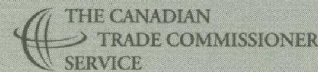


Where to find information and other programs and services on-line...

Although exporting can appear daunting at times, especially to new exporters, the good news is that you don't have to go it alone. The **CANADIAN TRADE COMMISSIONER SERVICE (TCS)** and DFAIT, along with other government departments and agencies, offer a broad range of valuable programs and services to help you do business abroad. Whether you are looking to acquire new technology, venture capital, or investment or to commercialize innovations, our network of 500 trade commissioners in over 140 markets is there to assist you. To learn more about our programs and services, visit www.infoexport.gc.ca.



British Columbia-based companies looking for information to start up a business or expand their business into international markets have a valuable single-window source of information in the **CANADA/BRITISH COLUMBIA BUSINESS SERVICES SOCIETY** (www.smallbusinessbc.ca). The Society provides access to government programs, services, information and data. New and potential exporters can meet with a member of the Society's Export Team to receive coaching on exporting their goods or services. The Business Library includes hundreds of "how to" publications, country and market information, and government procurement opportunities. Societies providing similar business services are found across Canada.

ADVANCING CANADIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP INC. (ACE) (www.acecanada.ca) is a national organization that seeks to strengthen entrepreneurship in Canada by offering innovative, hands-on entrepreneurship training programs on university and college campuses across Canada. Students at Canadian universities or colleges can form or join a campus ACE Team to gain entrepreneurial experience to ready themselves for the business world. Mentored by a board of advisors, ACE student teams apply their classroom learning to developing business ventures, educational outreach initiatives, and student business owner support projects. Their accomplishments are recognized at a national competition.

If you are an undergraduate business owner, you may be eligible to apply for the Canadian College and University Entrepreneur Award, sponsored by the **CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (CCSBE)** (www.ccsbe.org). The CCSBE is a national organization that promotes and advances the development of small business and entrepreneurship through research, education and training, networking, and dissemination of scholarly and policy-oriented information. The national winner of the Entrepreneur Award (\$2,000 prize) advances to the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards (\$US10,000 top prize).

Supporting young business owners, the **ROYAL BANK OF CANADA (RBC)** can help with financing and other resources that assist young entrepreneurs to expand their business. The RBC Web site has a section dedicated to young entrepreneurs, offering information about financing options and links to other Web sites rich in information on networking and mentoring, tools and training, and tips for business success, as well as links to resources catering specifically to Aboriginal young entrepreneurs. Visit the Young Entrepreneur pages of the RBC Web site at www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/ye/

Innovation is crucial to any nation's economic success in the global market. **YOUNG INVENTORS INTERNATIONAL (YII)** (www.younginventorsinternational.com) connects inventors and innovative entrepreneurs under the age of 35 to a global network of resources and support and provides the skills and knowledge they need to successfully commercialize their innovations. With a base of more than 300 members in nearly 20 countries, including Canada, the Young Inventors Web site provides access to an on-line communication network, information about YII conferences and workshops, and a mentoring matching process.

Participating on the University of Toronto Ace Team provided me with the practical skills I needed to start a business, as well as contact with some of Canada's leading entrepreneurs.

SAHVIV KHULLAR, PRESIDENT, FUTURE LEADERS OF GREATER TORONTO

Prepared by the Market Support Division (TMM)

Franchising in Africa — continued from page 1

and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The AfDB is therefore particularly interested in initiatives that can contribute to the long-term growth and viability of SMEs. International experience has shown that franchising—largely an SME undertaking—contributes to poverty reduction and wealth creation by stimulating entrepreneurship and transferring technical expertise through franchise licence agreements. The AfDB, therefore, commissioned a study to review the franchising industry in Africa and to propose a strategy for increasing private-sector development through franchising.

Championed by Roger Couture, Canada's former Executive Director at the AfDB, and funded in large part by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the ground-breaking AfDB study was carried out by Northern Lights. "This being our first project in Africa, we relied heavily on the advice and direction of what we affectionately came to refer to as Team Canada," says J. Perry Maisonneuve, Principal of Northern Lights and Team Leader

of the Project. "Jean-Francois Desgroseilliers, DFAIT's Liaison Officer to the AfDB, Jean-Charles Joly of DFAIT's International Trade Centre in Toronto, and Kent Peters of Export Development Canada, were invaluable to us every step of the way," adds Maisonneuve.

