



IBOC contacts Canadian companies, one-on-one, to discuss specific trade leads in detail.

IBOC Goes to Work for You

IBOC communicates business leads in two different ways – through direct personal contact with individual suppliers and electronically through e-mails sent to appropriate Canadian suppliers. Here is a primer on how the Centre goes to work for you, so you can make sure your company is well positioned to receive IBOC's valuable leads.

Personal contact with Canadian suppliers

When IBOC receives an international business lead from one of the trade commissioners abroad, the Centre's team of specialists goes to work immediately to find the right Canadian supplier for the specific product, service or partner requested. They search the Trade Commissioner Service database and Industry Canada's Canadian Company Capabilities (*Strategis*) database, as well as the vast resources of the Internet. In addition, they tap into the impressive Canada-wide network of industry-sector experts at Industry Canada, Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada, and other federal Team Canada Inc departments and agencies. IBOC also consults regularly with industry associations.

If an IBOC officer identifies your company as a potential supplier for the lead, you will be contacted to confirm the product/service match and your interest in pursuing the opportunity. If you're interested and the match is good, the officer will refer you either to the foreign buyer directly or to the trade commissioner abroad who generated the lead.

To increase your chances of being contacted personally by an IBOC officer through this free service, make sure your company is registered with the Trade Commissioner Service (www.infoexport.gc.ca) and Canadian Company Capabilities (*Strategis* – <http://strategis.gc.ca>) databases. Making sure your industry association has an updated profile of your company and maintaining an up-to-date company Web site are other valuable means by which IBOC officers can find you.



IBOC also communicates leads electronically to appropriate Canadian suppliers. The Centre is winding down its current electronic leads system, **e-Leads®**, and will soon be delivering its e-leads solely through the Virtual Trade Commissioner (VTC). This integration of IBOC's electronic leads system with the VTC is ensuring a single window of service for Canadian companies.

Virtual Trade Commissioner – The Door to IBOC e-leads

The VTC is the newest tool for helping companies conduct business in foreign markets. Using the VTC does not replace your interaction with the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS), but rather enhances and personalizes it. By registering your export-ready company with TCS, you receive a customized Web page containing market information and trade leads that match your international business interests. In addition, your company information is made available to the more than 500 trade officers in 140 offices abroad – as if there were an unlimited supply of your company brochures on their desks. You can request services on-line from the trade commissioners who are responsible for your industry in your targeted market, and you are automatically kept abreast of current developments in your particular market and industry sector.

Checking in with your Virtual Trade Commissioner through your customized Web page can become an important part of your business day, giving you a competitive edge in the global market. Remember that the VTC will now be the only means by which you can receive IBOC's up-to-date business leads by e-mail. For information on VTC registration, see the box on p. 3.



Register with the VTC to Get your IBOC e-leads

IBOC is winding down its current electronic leads system, **e-Leads®**, and will soon be delivering its up-to-date electronic leads to the desktops of Canadian companies through the VTC. So, to ensure that you continue to receive electronic business leads from IBOC, register your company – for free – with the Virtual Trade Commissioner, at www.infoexport.gc.ca

To be eligible for a VTC Web page, you must have researched and selected your target market. If you require help in assessing whether your company is ready to export, call Team Canada Inc at 1 888 811-1119 or visit www.exportsource.ca. If you are just starting to look into exporting, visit the Canada Business Service Centres Web site at www.cbosc.org.

SuccessSTORIES

Spirit Water – A Pure Canadian Product

When a Hong Kong company went searching for top-quality water, the International Business Opportunities Centre (IBOC) matched them with **Sawridge Waters Ltd.**, bottlers of Spirit Water and owners of Canada's largest bottled water plant. But what clinched the deal for Sawridge was the natural purity of its water source – Canadian glaciers.

So, would you choose bottled glacier water or bottled tap water? That's a question Tom Voss, Sawridge's business development manager, would like more people to consider. In Japan, the U.S. and China, where Sawridge exports Spirit Water, the choice is becoming clear.

Taste and purity are key. Spirit Water is an all-natural product – nothing is added or removed – and has a total dissolved solids (TDS) ratio of less than 10 parts per million. "By comparison, many other brands have more than 200 parts per million," says Voss.

Spirit Water is the exclusive bottled water distributed by Starbucks and is also carried by Air Canada.

Now, with regional sales at a high, Sawridge has shifted gears to expand its Pacific Rim markets. But even premium products need solid trade leads.

"A lead can turn into a million cases a year or fizzle out, but without solid leads, it's extremely hard to develop business abroad on your own," says Voss. "So, for IBOC to facilitate that process, to put a supplier together with a vendor across the Pacific Ocean, that's an extremely valuable service."



SuccessSTORIES

GV Snowshoes – Takes a Lead in the Right Direction

What do X-treme sports enthusiasts and early retirees have in common? – Snowshoes. Yes, the latest sport and fitness trend is snowshoeing, and demand is keeping Canadian manufacturers like **GV Snowshoes** hopping. The Quebec-based company supplies 40% of the snowshoe market in Canada and, thanks to an IBOC lead, is making good headway in Europe.

Following the trade lead, GV secured an order worth \$10,500 from a Helsinki retailer. The deal has since generated additional orders and spurred the company to embark on a European distribution plan.

"About 90% of our exports are to the U.S., but now we're finding distributors in every European country, and building an international reputation," says Richard Gignac, GV's sales manager.

So, what's behind the rise in popularity of snowshoes? According to Gignac, two factors have combined to produce favourable conditions in the snowshoe market: a growing emphasis on health and fitness, and advances in product technology. And while GV has been making traditional wood snowshoes since 1959, the company now manufactures state-of-the-art aluminum and injection-molded shoes as well.

Besides being a safe activity, snowshoeing allows people to go off the beaten track and cross difficult terrain. Similarly, with its plan for expansion to Europe and Japan, GV Snowshoes is treading new territory. "It really helps to have a Canadian presence like IBOC connecting us to international buyers and easing the way," says Gignac.

