

business women IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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SPRING 2009



In introducing this year's edition of the *Business Women in International Trade* newsletter, it gives me great pleasure as the new Minister of International Trade to be part of this annual chronicling of milestones and successes in the women's trade community. The Canadian government's ongoing commitment to encourage and support the growth of women exporters is stronger than ever, and perhaps more important than ever in this challenging economic climate. Expanding internationally can be a powerful pillar of your business strategy. It reduces reliance on a single market so your business can weather turbulent times and even grow.

This issue features resources and tips to help you pursue global markets. It also highlights our department's partnerships with women's business organizations across Canada and other government agencies like Status of Women Canada on an exciting initiative called *WEConnect Canada* that will help Canadian business women expand their business internationally.

We also profile five trailblazers in this issue. Not only have these women made their mark in non-traditional industries, but their stories demonstrate that gender does not have to be a barrier in the international trade arena. Another common thread is a deep commitment to corporate social responsibility in the way they conduct business, both at home and across borders, especially in the area of preserving the environment.

Stockwell Day

The Honourable Stockwell Day

Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway

Connecting Women to Contracts

Is your business at least 51% owned by a woman? Does it have export potential? If you answered yes to these questions, then you will be excited about the launch of *WEConnect Canada*, an independent non-profit organization that will qualify women-owned businesses (www.WEConnectCanada.org). Qualification makes it easier for corporations with supplier diversity programs in Canada, the U.S., the U.K., and other countries to find certified businesses. *WEConnect Canada* will also offer training, mentoring and coaching opportunities.

WEConnect Canada is guided by a corporate board of directors. Its founding corporate members include Accenture, Alcatel-Lucent, BMO Financial Group, Cisco, IBM, Manpower, Pfizer, Staples, and Wal-Mart, all of which have a supplier diversity program for women-owned businesses.

"Now more than ever, the world needs supply chain development that includes women-owned businesses that offer good value, innovation, job creation and economic growth," says Laraine Kaminisky, *WEConnect Canada's* Lead Strategist. "We are excited about building on the existing support network in Canada and partnering with corporations, associations, governments, and women entrepreneurs to accelerate the growth of women-owned businesses in the country through *WEConnect*."

As one of the key partners of this initiative, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) plays an important role

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in heightening awareness of *WEConnect Canada* through its Trade Commissioner Service, both domestically and abroad. As major contributors to this initiative, Status of Women Canada along with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency will support the qualification training for women entrepreneurs to make it easier for them to access new markets.

Why Seek *WEConnect* Qualification?

Once qualified by *WEConnect*, you can:

- access new corporate and government markets
- develop new market opportunities with large contract potential
- gain a foothold along the international chain of supply and demand
- join a powerful business network
- participate in business-to-business trading and partnerships
- grow your business!

"*WEConnect Canada* will have a major impact on Canadian women in trade," says Maureen Geddes, President of Cangram International Inc. and one of the woman entrepreneurs who participated in roundtable consultations organized by DFAIT last fall to introduce this supplier diversity initiative. "It's a win-win situation for all!"

To get started, email info@WEConnectCanada.org



Status of Women Canada is pleased to work in partnership with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada to support the vitally important work being done to ensure the success of Canadian business women as they

conduct trade around the globe. In these times of economic uncertainty, we remain committed to advancing women's full participation in all aspects of Canadian life and are actively identifying ways to help women expand their ability to grow their business to the next level of success. Status of Women Canada supports women in business in many ways. We have recently launched *WEConnect Canada*, which has the potential to catapult a greater number of successful women-owned businesses onto the global stage. In my current role, I look forward to continuing to create the conditions for women's success in domestic and international trade and business domains, building on the connections made in my previous role as Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. I am delighted to play a key role together with Minister Day in ensuring the success of Canadian women at home and abroad.

Helena Guergis

The Honourable Helena Guergis

Minister of State (Status of Women)



How did Joanne Caissie [centre] of small-town New Brunswick get the attention of a U.S. celebrity chef and end up with her product in the White House?

Find out why trade missions work...and how they can work for you! See page 2.

Expanding across borders is easier than you may think.

Business Women in International Trade helps p 3

Successful exporters share their secrets p 4

Coast-to-coast networks exist p 7

Resources to access p 8



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