



Team Canada Inc • Équipe Canada inc



Partnerships in Action

Team Canada Inc — Ontario Region Success Stories

Canada



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Foreword

In the global economy, trade matters more than ever for growth and jobs. Exports account for over 40 percent of Canada's gross domestic product, and more than 3 million Canadian workers owe their jobs directly to foreign markets. There's no doubt that international trade is very important to Canada — and to Ontario, a province that accounts for over half of Canada's exports.

Businesses across the country must have access to the information and services needed to take advantage of international business opportunities. To ensure that they do, the Government of Canada has created Team Canada Inc (TCI). This partnership of federal, provincial and territorial governments helps Canadian companies succeed in world markets.

TCI members and partners in Ontario are listed in the Appendix.

The stories in this collection tell you about what Team Canada Inc has achieved. They have been gathered by Industry Canada's Ontario Region Office. Among the TCI members and partners who helped were:

- the Ontario International Trade Centre
- Export Advisors hired through the Ontario Region Export Development Initiative
- Community Futures Development Corporations
- Trade Team Niagara
- the Entrepreneurial Manufacturing Generator.

This collection of stories only scratches the surface of what Team Canada Inc is all about. To find out more about this exciting initiative and the programs and services available to help your business, visit our Web site at exportsource.gc.ca or call 1-888-811-1119.





International Trade Centre

Canada's International Trade Centres (ITCs) are key components of Team Canada Inc. ITCs operate as part of Industry Canada in every province of the country. For businesspeople, they provide skills development, market information, counselling and advice, market entry services, trade financing, and more.

The Ontario ITC is located in Toronto. Trade Commissioners work with TCI members and partners across the province, giving companies the support they need to succeed and grow. They also work closely with Trade Commissioners based in other ITCs and in Canadian embassies and consulates around the world.

One of the services offered through the ITC is the Program for Export Market Development (PEMD). PEMD is managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and jointly administered with Industry Canada through the International Trade Centres. The program seeks to increase exports of Canadian goods and services by sharing the costs of activities that companies normally could not or would not undertake alone, thereby reducing risks involved in entering a foreign market. The recipient repays funding on the basis of incremental sales or contracts obtained.

Revolutionary Canadian building product a hit in U.S. markets

Nexwood Industries President Dado Suwanda has a problem that some fledgling manufacturers would welcome: he has nothing left to sell. Everything that Nexwood will produce in 2000 is spoken for. And some of the credit for the success goes to Team Canada Inc — particularly Trade Commissioner Brent Court of the Ontario International Trade Centre, plus the Program for Export Market Development.

Of course, it helps to have a revolutionary new product, and that's exactly what Nexwood's building material is. To produce this alternative to traditional lumber, Nexwood mixes reclaimed plastics with wood-like cellulose fibre (sawdust and/or rice hulls) and uses extrusion technology to create "boards." Because the product does not splinter, warp, blister, corrode or rot, it is ideal for outdoor applications, such as docks, patios, walkways and pool decks.

Since it was founded four years ago, Nexwood has grown from a small research and development group to a manufacturing operation with approximately 40 production workers and eight engineers in Brampton, Ontario, and a small sales force based in LaSalle, Quebec. It currently sells its products in Canada and the United States, and has plans to go further afield.

Mr. Suwanda attributes the company's sales growth to its success in penetrating the U.S. market — with the help of the Ontario ITC. Construction materials are subject to numerous regulations and building codes. There can be many complications and considerable expense involved in the process of manoeuvring through the approval process to comply with those codes in a foreign market. Beyond that is the challenge of setting up distributorships. Says Mr. Suwanda, "Brent Court has been extremely helpful in both these areas."





The ITC also helped with marketing. In 1997, Mr. Suwanda accepted an invitation from the Ontario International Trade Centre to participate in a Market Orientation Mission to Dallas, Texas. The contacts made there led to significant sales in the United States. This year the company once again participated in the mission, and it hopes to attend similar events that might lead to new opportunities.

PEMD provided funding used by Nexwood to pay for participation in trade shows, production of promotional material, costs associated with the regulatory approval process, and legal fees.

