

1.5 Where to find local contacts?

You will not find the local contacts you need by staying in your office. Consult the best practices list below and then go where you feel you are most likely to find the people you want to meet.

No matter which events you choose to attend, remember that networking and business opportunities can appear at any time. Having a large network to draw on when presented with unexpected requests can be an invaluable tool.

Best practices: Being in the right place to find contacts

Here are some networking opportunities you could attend to meet potential local contacts:

- ◆ Chamber of commerce meetings;
- ◆ Trade association meetings;
- ◆ Trade shows and conferences;
- ◆ Local business group events;
- ◆ Educational seminars;
- ◆ Service club events (e.g., Rotary Club);
- ◆ Company open-houses;
- ◆ Art gallery exhibits or other cultural events ;
- ◆ Fundraising events;
- ◆ Charity events;
- ◆ Young Presidents Association meetings; or
- ◆ Political events and official receptions (e.g. Canada Day, other countries' national day receptions)

1.6 Building your network

The ability to build and sustain a network will determine whether you succeed or fail in meeting the goal of connecting local contacts with Canadian companies. Building a network takes time and effort. You cannot expect to build a dynamic network by attending a single event, nor can you expect immediate results. Some of the great work you do in researching and building your network today might benefit a Canadian company years from now. Here are some field-tested tips you can use to help build your network in a local market.