Franchising: an interactive partnership

Conducting primary research, the study authors found that franchising is a good way to promote SME development by linking mature and young businesses and by connecting international and African enterprises.

The formal transfer of knowledge that takes place through a direct, long-term franchising business relationship makes franchising ideally suited for Canadians, who excel at developing and sharing expertise and know-how. Moreover, the risks are not as severe as generally believed. Studies have shown that in Africa the success rate for franchises is exceptionally high compared with that of SMEs in general. Following North American

trends, 80% of SMEs in Africa fail within two years, while the failure rate for franchised businesses has been estimated at between 3% and 14%.

South Africa: gateway to Africa

South Africa is where the study recommends investors begin. The country has the strongest franchise sector on the continent, with approximately 478 franchise systems that are supported by an active and progressive trade association, the Franchise Association of Southern Africa.

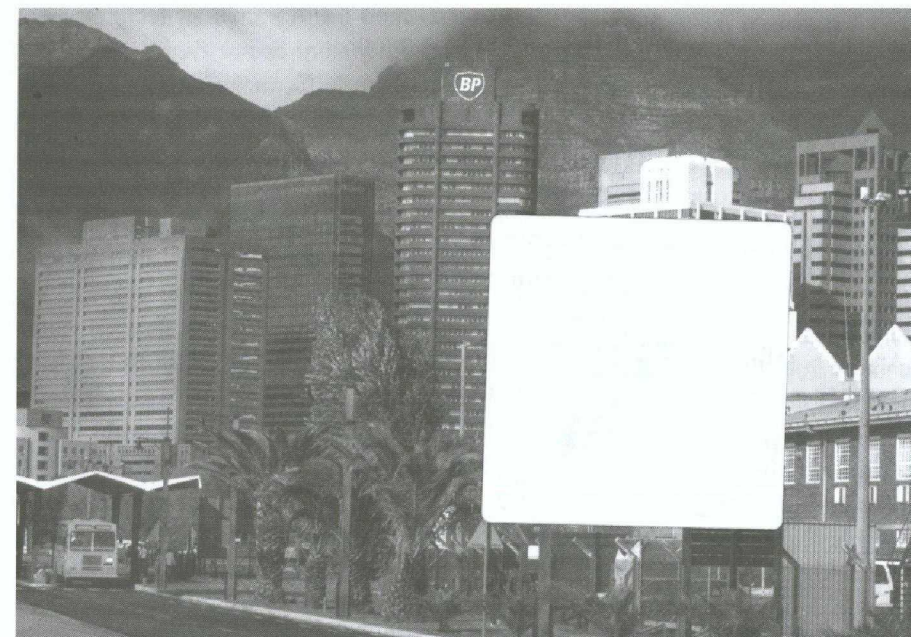
Maisonneuve describes South Africa as "very Canadian" in its nature, legal approach and accounting systems. "South Africans welcome Canadians and want to do business with them," he says. "Since the passing of the Apartheid regime, the country is eager to catch up with the rest of the world. Canadians can get comfortable in that market, learn the way business is done there, and team up with South Africans to expand into other African countries."

Seek out Northern Lights

Where should a company interested in pursuing these opportunities start? Northern Lights itself is a good place. Established in 1998 with five full-time employees and a roster of consultants, the company specializes in helping both aspiring and existing franchisors to develop and launch a franchise system or distribution strategy. As Maisonneuve says: "We're Canadians, we're working with the AfDB, and we know franchising."

For more information, contact J. Perry Maisonneuve, Principal of Northern Lights, tel.: (905) 812-1219, toll free: 1 877 967-8449, e-mail: jpmaisonneuve@franchiseservices.ca, Web site: www.franchiseservices.ca, or Ines Sagrario, AfDB franchise consultant, e-mail: sagrario-ines@afdb.org.

(For the unabridged version of this article, go to www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadexport under "International Financial Institutions.") ❖



Franchising in Africa: Cape Town, South Africa is a good place to start.