Today Nexwood sells its product on the U.S. West Coast and in the Midwest, and the company is currently targeting the Southeast. U.S sales account for approximately 90 percent of the business's total turnover. And success creates new opportunities: "Next we have to increase our production capacity," says Mr. Suwanda.

Exports heat up for Therm-O-Comfort

Paul Reehill, sales and marketing manager at Therm-O-Comfort Co. Ltd., has a full travel itinerary. One week he's at the Silverdome in Pontiac, Michigan, for the Design and Construction EXPO 2000 trade show; the next, he's in Palm Springs, California; and in a month he's off to Columbus, Ohio. Making a brief pit stop at Therm-O-Comfort headquarters in St. Thomas, Ontario, Mr. Reehill reports that the company is in the midst of an aggressive marketing campaign, with Team Canada Inc providing vital help through two Canadian Trade Commissioners: Toronto-based Brent Court and Detroit-based Tom Quinn. "They have a wealth of knowledge to speed up the process and point you in the right direction," says Mr. Reehill.

Established in 1977, Therm-O-Comfort produces cellulose insulation made from 100 percent recycled newspaper and other paper products. It sells the product directly to insulation contractors. The same product, minus certain additives, is the base for the company's hydro-seed mulch, the green-coloured material often used in construction areas to seed grass, particularly alongside new roadways.

Therm-O-Comfort has participated in several Ontario International Trade Centre-sponsored events, including the October 1998 Canadian Home Centre show buyers reception, the October 1999 U.S. Outlook conference and the December 1999 Construct Canada Export Café. The company invested in a trade show booth and increased its participation in shows south of the border. "This has turned out to be dynamite for us," says Mr. Reehill.

The Program for Export Market Development has provided funding. Says Mr. Reehill, "PEMD opened the door for us to move very quickly into the U.S.; it was the catalyst we needed to get things off the ground." He hopes to obtain more funding from PEMD to help the company intensify its efforts, particularly in promoting the hydro-seed mulch product line in the United States.

Therm-O-Comfort has made good use of the wealth of information available to it through the ExportSource Web site (exportsource.gc.ca) and from the Trade Commissioners themselves.

Says Mr. Reehill, "If I have a particular question, I just phone Detroit, Buffalo or Toronto, and I don't





wait long for an answer. They're really excellent and the support is tremendous. I bounce ideas off Brent Court to make sure that I am going in the right direction, because if you make a mistake it can set a small company like ours back dramatically."

There don't seem to have been too many mistakes. In 2000, the company expects a 25 to 30 percent increase in overall sales, almost all of it in the U.S. market. Through ITC connections, Therm-O-Comfort has established a partnership with a distributor servicing Central and South America. It is now upgrading its manufacturing equipment to quadruple production capacity. "The future," says Mr. Reehill, "looks very bright."

A solid rock of support

The recent history of Markham, Ontario-based Belmont Rose Granite is very much the story of owner Carole Proud and her relationship with Candice Rice, a Trade Commissioner with the Ontario International Trade Centre. It has been a productive partnership leading to increased sales. Says Ms. Proud, "Candice was very enthusiastic about what I was doing, particularly because I was a female in a traditionally male-dominated business. I think she was impressed by my attitude."

Belmont Rose Granite provides rose-coloured granite dimensional stone extracted from a 400-acre quarry near Peterborough, Ontario. Ms. Proud says she never imagined that she would some day run a quarry. In the early 1990s she operated her own company in the equipment leasing business. This, in turn, led her to Belmont Rose Granite. She liked the product so much that she bought the company. As for concerns about a woman in a so-called man's business, she says, "Whether you wear a skirt or pants, it makes no difference when it comes to running a successful company."

With her strong marketing skills, Ms. Proud knew that she could expand sales, particularly in the United States, where the company had established a toehold on the East Coast. In 1997 she walked into the Ontario ITC and introduced herself to Candice Rice. "I wanted to know who the Trade Commissioners were and what they could do for me," she says.

