

Private Sector Helps Small Business Dream Big

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When Robert Presser boarded a *Canadian Airlines* Boeing 767 in February 1996 bound for São Paulo, he was about to do something that he had never done before. Presser, Vice-President of *Acme Engineering Products* of Montreal, had good reason to believe that the Brazilian market for environmental control devices was about to crack wide open, and he didn't want to miss the action.

Previously, Presser had been held back because his company lacked the resources to travel so far to tap a potentially lucrative market. This time was different — Presser had a backer in *Canadian Airlines International*.

Through the *Small Business International Expansion Program*, *Canadian Airlines* has helped entrepreneurs like Presser to leap the long-distance barrier. Each year, the Program provides international airfare, accommodation and local support to 20 selected small companies with international growth potential.

Heading up the airline's support of this fast-growing segment of the economy is the *Canadian Airlines Foundation*. The Foundation's aim is to develop and support community-investment programs in areas where *Canadian Airlines* can have the most impact. Other examples of the Foundation's work include promoting a healthy tourism industry, assisting people in medical need, and supporting volunteerism among employees and retirees.

The Foundation's goal for small businesses is to help open the door to international markets. *Canadian Airlines* has flown entrepreneurs to Asia, Europe, the United Kingdom, the South Pacific, Latin America

and South America.

"By offering air transportation, accommodation and local support, we can help bridge the gap that often prevents small businesses from expanding abroad," says Dan O'Grady, Foundation manager.

Robert Presser said that Brazil would have been beyond the reach of his 15-employee company. Instead, not only has he made contacts in the South American country, he is poised to achieve sales by year-end.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any business that:

- has been in operation for at least two years
- has international growth potential
- is a registered Canadian company and is resident in Canada
- is financially stable
- has annual gross sales of \$1 million to \$10 million

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE?

- Forms must be returned by May 16, 1997

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Interested entrepreneurs must fill out an application form and provide references.
- Applicants will be asked to describe their product, the international opportunity that they are pursuing, the problems that they have encountered trying to develop the home market and the anticipated benefits of international exposure.
- All proposals will be reviewed by a panel of experts, including

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