

## A NEW LOOK AT EXPORTING

### *Canadian Women Doing Business in Asia*

It was the title that hooked me. Texts about Canadian business women are rare: rarer still if they deal with women doing business in Asia. I found this sixty-page study so fascinating that I have made it the subject of my first editorial.

*Canadian Women Doing Business in Asia* was produced jointly by the Vancouver office of Industry Science and Technology, Canada (ISTC) and of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APFC.) This report puts to rest the widespread myth that it is difficult for women to do business in this region. In fact, the opposite seems to be true. According to interviews with 22 women, each with more than two years of experience doing business in Asia: women are well suited for doing business in Asia because they often show flexibility, listen, consult, work well in groups and are good in interpersonal relations. Men or women who have or develop these aptitudes, will have an edge.

The impression one gets from the experiences of the women featured in this report is that often it is their manager back home, not their Asian interlocutor, who had reservations about their doing business in Asia. The Asians show a certain initial reticence in placing their trust in a foreigner, man or woman, until they have evaluated his or her reaction to a society that differs so much from Canada.

This trust is the key to business success in Asia, as in Africa or any other foreign market. A relationship of mutual trust is not established overnight. It takes

time and care. Business deals will come later.

The women quoted in this report stress the importance of doing one's homework, and knowing one's subject. This is what matters, more than gender, as well as such factors as age and the position one holds in the pecking order back home. Which brings up the question of the business card, an indispensable tool, in Asian terms, for determining who are the real decision makers.

Besides giving observations valid for the whole area, *Canadian Women Doing Business in Asia* has a chapter for each market: the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, Taiwan and Thailand. The particularities of each market are discussed as far as business in general is concerned. There are also tips on making contacts, negotiating contracts etc.

Because it puts to rest old myths and suggests a whole repertory of practices suited to Asian reality, this report belongs on your bookshelves, if you're interested in the Asian market.

Copies of the report can be ordered from Linda Peach, researcher and coordinator for this project. The International Trade Centre, Scotia Tower, Suite 900, 650 West Georgia Street, P.O. Box 11610, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5H8. Tel.: (604) 666-1418. Fax: (604) 666-8330.

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