa on February 27, 2013. Visit our website at [businesswomenintrade.gc.ca](http://businesswomenintrade.gc.ca) and join our LinkedIn group at [linkd.in/bwit-faci](http://linkd.in/bwit-faci).

eBay’s Andrea Stairs with Fashion-preneur winner Tina Kastana and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.

