

BUSINESS WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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Entrepreneur Andrina Lever, then President of Women Entrepreneurs of Canada, was instrumental in getting the trade mission off the ground. "Everyone focused their energies on helping women export. We conducted research on women exporters, solicited private sector support and had the federal government behind us," says Lever.

By all accounts, it was a huge success. The trade mission generated millions of dollars in trade for Canadian business women and led to the launch of the program now known as Business Women in International Trade at Global Affairs Canada.

"The trade mission underscored the importance of supporting women entrepreneurs. Today, BWIT provides access to resources and networks through a dedicated website, newsletters and annual trade missions for women," explains Mousseau. "Our strategy keeps us focused on our priorities. Women entrepreneurs are central to our work."

RBC Economics Research estimated that majority women-owned businesses contributed almost \$150 billion to the Canadian economy (2011). According to a 2012 BMO study, women-owned businesses employ more than 1.5 million people in Canada.



Barb Stegemann,
Founder, The 7 Virtues

Halifax perfume entrepreneur Barb Stegemann is one of them. Like other women before her, she's on a mission to pay it forward. As founder of The 7 Virtues, she buys essential oils from farmers in Afghanistan, Rwanda and Haiti. Her goal? To help them rebuild their lives after war and strife.

"When we pay farmers fair market value, they don't have to rely on illegal crops to make a living,"

explains Stegemann. "We're ahead of our time. MBA programs in Canada are studying our business model because today's youth want to change the world. Their measure of success is not money—it's about leaving this world a better place."

Stegemann says success is within reach for businesses that take risks and reach out to their networks for support along the way.

"The BWIT team and the Trade Commissioner Service have been instrumental in our expansion and growth," she explains. "It's much more powerful when they call a buyer for me. I wouldn't dare go into a country without their support. I have been incredibly impressed by the whole organization."

SERVICES TO SUPPORT WOMEN

In addition to this annual newsletter, the Business Women in International Trade (BWIT) program offers innovative products and services to help Canadian women-owned businesses succeed on a global scale.

BWIT Trade Missions—Ready to take flight? BWIT leads trade missions for women entrepreneurs. We help you prepare for the trade mission to make sure you get the most out of it. We also offer advice and assistance before, during and after your business trip.

businesswomenintrade.gc.ca

BWIT Website—Connect with us online for information and resources to help you export, invest abroad and grow your markets. Find out about funding, supplier diversity, selling to the U.S. market, export and import controls, trade agreements and much more. businesswomenintrade.gc.ca

BWIT LinkedIn Group—Join our interactive online discussions on everything related to women in international business. Share information, successes and opportunities with our members. linkd.in/bwit-faci

BWIT News—Our monthly email updates will keep you informed about upcoming events, programs, trade missions, research and tools for women entrepreneurs. Sign up today. businesswomenintrade.gc.ca

Directory of Women-Owned Businesses—Get the attention of more than 5 million visitors and procurement professionals from around the world. Register for this free online directory. ic.gc.ca/bwit



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