

SELLING TO THE EUROPEAN UNION



Now, more than ever, Europe's doors are open for business. The recent entry into force of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) means huge benefits for Canadian

business women, affecting virtually every sector. Under the agreement, 98% of European Union (EU) tariff lines are now duty-free for goods originating in Canada, and an additional 1% will be eliminated over a seven-year period.

If you are considering exporting to Europe, the possibilities are plenty. The EU is the world's second-largest economy and Canada's second-largest trading partner after the United States. With preferential access to this market, Canadian businesses now have a true competitive edge.

In addition to eliminating tariffs, CETA comes with other benefits. It provides increased market access for goods, important trade in services commitments, labour mobility provisions and increased access to government procurement. The agreement's customs and trade facilitation commitments aim to reduce processing times at the border.

Vancouver-based Trade Commissioner David Tsui is one of a global team of trade commissioners working to position women and other entrepreneurs in Europe. "When we work with you, we ask some important questions: What do you need in order to enter the market? Whether it is market knowledge, strategy, contacts or problem solving, we can help you break it down. Together, we find solutions and identify changes you need to make to adapt your product or service to each market in order to support a successful entry into Europe."

Tsui works with women-owned companies like Waterplay, an aquatic play equipment company located in Kelowna, BC. CEO Jill White says the company started pursuing markets in Europe 10 years ago. She's hopeful that CETA will make Waterplay's solutions more competitive by opening Canada's borders to innovative industrial technology and materials from Europe.

"The key to entering Europe is finding the right partners," explains White. "Selling is not something you can do well from Canada. You need the right people, and you need to travel to the market regularly to train and support your distributors. This is where having the Trade Commissioner Service in the market really helps."

Along the way, trade commissioners can provide market intelligence and knowledge, access to key contacts, problem solving support and advice. "My recommendation? Move now to establish a good position in Europe before other countries negotiate their own agreements," says Tsui.



SOUND ADVICE: BEFORE YOU GO

Montreal business woman Suzanne Murray, CEO of AXDEV Group, does approximately two-thirds of her business in Europe. She offers these words of wisdom to other business women:



Suzanne Murray
CEO, AXDEV Group

- Research your target markets. Each European country is different and has its own laws, rules and regulations.
- Become culturally proficient. Learn how to negotiate and how to dialogue in business with Europeans. Every country is different, so your approach must be sensitive to their needs. This can be a major learning curve for business women.
- Use the Euro's value to your advantage. Offer your products and services at competitive prices.
- Work with lawyers and accountants who have experience or partners in Europe. They can get your business registered, set up banking and help you with legalities for each market you target in Europe.
- Wear your Canadian pride. Canada has an excellent reputation for quality and service. Leverage it to your advantage.

Before you go, remember: Connect with the Business Women in International Trade team and the Trade Commissioner Service for market information, expert advice, on-the-ground contacts and much more.