

# business women IN TRADE

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They “rocked” Washington! See inside to find out more about these 100 plus businesswomen who participated in the first international trade mission for Canadian women a decade ago.



**W**omen are not only playing an active role in international trade – but many businesswomen, such as the award winners profiled within this issue, are excelling in highly-competitive industries in the global arena. Indeed, they are outstanding role models for all Canadian businesses at a time of increasing globalization and competition.

It's more important than ever to sharpen our entrepreneurial instincts as a country. Global value and supply chains, combined with successive breakthroughs in information and communications technology, have fuelled nothing short of a revolution in international commerce. Distances are shrinking, borders are being erased, and countries like China, India and Brazil are coming to the fore, and challenging all trading nations to become more competitive and more entrepreneurial.

The stories of these women trailblazers help show the way.

In recognition of women's growing role in international trade, Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently appointed Helena Guergis as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Sport. This new position underscores the important role played by women in Canada's economic performance. It also serves as another channel to solicit input on ways to redefine how the government can best work with the private sector to meet your international business needs.

Our department has a strong tradition of support to Canadian business, including Trade Commissioners and other resources to help you export and invest abroad.

I encourage all business leaders to think about their companies in the context of the global economy. There are many opportunities to expand into other markets, or form partnerships with other international companies. Your leadership is putting Canadian companies at the forefront. Keep up the good work!

**David Emerson**  
Minister of International Trade



**T**his year's issue of *Businesswomen in Trade* marks an important milestone: the 10th anniversary of the first-ever all-women Canadian trade mission to Washington, D.C. in 1997.

Back then, there was little known about women entrepreneurs and it took a cross-country recruitment drive to find and select those interested in exporting. In the end, over 100 Canadian women from coast to coast participated in the mission.

For this issue, we tracked down many of these women to find out where they are today and whether participating in that historic mission a decade ago was indeed pivotal for their business and export growth. You can read some of their stories in these pages. Many learned a great deal to help accelerate export success, some even closed deals during and after the mission, and everyone built an enduring network of contacts that has lasted to this day.

The mission also launched a cascade of initiatives – both from the public and private sectors – to encourage and help more women entrepreneurs to export.

Today, there are a host of resources to help you, from regional programs and Trade Commissioners to women's business organizations across the country (*see pages 11 and 12*).

In my new role, I look forward to meeting with many of these organizations and to spearheading initiatives such as trade missions that will both introduce more women to the vast opportunities in the global marketplace and help existing women exporters do even more international business.

Take advantage of these resources to catapult your business onto the global stage!

**Helena Guergis**  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Sport



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