

Kudos to Outstanding Exporters

Women entrepreneurs continue to make an ever-growing impact on the Canadian and global economies. Congratulations to these outstanding businesswomen whose export achievements were recognized with prestigious awards in the past year!

BDC Exporter Award Winner – 2006 RBC Canadian Woman Entrepreneur Awards



“ World domination is a full-time job – requiring lots of guts, determination and confidence.”

Kyle MacDonald

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Year Established: 1987
Employees: 105
Years Exporting: 1995
Export Sales: 60%
Export Markets: U.S., Australia, New Zealand, UK, Ireland, South Africa, China

BUSINESS: Revolutionizing the retail banking industry, Phoenix is the only company in Canada, and one of only three worldwide, that competes on a global level in the ATM software solution market.

BACKGROUND: Kyle always had a vision to do business globally. With a business degree and 10 years of direct experience in the banking and self-service industry, she started Phoenix to improve self-service banking technology and fearlessly took on an oligopoly. In 1999, *National Post* and *Chatelaine* magazines honoured her as one of Canada's top woman entrepreneurs. Today, Kyle criss-crosses the globe regularly, enjoying international recognition for her bold initiatives.

COMPETITIVE EDGE: Developed the first ATM software that could run on any ATM hardware.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS: Deep knowledge of customer needs combined with nimbleness in meeting those needs; and a team of gutsy, talented pros who routinely raise the bar with world-class software solutions.

BIGGEST EXPORT CHALLENGE: To compete successfully and profitably against big global competitors with deep pockets.

RESOURCES USED: Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) Tax Incentive Program to help fund some product development; and the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service when entering new markets to help add credibility. “One of the must-do’s is making connections with the trade commissioners when we go into a new country. We want them to know who we are and what we do.”

LESSON LEARNED: “References are everything when cracking into new markets. How can another country have confidence in your product if your own customers at home do not? And if you make a promise, keep it. In geographically remote locations, promises that you deliver on will earn you some of your best references.”

BEST MOMENT: When Phoenix beat out a \$6 billion corporation to snag its first international contract – with the Bank of New Zealand (member of National Australia Group) in 2000.

GREATEST EXPORT REWARDS: “Outperforming very large competitors worldwide as well as experiencing how Canadians are so warmly welcomed as potential suppliers around the globe.”

EXPORT GOALS: “To increase export sales to 80% of revenues by penetrating new markets like China, India and South America but, at the same time, to keep all our IT investment in Canada.”

BIGGEST EXPORT TIP: “Be prepared to travel in order to develop solid client relationships and play up the fact that you’re from Canada because people love our country. Take Canadian gifts and flags and build relationships socially and personally. We tend to be telephone/e-mail people in North America, but other countries are not. It’s important to get your arms around the cultural differences.”

ON WINNING EXPORTER AWARD

“ It’s the most meaningful award I’ve ever won and a big win for Phoenix. To receive national recognition of achievement for what it takes to compete globally is pretty special!”