

Draft article for CanadExport - 15 December 1997 edition  
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## **Canadian Businesswomen in Washington**

### **A Dynamic Force to Be Reckoned With**

*International Trade Minister Sergio Marchi led the first-ever Canadian businesswomen's trade mission to Washington, D.C., from November 12 to 14. The mission brought together a wealth of talent from Canada's most promising and ambitious women entrepreneurs, determined to do their share in the revitalization of the Canadian economy and creation of jobs for Canadians.*

Many of the 125 Canadian participants came to Washington to create contacts with U.S. firms, or to strengthen already existing networks by forming strategic alliances with potential U.S. partners. All came to hone their knowledge about the intricacies of the U.S. market, as well as to network and establish links with other Canadian women entrepreneurs.

#### **Mission facilitated deal making**

For all of the participants, the mission was a great tool for reaching out to the U.S. market -- even for seasoned entrepreneurs such as Bianca Batistini, vice-president of CAN-AM, a Magog, Quebec, consulting firm specializing in immigration and export services. Batistini, who has been involved in the U.S. market since 1982, came away from the mission with a potential U.S. partner specializing in commercial law who she believes will facilitate her work in the United States.

The mission exceeded the expectations of Rita Vallières, president of Fredericton, New Brunswick's, Optimum Translation, a world leader in linguistic services. Vallières, who discovered an excellent potential partnership with a U.S. translation firm, believes the mission has heralded in a new era of women entrepreneurs.

This sentiment was echoed by Melanie Sibbitt, President of Two Crazy Ladies Inc., of Willowdale, Ontario -- a Canadian promotional products firm that announced, during the mission, a partnership with U.S. convention and meeting planning group, KT and Associates Inc.

Convinced that women need to be taught at an early age how to manage their money and take charge of their life, Sibbitt will be collaborating with three other entrepreneurs she met on the mission on a book showing women how to take the plunge into business.