Ms. Rice told her about a host of services available to exporters: Web sites, the Export Association, other women in business, and trade centres in the United States. She encouraged Ms. Proud to attend the 1999 Businesswomen's Trade Summit in Toronto, sponsored by Industry Canada. "There were a great many women there who were as enthusiastic as I am, all wanting to survive in business, to export," says Ms. Proud.

And thanks to funding through the Program for Export Market Development, Ms. Proud was able to participate in a recent trade mission to Washington.

In addition, Canadian trade offices in the United States provided Ms. Proud with facilities for meetings and conference calls with potential customers and distributors. As a result of these activities in Detroit and





Buffalo, she broke into the crushed stone market big time. Recently, the company has made progress in the Midwest.

Sometime in the not too distant future, Belmont Rose Granite plans to saw and finish its own granite. At present it ships unfinished granite blocks out of province. “The real opportunities to improve the bottom line are in value-added products,” says Ms. Proud. With the continued assistance of the Ontario International Trade Centre, she looks forward to exporting those products.

The coast is clear

“I would definitely encourage all small and medium-sized enterprises who are interested in exporting to contact the Program for Export Market Development,” advises Charles Fournier of Baird & Associates. “PEMD was certainly the financial resource we needed to allow us to do what we did; and they were very cooperative, which made for a positive experience.”

What Baird & Associates did is expand by exporting consulting services. The firm is a grouping of world-class experts in innovative, cost-effective and environmentally sensitive solutions to coastal engineering projects. As an international leader in coastal research and development, Baird & Associates is uniquely qualified to understand complex water-related problems, develop creative design alternatives and deliver the optimal final design/solution for difficult projects.

Started in 1981, the firm has grown since then and now has four offices: two in Canada (in Ottawa and Oakville, Ontario), one in the United States and one in Chile. In early 1998, Baird & Associates merged with Atria Engineering to create a new and unique team in the field of coastal consulting. Atria’s coastal expertise perfectly complemented Baird’s practical and innovative coastal and river engineering strengths. In early 1999, they announced the creation of Atria Baird Consultores S.A. to provide services in South America.

Mr. Fournier credits Industry Canada and other Team Canada Inc members and partners for helping with contacts and opening doors. The initial assistance from PEMD went to finance marketing material and business trips essential for establishing and maintaining business relationships. “Working with our Trade Commissioner gave us one-on-one professional service we might not get somewhere else,” comments Mr. Fournier. “Our Trade Commissioner helped to keep us focussed on certain areas and helped us with our networking.” He adds, “Our PEMD advisor helped us put a plan together and provided us with comments and feedback while giving us taxation and legal advice.”

In Chile, says Mr. Fournier, “We were awarded the coastal engineering and design work associated with a new port development. This is Chile’s most important port development initiative, and we were successful in large part due to the financial assistance that PEMD provided us.”





The people have spoken

“Exporting was always viewed as a necessary part of developing this company,” says Tamiyo Tomihiro, Mothership production manager and pattern drafter. “Just from sheer population numbers, the United States is a strong market resource to be tapped by Canadians.”

A retail clothing store on College Street in Toronto, Mothership was founded in 1995 by Anita Bacic. In 1997 she started a clothing line labelled “The Mother,” sold only at the Mothership location. Ms. Bacic had attended many trade shows to buy stock for her store; now she realized that in order to launch her new wholesale line successfully, she would need to showcase it at one of these trade shows.

Her “The People Have Spoken” clothing label was started in early 1998 specifically for showing at the June 1998 International Fashion Boutique Show in New York City. At this first trade show, a sample line of fall/winter 1998 women’s wear was showcased. Next came the spring/summer 1999 line and then the fall/winter 1999 line, which included men’s styles. The spring/summer 2000 line was also showcased in New York and had a full men’s line as well as a women’s line. With every trade show and every season, sales have increased.

Mothership’s participation in the first trade show was made possible mainly through funding from the Program for Export Market Development.

“If we did not receive help from PEMD, we would have seriously jeopardized all of the other start-up and production costs needed to get the business under way,” says Ms. Tomihiro.

