

Plan ahead for a free trade future

At negotiating tables around the world, it's full steam ahead for Canada's pro-trade plan—the most ambitious international trade expansion effort in our nation's history.

An impressive 20 free trade initiatives are currently underway with the European Union, India, Japan and several others. Each shines the spotlight on markets with huge potential for Canadian business women.

These are large, dynamic and fast-growing markets. For example, an agreement with the European Union, a market of 500 million people, has the potential to boost Canada's annual income by \$12.1 billion (at 2007 prices). That represents exciting potential for Canadian business women.

Alena Poremsky, the International Sales Manager for Evans Consoles in Calgary, agrees. "In Europe, we have to compete with European console suppliers, but we're at a disadvantage because of the taxes. With an FTA in place, I see the potential for us to double our business there."

In addition to the EU, Canada is engaged in negotiations with large, dynamic and fast-growing markets such as Japan and India. Canada is also negotiating with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S. and Vietnam). The TPP currently represents a market of more than 792 million people and a combined GDP of \$27.5 trillion—over 38% of the world's economy.

If you're planning ahead for these agreements, look no further than the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) for information and advice. "The TCS is an amazing resource for Canadian companies. We have people on the ground in 150 cities worldwide," explains Senior Trade Commissioner Patricia Elliott. "If you have questions about the FTAs and upcoming opportunities, or you need contacts such as suppliers and local partners, the TCS should always be your first point of contact."

To find out more, visit international.gc.ca/yournextmarket.

Resource centre: global intel

FITTskills: The Forum for International Trade Training has released the 6th edition of its FITTs skills textbooks. Topics include Global Supply Chain Management, International Marketing and International Trade Finance, among others. For more information on these valuable tools of the trade, visit fitt.ca.

Canada-U.S. business: Do you cross the border for business? The Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters' new *Canada-U.S. Business Travel Guide* outlines the rules for entry and describes the visas you need. Access it at cme-mec.ca.

From sandpaper to certification: Why you should do it

When Ruth Grady traded the travel industry for ownership of PEI sandpaper company, Northern Abrasives Inc., she had no idea her products would one day grace prime shelf space at Walmart. That's exactly where she is today thanks to certification as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) through WEConnect Canada. This non-profit organization delivers the certification that connects business women with the growing global demand for diverse and innovative suppliers.



Ruth Grady

"We are in every store across Canada. Without certification, Walmart would never have looked at us," explains Grady. "Now, we're being considered for shelf space in Walmart's U.S. stores. There's huge potential for us."

WBE certification gives women VIP access to sales opportunities available through supplier diversity programs at the vast majority of Fortune 500 companies. These organizations—in Canada, the U.S. and, increasingly, other parts of the world—set aside a specific spend each year for goods and services from women, Aboriginal, disabled and other minority suppliers. To qualify, your firm must be 51% (or more) woman-owned and operated.

Certification has its rewards. Besides connecting with potentially lucrative opportunities, you also get access to training, mentoring, plus a vast network of like-minded business women who may want to partner with you to tender for large contracts.

For more information about certification, supplier diversity and upcoming women's trade missions, visit weconnectcanada.org.

“ Sound advice

"If you're entering into a new market, focus your efforts on one specific product, service or area rather than spreading your efforts too thinly. Hire young on-the-ground coordinators and develop their skills to work with you over time. You will meet many new contacts. Find a system to organize ongoing communication with them."

Francine Whiteduck,
President and CEO
Whiteduck Resources
Kitigan Zibi, QC

