

**TANYA CLAESSENS**

**Vice-president**  
**Kutoka Interactive Inc.**  
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**Web Site:** www.kutoka.com  
**Year Founded:** 1995  
**Employees:** 25  
**Export Sales:** 40%  
**Years Exporting:** 6  
**Export Markets:** United States, Europe and Asia



*"To succeed in global markets, you absolutely have to be distinctive to differentiate yourself, especially when you're up against giant competitors."*

**Solutions**

On the first front, Kutoka called on Export Development Canada (EDC) to insure all its sales to the United States. "We couldn't have done it without them." On the second, Kutoka used the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's (DFAIT) network of trade commissioners in various countries to research foreign companies interested in licensing their products and to select the most promising partners. (Kutoka now works with a U.S. licensee as well.)

**Competitive Edge**

From the start, Kutoka has offered a very distinctive and high-quality product. "At the time we started, most children's games were the quality of B-movies," Tanya says. "Kids were either bored with them in 20 minutes or were turned off, because they were too pedagogic. We focused on creating a very rich, interactive environment. Mia, for example, has something really special. She just seems to bring a smile in any language."

**Export Tips**

**Participate in Your Industry Trade Shows.** For Kutoka, involvement in gaming and educational software trade shows from the start enabled them to introduce their titles and make critical contacts. Now they attend the big shows, in places like Los Angeles and Cannes, every year.

**Protect Your Sales to Foreign Buyers.** Insure one of your most important business assets - your accounts receivable. Working with EDC gave Kutoka a secure foreign footing when it started exporting.

**Do Your Homework to Find the Right Foreign Partners.** "Our goal is to choose licensees who are going to be as passionate about our product as we are."

**Be Distinctive.** "To succeed in global markets, you absolutely have to be distinctive to differentiate yourself, especially when you're up against giant competitors."

For more on this story, visit: [www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen/exportlibrary/successstories-e.asp](http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen/exportlibrary/successstories-e.asp)

**JULIANNE BIEN**

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**Spectrahue Light and Sound Inc.**  
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**Web Site:** www.spectrahue.com  
**Year Incorporated:** 1999  
**Export Sales:** 60%  
**Export Markets:** United States, Mexico and Europe



*"Don't give away your trade secrets."*

**Description**

Spectrahue designs, manufactures and distributes colour light therapy products that are primarily used by spas and estheticians to promote relaxation and harmonious health. Its LumaLight™ line ranges from a portable desk model (often used by individuals suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder and mood-related disorders) to wall- and ceiling-mount illuminators that throw colour rays up to 15 feet (typically used in spas, health-care facilities, reception areas and even corporate 'quiet rooms' to create soothing, colour light tonations). The company offers courses and has produced an educational video series on colour harmonics, called Energetically Correct™. "The whole theory of colour therapy for healing has been around for a long time; it is a beautiful adjunct to traditional and alternative therapies."

**Background**

In some ways, starting Spectrahue was a spiritual quest for Julianne. She began the company after looking into alternative therapies of a gentle and non-invasive nature to cure her own chronic back pain. She discovered colour therapy, which is popular in Europe and uses colour frequencies to promote healing. Initially, she imported equipment from Germany, but, soon, she recognized the need for a higher-quality product and decided to manufacture in Canada.

**Export Goals**

"To grow quickly, go global and set up more distributors who will attend trade shows and do speaking engagements at conferences."

**Biggest Export Benefits**

"Sharing my work outside the country broadens my horizons. I tend to be a humanitarian, so seeing how much I've touched people's lives by giving them a pain-free existence is the most encouraging part. Also Americans love Canadian-made products! They perceive Canadians as being very honest."

**Biggest Challenge**

"Strategic marketing, i.e., learning the mentality of customers in different regions and adjusting my marketing materials accordingly."

**Solutions**

Julianne has accessed advice from DFAIT's trade commissioners in massaging her business plan. She has used the Program for Export Market Development (PEMD) to participate in U.S. trade shows and to help her to develop U.S. marketing materials. "I went to New York on PEMD and tripled my sales. In addition, the Business Development Bank of Canada has been wonderful in providing a loan to help finance my video series."

**Best Moment**

When people contact me from other countries after reading one of the many articles I have written for magazines, and thank me for my product. That's what really keeps me going."

**Export Tips**

**Avoid Giving Full Credit to Distributors.** "Get money or bank transfers before you ship the product. Unless distributors are meeting a certain volume first, don't give them a territory, because you'll be cutting yourself short."

**Protect Your Research and Development (R&D).** "Don't give away your trade secrets. If you've invested in R&D and outsource the manufacturing of your products, have a non-compete clause with the manufacturer."

**Keep a Balance.** "Never forget you are a woman, because that's a great sales tool in a man's world in terms of exporting. If you respect yourself and who you are, others can only respect you, too."

For more tips from Julianne Bien, visit: [www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen/exportlibrary/successstories-e.asp](http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen/exportlibrary/successstories-e.asp)