



Canadian Trade Successes 11-06
Emma Scott Design

A RELATIONSHIP BUILT WITHOUT COMPROMISE

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Key Quotation:

“Export Link Canada, an organization funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada, was remarkable. They helped me overcome major obstacles, such as clearing customs, and put me in touch with the right people on every occasion. Also, if they didn’t have the solution to a particular problem, they’d get back to me almost immediately with the answer. They were just always on the case.” Emma Scott also praises Canadian Heritage, particularly its Trade Routes program. “It provided funding and support when I needed it most,” she says.

Story details:

Chicago wanted a relationship but said it wasn’t quite ready to commit. New York, on the other hand, wasted no time, saying “I do” after just one date. As for Emma Scott, the Edmonton-based designer whose bridal fashions now grace salons across the United States, well, she’s just delighted that she can design and create without compromise.

“All my life I wanted to create beautiful, classic gowns,” says Scott, a graduate of the Olds College Fashion Program in Alberta. “I can’t remember a time when I didn’t have a sketch pad in my hands, when I wasn’t putting my ideas down on paper. Now, with samples of my work being displayed in salons across the U.S., it’s like a dream come true.”

For a while, at least, Scott's dream had to be put on hold: there were bills to pay, and a husband and three young boys who needed attention. While U.S. brides-to-be did without, Scott designed for select custom clients from her home-based atelier.

In 1999, with the kids in school, Scott started pursuing her dream in earnest. She moved her home-based business to a commercial location in Edmonton. Three years later, she expanded into a much larger retail salon and atelier.

But all that time, the large bridal markets of the United States were calling. In the fall of 2004, Scott answered that call, putting up more than \$60,000 of her own money to launch her first couture bridal collection at one of the largest wholesale bridal shows in the U.S.—in Chicago. "The people there were exceptionally encouraging," she says. "I was constantly being asked why I wasn't in more shows, why my designs weren't more available." Still, the hard reality was, at the end of the day, she went home with no accounts.

That changed dramatically the following spring when Scott took her dream to New York, to the largest couture bridal market in the U.S. This time, she emerged with three accounts—and Emma Scott Design had become an international success story.

Today, as Scott strengthens her U.S. presence through trunk shows and one-on-one meetings with boutique owners in new markets, she is quick to credit one organization. "Export Link Canada, an organization funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada, was remarkable. They helped me overcome major obstacles, such as clearing customs, and put me in touch with the right people on every occasion. Also, if they didn't have the solution to a particular problem, they'd get back to me almost immediately with the answer. They were just always on the case."

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Today, Emma Scott Design is a success story in both Canada and the United States. And Scott, named Global Television's Woman of Vision in April 2005, is living her dream. "Most important," she stresses, "I'm doing it without compromising my ideals or my philosophy about quality and individuality in fashion."