At the Ontario International Trade Centre, Trade Commissioner Candice Rice gave Mothership extensive advice and information. She pointed the business to the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service’s InfoExport Web site (<http://www.infoexport.gc.ca>), where the PEMD application form was available for downloading. And Ms. Rice helped Mothership complete the form.

“Any sort of government form is intimidating for the average person, but Candice’s receptivity balances it out for us,” says Ms. Tomihiro.

Ontario Region Export Development Initiative

To add to Team Canada Inc services available in local communities across southern Ontario, Industry Canada has spearheaded the Ontario Region Export Development Initiative, a pilot project funded by TCI member Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

Under the Initiative, Export Advisors have been hired to provide local businesspeople with services, such as export awareness, education, training, development and implementation of export plans, export-readiness assessments, and access to government resources. The Advisors are based in the communities they serve and work out of a host organization.





Cleaning up

In Wyoming, Ontario, Movreen Collins' dream was to run a home-based business that would be financially lucrative and personally fulfilling. The dream turned into reality with Bean'Stock Inc., a producer of all-natural specialty soaps. Today Bean'Stock has a 3000-square-foot facility and employs 11 full- and part-time personnel, plus it contracts out services, such as building display units and cutting soap. Ms. Collins now exports her products to the United States, and she has received inquiries from as far away as Japan and Australia.

"You start with a good idea," says Ms. Collins, "then you detail it in a good business plan." Her original business plan was close to 200 pages but has since been revised to include an export plan. "With over 650 Canadian retail accounts," her Export Advisor and Team Canada Inc partner, Dan Tye, explains, "Movreen felt it was time to enter the U.S. market." After numerous meetings, the two hammered out a fully articulated export plan.

Mr. Tye has continued to provide Bean'Stock with advice, helping with the transition to exporting. Ms. Collins recently secured a number of accounts at the company's first U.S. trade show in Atlanta, Georgia.

"There is a lot of preparation involved when you are getting ready to export; it can be intimidating at times," says Ms. Collins. Questions range from invoicing to dealing with customs officials. Before exporting to the United States, Ms. Collins was cautious. Despite the opportunities of a market about 10 times the size of Canada's, she recognized that many small businesses have failed by expanding too quickly and before really understanding the export market.

"I feel our success is due in part to Dan's assistance in helping us to fully prepare for the U.S. market," says Ms. Collins. "Without this community assistance, I feel that the information our Advisor provided us, although attainable, would have been much more painstaking and possibly quite expensive."

Taking a deep breath

ESSA Inc. President Robert Gibbs maintains, "People are most concerned about two things in life: the quality of air they breathe and the quality of water they drink." Certainly it's true that what we breathe, drink and eat can have a very large overall impact on the quality of our lives.

"As a result of today's energy-efficient tight or closed building construction, the air in our homes and workplace is always 2 to 5 times more polluted than the worst outdoor air, and may even be 100 times more polluted," says Mr. Gibbs. To remedy the problem, ESSA manufactures a filtration system that can be integrated into almost any new air moving equipment, or retrofitted into existing installations. If the building does not have an air moving system, ESSA has self-contained units with their own fans and controls, both manual and infrared remote-controlled.

Originally a basement business producing 10 to 12 units a month, ESSA is now a manufacturing facility, based in Belleville, Ontario, that produces hundreds of units per week. Thousands of these have





been installed abroad, as ESSA exports its products to the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea. No wonder that little time is left for anything else. “Small businesses are aware of government initiatives but don’t have the time to do the research themselves,” says Mr. Gibbs. This is where an Export Advisor, part of the Team Canada Inc network, comes in.

ESSA’s Export Advisor is Martin Edwards, hired under the Ontario Region Export Development Initiative. According to him, Mr. Gibbs was quite well versed on export matters but needed assistance on other issues, such as finding information on how to have his product tested and verified. Mr. Edwards suggested the Environmental Technology Verification Program, which fosters the growth and marketability of Canada’s environmental industry by providing validation and independent verification of performance claims.

“Canada has a vast array of programs,” says Mr. Edwards. “We are not simply export advisors; we are facilitators. We are able to get information into the hands of small business owners quickly, so they can continue to do their jobs well.”

