



Virtual Trade Commissioner
Access a World of Trade Knowledge

Canadian Heritage and the Virtual Trade Commissioner: Bringing Canada's cultural exports to the world

In partnering with the Virtual Trade Commissioner (VTC), the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) now offers small and medium-sized enterprises online access to arts and cultural export development services offered by its Trades Routes program.

Canadian Heritage, via Trade Routes, is focused on actively supporting exports of Canadian cultural products and services and increasing the number of Canadian cultural exporters.

Trade Routes helps Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises to strategically increase export capacity and sell internationally. The program offers market entry support, in-market assistance, financial assistance (through a contributions program) and market intelligence (through a research program). Support is available across all cultural sectors: film, television, new media, publishing, sound recording, performing arts, design, visual arts, crafts and heritage.

Global success: It's about who you know

Through the VTC, you can connect with PCH/Trade Routes officers serving the cultural industries from International Trade Canada's regional offices across the country, and from Canada's missions abroad.

PCH/Trade Routes officers across Canada offer sector-specific market entry support directly to arts and cultural entrepreneurs who are ready to export or want to build on existing international business. Through consultations, these officers provide export counselling and skills development. They work with organizations to forge productive alliances with key cultural network partners. For example, the officer in St. John's brought international buyers and presenters to Contact East, Atlantic Canada's performing arts showcase and conference, resulting in on-the-spot bookings and plans for attendance at future events.

PCH/Trade Routes officers at missions abroad provide in-market assistance to arts and cultural enterprises interested in exporting to specific markets. These officers

conduct outreach programs and connect with potential partners for Canada's arts and cultural sectors. They also work with local partners seeking Canadian contacts.

The officer in Paris, for example, arranged for the General Commissioner of ARTÉNÎM—one of the Mediterranean's largest art trade shows—to visit the Association des galeries d'art contemporain's spring trade show in Montreal. The result? In a first, 10 Canadian galleries were invited to ARTÉNÎM.

Whether in Canada or abroad, PCH/Trade Routes officers are well-versed in arts and cultural exports and know how to successfully promote Canadian content within those markets.

Connect to financial assistance through the VTC

You can also access information on the Trade Routes Contributions Program through the VTC. The Contributions Program offers financial assistance to help arts and cultural organizations become more export-ready and build their capacity for successful international sales. Through the Contributions Program, you can access strategic support for key trade shows and events, innovative in-market tools, trade and buyers missions, new markets visits and networking opportunities.

Growing your global advantage

The VTC now provides access to more of Canada's international trade experts than ever before, facilitated by a growing number of partnerships with government departments and trade promotion organizations: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Export Development Canada, the Canadian Commercial Corporation, International Trade Canada and PCH. Your personal Virtual Trade Commissioner is a sophisticated and increasingly valuable trade service and informational online tool. The more often you use it, the more you leverage your global advantage.

Find out more at:

www.infoexport.gc.ca

Food and beverage firms cook up business at diversity event

A number of U.S. *Fortune 500* companies have integrated Supplier Diversity into their operations, increasing opportunities for Canadian firms owned by women and visible minorities to break into the U.S. market.

Supplier Diversity provides economic opportunities to North American businesses that are owned by visible minorities and women. Companies are certified for eligibility in the program by the National Minority Business Supplier Development Council (NMBSDC) and in Canada by its newly established sister organization, the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC).

Food vendors, for example, participating in such programs in the U.S. often enjoy a reduction or elimination of slotting fees, facilitated entry to participating supermarkets, and assistance in securing a distributor.

With this in mind, the Government of Canada and the City of Toronto partnered last month on the first trade event in Canada to bring food and beverage products from minority- and women-owned companies to the attention of "diversity buyers" representing two supermarket chains in the U.S.

Presentations to participating companies by the CAMSC and the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) emphasized the growing visibility of the program in Canada, and its importance to the U.S. retail industry.

The Toronto showcase was attended by the Washington D.C.-based director of supplier diversity for FMI and by two buyers from Safeway and Ahold USA, two of the largest supermarket chains in the U.S. Between them, the buyers are responsible for the purchase of all diversity products for the chains' 3,000 stores nationwide.

After this event, Ahold's diversity buyer provided the Canadian Consulate General in Philadelphia with a list of 50 products the chain would like to have co-packed for private label, preferably by minority- and women-owned businesses in Canada.

The two-day promotion included visits for the U.S. participants to a variety of Toronto-area food retailers, where buyers were able to see on store shelves many of the products they would view the following day from the participating companies.

In addition to the product display, the 25 companies obtained excellent information from their scheduled



Opportunities are growing for "diversity suppliers" in the U.S.

one-on-one meetings with U.S. buyers, whose on site assistance and referrals to other Safeway and Ahold category buyers were extremely helpful to them. As a result, companies anticipate projected sales of some \$6.6 million to the two chains over the next 12 months. All Canadian participants expressed strong interest in participating in future promotions with U.S. food retailers that have adopted Supplier Diversity.

For more information, contact Cynthia Stevenson, Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C., email: cynthia.stevenson@international.gc.ca.