

How Canada Business Service Centres help unprepared companies become our clients – The Miami-Montreal Experience



Team Canada Inc • Équipe Canada inc

To maximize client results, posts now work with clients who have researched and selected their target markets. This is one of the major results of the Trade Commissioner Service renewal exercise. This means however that posts will have to refer some companies to the services available in Canada to help them prepare. How does this process work? Please read on!

Interview with David Ericson (DE), trade officer at our Miami Consulate

David, you recently referred a Canadian company to the Canada Business Service Centre (CBSC) in Montreal. What were the circumstances?

DE: We received a request from a Montreal consultant who had the mandate to market two products of a Canadian beverage manufacturer.

Why did you refer them to the CBSC?

DE: By the type of questions the request contained, I could see that the company was unaware of the counselling services offered by Agriculture and Agrifood Canada in Montreal. Clearly, they had not researched the market. Moreover, I had very little information on the company and its products, so it was difficult for me to speak to my local contacts about them.

So you referred them to the CBSC?

DE: Yes, but I did more than that. I believe that this company's products have potential in the Florida market and possibly in the Caribbean markets. In fact, this client could be a valuable participant for the upcoming Miami Food, Fisheries and Beverages Trade Fair taking place this September 27 and 28. So I copied Maurice Kaspy of the Montreal CBSC on my correspondence with the client, and asked him to get in touch with them.

Do you know what happened next?

DE: Maurice informed me that he had, in fact, called and met with the client. I really hope the company can participate in our fair, and I look forward to helping them enter the Florida and Caribbean markets.

Interview with Maurice Kaspy (MK), export contact at InfoEntrepreneurs, the CBSC for the Quebec region

Maurice, I understand that some posts have started referring to you companies that had approached them abroad. How do the company managers react when you call them?

MK: They are a little surprised at first, even though the posts advise them that someone from Montreal would be calling them. They are especially surprised to learn about all the ser-

vices available in Canada. You know, the initial reaction of a small company interested in Japan is to contact our embassy in Japan. Often, they are not aware of everything that can and should be done before they go abroad.

What do you say to the companies that the posts ask you to contact?

MK: First of all, their needs have to be clarified and their level of preparation evaluated. As part of the diagnosis, we can offer them export guides, information on government programs, and contacts who can help them better understand the export process. In addition, we can provide them with market studies and contacts with partners of Team Canada Inc who work in their region or their industrial sector, who can advise them on the selection of one or more target markets. It all depends on the diagnosis.

Had companies you spoke to researched and selected the markets of the posts they had contacted?

MK: No, and their correspondence with the posts was often too general. Companies must be encouraged to prepare themselves in Canada before contacting posts. Plus, they must properly structure their requests; we are willing to help companies do this. We encourage them to answer the six questions that appear on the TCS services list, register with WIN Exports, and ask for services by name. But officers abroad also have a role to play.

Refer unprepared companies to 1-888-811-1119