

CANADIAN TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATOR INITIATIVE BRINGS REWARDS



Wendy MacKinnon Keith,
Founder
DigitalRetailApps

Edmonton's Wendy MacKinnon Keith has her sights firmly set on building a billion-dollar global company. As the founder of DigitalRetailApps, her goal is to revolutionize the shopper experience through the company's patented mobile self-pay application. Shoppers pay for their purchases directly on smartphones, and retailers can verify the transactions in-store.

The technology has caught the attention of Visa's global headquarters, where it's currently being deployed. This is a huge leap for DigitalRetailApps, a small firm competing with thousands of payment technology companies.

"We decided early on to develop tier 1 relationships with firms like Visa that have a huge influence with our potential customers," explains MacKinnon Keith. "We are in discussions with large global retailers to pilot and deploy the technology."

As a participant in the Canadian Technology Accelerator (CTA) initiative in San Francisco, MacKinnon Keith has been well-positioned to build these relationships. An initiative of the Trade Commissioner Service, CTAs help high-growth earlier-stage Canadian companies enter international markets.

There are currently 11 CTAs in nine locations: Boston; Denver; New York City; Philadelphia; San Francisco; Silicon Valley; London, UK; Mumbai/New Delhi, India and France. Participating companies must be working in the life sciences, clean technologies, and information and communication technologies sectors.

"We give participants office space and services, we offer advice and we connect them with business leaders who act as mentors," says Dina Santos, Trade Commissioner in Palo Alto, California. "We introduce participants to venture capitalists and strategic partners that will help them accelerate their success in the market."

MacKinnon Keith says it's been a tremendous experience. "Having office space close to our potential channel partners and large retail companies has been critical to our development and growth."

"I highly recommend the Canadian Technology Accelerator initiative," she says. "Make sure you have the resources to spend significant time in the city. Success is about showing up, being there and fully participating."

For more information on the CTA initiative, visit tradecommissioner.gc.ca/CTA.

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“ Sound advice: Access supplier diversity programs



"Cordé Électrique manufactures made-to-order electrical harnesses for the automotive, appliance and medical industries. I founded the business five years ago, and we are now expanding into the U.S.

In June 2015, I participated in the business women's trade mission, led by BWIT, to WBENC in Austin, Texas to evaluate supplier diversity opportunities for women-owned

businesses. During the mission, I met with Toyota, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler. They invited me to take part in their supplier diversity fairs, where I made excellent contacts.

Following my participation in the trade mission, the number of opportunities for my business skyrocketed. We're now clear on our strategy: our goal is to sell to tier 1 and 2 suppliers. To do this, we are working in collaboration with the Trade Commissioner Service in Detroit which is connecting us with tier 1 and 2 suppliers in our target market. Our experience so far has been very encouraging and the future looks promising."

Lise Déziel, Founder
Cordé Électrique
Valcourt, QC