

SUCCESS STARTS HERE



BWIT team with Manjit Minhas (centre), co-star of CBC's *Dragon's Den*.

"BWIT hosted a successful event with our partners, Carleton University, Export Development Canada, and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The event, *Putting Canada's Progressive Trade Agenda into Practice*, featured guest speaker Manjit Minhas," explains Danuta Tardif, BWIT Trade Commissioner.

Canadian business women are a driving force in our economy. On your road to success, the Business Women in International Trade (BWIT) program is your first step. Whether you're actively exporting or considering making the leap, our team is here to help make the journey to global markets a smooth one.

Since 1997, the BWIT program has focused on giving Canadian business women the support system they need to access global value chains, including:

- Women-focused trade missions
- Tailored information about government services and programs
- Access to trade commissioners in Canada and abroad
- Business-to-business introductions
- Access to funding opportunities

"We have a powerful network of allies across Canada and around the world," explains Josie Mousseau, Deputy Director of the BWIT program. "We're all dedicated to seeing Canadian women succeed in global markets. We make it our mission to connect business women to the people, programs and opportunities that will help their businesses prosper."

One look at the numbers, and it's easy to understand why women-owned businesses are a force to be reckoned with in Canada. Majority women-owned businesses contribute over \$117 billion annually to the Canadian economy.

One of these is Montreal-based skincare company Derme&Co. CEO Manon Pilon has worked closely with the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) and BWIT to correct her course in China. After one attempt to enter the Chinese market on her own, Pilon says she had to pull back when her \$150,000 investment did not bear fruit.

"I knew China had great potential for us, so I reached out to the TCS and BWIT. I was given excellent advice and they connected me with the CanExport program. With their help, we received funding to pursue our opportunities there," says Pilon.

With a fresh mindset and a strong support system, Pilon showcased her company at a large Hong Kong trade show and hosted product demonstrations. "I met a respected Chinese chemist who has become a powerful ally for us in China. He's now our spokesperson and our distributor."



Manon Pilon
CEO, Derme&Co.

Trade Commissioner Audrey Streel, based at the TCS Montreal regional office, supported Pilon's China plans. "As trade commissioners, we provide highly personalized market preparation services to companies like Derme&Co. We work with them to identify their capacity, clarify their value proposition, examine sales channels, assess target markets and refine their market entry plans."

As for Pilon, she says it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. "Working with BWIT and the TCS was the best experience. I'm excited about exploring the next market with them."

"The lesson here is to work with us," says Streel, "We make it our business to understand yours from the ground up. It is our goal to help you on your export journey—every step of the way."

Learn more about BWIT's activities and upcoming trade missions at businesswomenintrade.gc.ca.

STRONGER TOGETHER

BWIT takes great pride in being part of a national network of partners that supports women entrepreneurs. Here's what one of our valued partners has to say:

"The Women's Enterprise Centres bring the grassroots development of entrepreneurs to the table, and BWIT provides the opportunities and guidance our business women need to navigate new markets. The women-focused trade missions BWIT leads create incredible opportunities to grow their networks and secure contracts globally. The BWIT team is our go-to resource for information and support."

—Sandra Altner, CEO, Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba and Chair, Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada

