



In 1992, 10,339 visas were issued to business immigrants with the majority of applications coming from Hong Kong.

ning well in advance of your entry to Canada. There is a tremendous advantage in sitting down with qualified advisors and organizing your affairs.

"Also, it's not a decision that has to be made immediately. You don't have to suddenly sell your business here, as a matter of fact you don't have to give it up at all. There's no reason you can't work both ends of the stick, using your expertise and your business in Hong Kong to help you along. The officials only want to know how you plan to keep it going, whether you will fly back and forth regularly or perhaps have a family member look after it in your absence."

Despite the potential financial advantages Weir refers to, not everyone would agree that maintaining strong business ties to Hong Kong while you migrate is a good idea. "Those who make a complete commitment to starting a new life overseas, both in terms of business and lifestyle, seem to be the happiest and most successful," says Joe Chin of The Immigration Centre, a consulting agency in Hong Kong. "If you do the astronaut routine, that is having your family in Canada while you fly back and forth to your business in Hong Kong, it will be very disruptive and potentially damaging to your family life."

Chin says he advises his clients to use their time and their energy to establish themselves in their new country. "You may miss out on a Hong Kong deal or two," he concedes, "but money really isn't everything and it certainly can't buy happiness." ♦

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## ONE WHO CAME BACK

*"I call it the reverse brain drain," jokes Ken Law. "Like many others, I felt an irresistible urge to come back and have another go at Hong Kong."*

Now a senior level executive with a Hong Kong automotive marketing firm, Law first moved to Canada in 1978. He says he found little difficulty with the immigration process and settled in quickly. "The Canadian system is one of the fairest of any of the Western countries," notes Law. "At that time employment was not a problem and Canadians are quite liberal in their acceptance of new citizens. The Chinese have been going to Canada since the days of the railway and have earned respect for their hard-working ways."

Law, whose family had a small business in Hong Kong never completely broke his ties with his birthplace however, and despite enjoying the less frantic lifestyle and working environment that Canada offered, he eventually started to think about returning. "It was a combination of the economy, the harsh Canadian tax structure and homesickness that brought me back," he says. "I compared myself with friends who were still here in Hong Kong and it really bothered me that their equity was increasing much faster than mine."

Although he's glad to be back and is enjoying the financial success he craved, Law cautions that returning to Hong Kong is not without its drawbacks. "The cost of living here has gone up drastically since I moved to Canada. Those who sold all their property here in the late 80's before moving may find they can't afford to get back in the market."

Law implores prospective immigrants to be as realistic as they can about what it will be like in Canada. "Canada is one of the most beautiful and friendly places in the world, but it is very tough to run a business there with the same degree of instant success as is possible in Hong Kong," he says. "There, the population is so spread out and business is conducted very differently. Making money is a long-term undertaking."

Not everyone has the same priorities and feels the need to come back to Hong Kong, Law recognizes, and he has strong advice for those committed to make a new life in Canada. "I couldn't get Hong Kong out of my mind because I really never let go," he confesses. "To do it successfully, you must accept the fact that Canada is a completely different world. Give it your all and never look back." ♦



Ken Law: the Canadian economy, tax structure and homesickness for Hong Kong brought him back to the territory.