

CERTIFICATION CREATES OPPORTUNITIES



Cynthia Spraggs
CEO, Sales Beacon

Are you a woman, Indigenous or minority-owned business? Have you thought about certification? While it may seem like a big step, it opens the door to huge opportunities. Consider this: certification gives women and other minority-owned firms direct access to contracts with multinational corporations and governments with supplier diversity programs. These programs—available through companies like BMW, Disney, MGM, Microsoft, Walmart and others—set aside

billions of dollars annually to purchase exclusively from certified businesses.

Certifying bodies include WBE Canada and WEConnect International in Canada for women-owned firms, the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC) for Indigenous and visible minority-owned companies, and the Canadian Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce for LGBT-owned firms. To qualify for certification, your business must be 51% or more owned and operated by one of these minority groups.

“Certifying bodies also provide training, mentorship and advice,” explains Nicola Maule, Trade Commissioner, Business Women in International Trade. “We work closely with them. It means women have a tremendous support system behind them.”

Cynthia Spraggs, CEO of Sales Beacon in Chester, Nova Scotia, agrees. “Diversity certification has given us access to buyers with Fortune 500 companies and governments. Certification ensures our company profile is displayed on the WBE Canada and WEConnect International websites. This showcases our offerings to large multinationals. We also attend supplier diversity events such as the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) National Conference and Business Fair, which gets us closer to supplier diversity procurement opportunities.”

Find out more about certifying your company on our website at businesswomenintrade.gc.ca.

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PROTECT YOURSELF!

One of the most valuable tools in a business woman’s international toolbox is intellectual property protection. To find out more about trademarks, copyright and protecting your intellectual property, visit canada.ca/intellectualproperty.



SPOTLIGHT ON EDC: SERVICES FOR EXPORTERS

Export Development Canada (EDC) helps position Canadian companies to respond to global business opportunities. EDC offers insurance, financial services, bonding products and small business solutions.

- **Export Guarantee Program:** Offers help to companies that want to say “yes” to a large contract by providing a guarantee for a bank loan.
- **Working capital:** Small Canadian companies often find it difficult to get help and financing to deliver on large contracts from international buyers. EDC provides financing to allow them to grow their credit profile and compete for large contracts. EDC can also provide Accounts Receivable Insurance to protect companies from non-payment.
- **Finding a buyer or agent:** Finding a buyer or agent to distribute a product can be a big challenge in a new market. EDC offers a “pull loan” that is designed to connect firms with international buyers and distribution channels. “This is financing EDC provides to a foreign buyer. We then use it to influence that buyer to procure (or pull) from Canadian companies,” explains Elise Dedekam. “In 2016, this tool facilitated business for 960 Canadian companies.”

EDC is actively exploring new opportunities to better support women-owned businesses. For more information about EDC’s financing and insurance solutions for exporters, visit edc.ca.



EDC’s Export Guarantee Program gives our bank the confidence needed to sustain our activities, most of which are outside of Canada. The process is quick and streamlined, so we can pursue business without having to complete paperwork every time business arises.”

—Michelle Laflamme, CEO, Emovi