

Trade Commissioner Heads Up Canada Business Service Centre

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In the last edition of *TCS International*, we discussed the network of Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) — one of the domestic partners that is responsible for helping companies prepare for international markets. This past March, one of our Trade Commissioners (TC) accepted an assignment to head up the centre in Vancouver, allowing us an insider's view of the Canada/British Columbia Business Service Centre (CBCBSC). Carl Kuhnke has been with the Trade Commissioner Service since 1976, and has served in Tokyo (twice), Munich, Ottawa and Seattle. Carl spoke to *TCS International* this past March, a few weeks after starting his new assignment in Vancouver.

TCS: Welcome back to Canada, Carl. I know you have recently arrived from Seattle and are now heading up the CBSC in Vancouver. How is the view so far from a domestic vantage point?

CK: There's not a cloud in the sky, it's 17 degrees Celsius, the view is great! I've been here two weeks — 10 working days — and it's fascinating to see what goes on in these business centres. At the post in Seattle, just two hours from here, the Business Development Officers know very little about what goes on in these centres, which for the most part are jointly funded federally and provincially.

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TCS: How does your job differ from being a trade program manager outside of Canada (border-out) to one inside Canada (border-in)?

CK: In DFAIT, whether you are abroad or in Ottawa, you tend to be "issue-oriented". Even as the Senior Trade Commissioner in Seattle, I found that many departmental issues came to bear on the management side. Domestically in my new position, the issue is management. I am spending 40 percent of my time on personnel and union issues, and the other 60 percent on what DFAIT would call "program issues" — the business plan, the operational budget, that type of thing — but all management-oriented.

TCS: I understand that you service companies that are interested in foreign markets. At which point would your office refer someone to the International Trade Centre (ITC) or to a post?

CK: We have an extensive trade markets library here, and our Business Service Officers are quite effective at "pathfinding". Here at the CBCBSC,