

his own operation as a financial adviser and business consultant, Henderson worked as an accountant with Ernst & Whinney's Hong Kong office – intending to serve the typical two-year expat term. He then helped a major Chinese family organization to restructure their business affairs. At that time, Henderson was also president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong.

In the four year that he has run Pacific Rim Ventures, the company has been dynamic in nature, something Henderson deems vital to conducting business in an international entrepot like Hong Kong. Henderson explains that, "In 1986 and 1987, before the market crash in October, many Canadian organizations were looking to set up in Asia and so consulting was a big business. Subsequent to the crash, Pacific Rim has increasingly focussed on local business consulting and providing a range of professional services from financial advising to business stress relief counselling."

Henderson agrees there are and always have been great opportunities in Asia, but also says that without familiarity with the market and the lay of the land, "a solo act is a mistake." It's wise to seek a partner or consultant's knowledgeable in the region and market.

About establishing a business in Hong Kong, Henderson says. "If you can afford the rent, everything else – technically and legally – is easy. The rent issue is the big nut to crack".

If the rent hurdle is no obstacle, Henderson believes they are three keys to success in Hong Kong: a lot of energy and stamina to jump in and try it; a commitment to the business; and a set of goals that do not involve making money. He is adamant on the last point and says that, "if your primary objective is to make money as an entrepreneur then you may be disappointed because it doesn't happen that easily."

In this way, Henderson has attained satisfaction over the years by helping many Canadians build their careers in Hong Kong, using Pacific Rim Ventures as a launching pad. Using his words, Pacific Rim Ventures has been an incubator for a lot of other businesses, particularly Canadian companies.

One such company was recently launched by Harold Mandel, a graduate of York University. Mandel found a need in the local market for a specific service that he is now providing through his company, Marketing Consultants Limited (MCL).

MCL assists companies in utilising Audiotex, one of the latest mediums for sales and promotions. Advertising agents and promotional companies use MCL on a consulting basis for generating information or promotional programs designed for telephone lines. Harold describes the new services as a cost-efficient promotional medium that can also be an additional revenue source.

"The attraction of Hong Kong is that you're not tied down with regulations in starting up a company," says Mandel. It has been said that the hardest aspect to starting up a business in Hong Kong is choosing the name.

For many Canadians, and particularly these entrepreneurs, it appears that Hong Kong is truly a land of opportunities. What is it that makes these Canadians successful? The common denominator among Iceville, Pacific Rim Ventures and Marketing Consultants are commitment, adaptability and perseverance of the owners themselves. In short, long live the entrepreneurial spirit.

Connie Smith, a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia, is currently an executive officer with the Hong Kong Shippers Council.

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