

Dedicated to Canadian entrepreneurs

The **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CANADA (BDC)** is dedicated to supporting the country's small and medium-sized businesses with innovative financing solutions, venture capital at all stages of growth, and customized consulting services. Acknowledging the importance of developing new markets, the Bank has designed specific business solutions enabling Canadian entrepreneurs to access foreign markets.



Comprehensive exporting solutions

Through BDC Consulting Group, the Bank provides entrepreneurs with comprehensive exporting solutions, from evaluating the export potential of a business to establishing a distribution channel in foreign markets. The Bank also offers a wide range of innovative financing solutions for Canadian exporters and potential exporters. In addition, BDC supports businesses with high-growth potential in their export activities by providing them with venture capital financing.

Small Business Week and the Young Entrepreneur Awards

Apart from offering comprehensive and customized business solutions to Canadian small and medium-sized exporters, the Bank has been celebrating Canadian entrepreneurship for 25 years through Small Business Week®, the annual event par excellence for Canadian entrepreneurs. For the last quarter of a century, hundreds of thousands of people have taken part in thousands of activities — many centred on exporting — that have been held across the country, and more than 240 young entrepreneurs have received the Young Entrepreneur Awards (YEA).

Small Business Week's main event is the Young Entrepreneur Awards presentation, which honours talented young business owners — one from each province and territory — who have distinguished themselves with their innovative spirit and business acumen. Each year, the winners of the YEA are eligible for other awards, including the Export Achievement Award. The Young Entrepreneur Awards thus recognize the importance of exports for young entrepreneurs. Moreover, a company's export performance is one of the selection criteria considered by the panel that selects the winners.



ERIC GRANT-O'GRADY

Two Stage Innovation Inc.: A winning company

In 2003, **TWO STAGE INNOVATION INC.** (www.twostage.com) won the Young Entrepreneur Award for Ontario. Located in Milton and headed by Eric Grant-O'Grady, this dynamic company specializes in customs systems integration for the automotive and environmental sectors. Two Stage Innovation symbolizes well the growing importance of exports in the new economy. As Grant-O'Grady points out: "We only started exporting in 2001 when we sold a system to Hungary. And now, in 2004, our exports represent a third in a more than \$4-million total business."

For Two Stage Innovation, as for any other business, the recipe for success can be summed up in a few words: commitment by senior management, an innovative product, a market niche, and client loyalty. This last factor is crucial. In fact, Grant-O'Grady admits, "The best testimonial we can ask of our clients is their repeat business. Take the Hungarian contract. We did a contract for a Canadian firm, and when they built a plant in that country, they came to us because they knew we could get the job done."

BDC: A solid commitment to Canadian exporters

The Business Development Bank of Canada is strongly committed to helping Canadian small and medium-sized businesses in their export ventures. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, the total financing authorized by the Bank for exporters and knowledge-based industries exceeded \$1 billion. For BDC, helping companies grow and thrive in an increasingly competitive world is not only part of its mandate, it's truly an act of faith in our Canadian entrepreneurs. To contact BDC, call **1-877-232-2269** or visit www.bdc.ca.

Below are just some of the organizations that can provide information, advice, resources, training, and peer support — everything you need to solidify your business to make it export ready.

Peer support: there's nothing like it. The national Young Entrepreneurs Association and the international Young Entrepreneurs' Organization are both dedicated to peer support.

Created in 1991, the **YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ASSOCIATION (YEA)** (www.yea.ca) has evolved into a national organization with 10 chapters across Canada, whose mandate is to support young people in business — primarily those aged 35 and under. YEA provides its members with the opportunity to learn from one another's experience and to benefit from the support of their peers. The Association organizes activities such as corporate tours, seminars, conferences and social events, and facilitates the formation of peer mentorship groups.

The over 4,000-member-strong **YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS' ORGANIZATION (YEO)** (www.yeo.org) is an international community of entrepreneurs in 100 chapters around the world, including almost 450 members in seven Canadian cities. With a mission to support, educate and encourage entrepreneurs to succeed in building their companies, YEO gives its members, all under age 40, the opportunity to interact with a dynamic network of peers at an international level. Benefits include access to top speakers, marketing materials, an extensive networking database, and workshops, as well as peer and mentor programs.

Solidifying your business will take you a long way to getting ready to export. If you're a business person between the ages of 20 and 40 in the Montréal area, you will find a valuable business and support network in the **JEUNE CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DE MONTRÉAL (JCCM)** (www.jccm.org). The largest junior chamber of commerce in North America, the 1,400-member JCCM aims to help its members grow their business and develop their career. For entrepreneurs, who make up 20% of the membership, the JCCM offers support activities such as peer groups and a mentoring program, and business development activities such as networking events, dinners, and business clubs. The Chambre also sponsors two contests that give entrepreneurs the opportunity to gain local recognition for excellence and to receive financial support from local investors.

The leaders of tomorrow learn from the leaders of today....That's the thinking behind the **VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE'S LEADERS OF TOMORROW (LOT)** program (www.leadersoftomorrow.bc.ca). Through LOT, established members of the Vancouver business community share their experience and know-how with Vancouver-area students. The program funds students' participation in a variety of Board functions, increasing their awareness of issues and policies that are important to the business community. LOT also provides guidance and support through a mentorship program that pairs students with local business people who can help them navigate a business setting and build their confidence and networking skills.

Where can you learn the international trade skills that will make you competitive in the global marketplace? At Canada's centre for international trade training and certification — the **FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE TRAINING (FITT)** (www.fitt.ca). The national not-for-profit professional organization delivers international trade training programs through Canadian community colleges, universities, private organizations and on-line. Individual entrepreneurs and business professionals working for firms seeking to become global players can take FITT training programs to gain practical trade skills and a competitive leading edge. Business professionals with one year's experience in international trade are also eligible for FITT's Certified International Trade Professional (C.I.T.P.) designation — the highest level of professional accreditation available to international business and trade professionals.

FITT gave me all the tools and resources I needed to be successful in starting my business. It's a valuable hands-on approach to international trade.

ANDREW SMITH, PRESIDENT, KODIAK INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORP., VANCOUVER, B.C.

If you're an export-ready Aboriginal company, you can take part in Canada's newly launched Virtual Aboriginal Trade Show (VATS). To register, go the VATS Web site at www.vats.ca and click on "member."