Brantford company cracks new markets

Karen Seale can’t say enough good things about Export Advisor Diane King, Trade Commissioner Brent Court and what they have done for her company. As general manager of Smart Turner Pumps, an industrial pump manufacturer based in Brantford, Ontario, she has seen gross sales rise by an astonishing 700 percent since October 1998. Ms. Seale attributes much of the success to the advice and direction she received from these Team Canada Inc representatives.

Founded in the 1870s, Smart Turner Pumps has had a long and not always successful run. By the 1990s, the company was encountering difficulties despite a good number of aftermarket contacts. New ownership took over in October 1998. According to Ms. Seale, they recognized the opportunities but saw as well the need for significant growth in new markets.

Since then, the Ontario International Trade Centre has helped Smart Turner Pumps bid on large jobs and establish a sales network in the United States. And Canadian consulates in Chicago and Detroit helped the company acquire a list of potential distributors and analyse potential markets.

Today Smart Turner Pumps has a well-defined marketing strategy that includes 20 new distributors in the United States. To expand its growing network overseas, the company continues to explore the possibility of adding distributors in other countries in addition to New Zealand, Guyana and Venezuela. And this is a company that did not have a single distributor in 1998!

The company has become a more technologically savvy marketer. “In the beginning, I didn’t even know how to run the Internet,” says Ms. Seale. Diane King introduced her to a number of relevant Web sites including Strategis (<http://strategis.gc.ca>) and Merx (<http://www.merx.cebra.com>). Now Ms. Seale routinely communicates and conducts business on the Web. The result is more business and more jobs — particularly for southern Ontario machine shops, to which the company outsources its manufacturing and aftermarket business.





But this is just the beginning, says Ms. Seale. She is currently exploring how the company might benefit from funding provided under the Program for Export Market Development.

Ms. Seale plans to attend a meeting with Export Development Corporation (a Team Canada Inc member) in Toronto to explore the possibilities of exporting Smart Turner Pumps' products to Chile. "To get this sort of business, you have to get in on the ground floor, and that's what this meeting allows us to do," she says.

Ms. Seale's final word: "I can't say enough about how Diane King and Brent Court have gotten me going in the right direction; without them, I would have floundered."

More than one way to cut it

Have you ever done something and thought that there must be an easier way? This is exactly what goes on in Larry Robertson's mind whenever he invents a product. As a teen, for example, he used to help his mother prepare dinner for the family and learned for himself what a struggle it can be to cut through hard vegetables, such as squash, turnip or cabbage.

Years later Mr. Robertson invented Knifeguard. This easy-to-use, lightweight device attaches to most knives, allowing users to push down with both hands when cutting through tough stuff. Today Mr. Robertson's Trenton, Ontario-based company, INVO Innovative Products Inc., markets useful products ranging from Knifeguard and other kitchen gadgets to environmentally friendly earwig traps.

INVO has been supported by Martin Edwards, an Export Advisor hired through the Ontario Region Export Development Initiative.

"Martin has been very helpful," explains Mr. Robertson. "He has given me assistance in reviewing tariff rates for the U.S. and ensuring that my products enter duty free under the North American Free Trade Agreement in accordance with the Rules of Origin." For this purpose, Mr. Edwards worked closely with the Tariffs and Market Access Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. "He also informs me about various programs I might be interested in, such as the New Exporters to Border States [NEBS] program," adds Mr. Robertson.

NEBS is a co-operative program established through the efforts of Team Canada Inc members and partners. A key export education tool, it targets Canadian companies that are incorporated and operating in Canada, have an interest in exporting to the United States, but are not yet doing so on a regular basis. NEBS introduces the essentials of exporting, including practical export information and first-hand exposure to the markets in U.S. border states. Mr. Robertson plans to participate in an upcoming NEBS mission to Buffalo.

From one person inventing and developing useful household items, INVO has blossomed into a thriving business that employs local manufacturers and commissioned sales representatives, graphic artists and printing companies. "With the creation of more great new products and new sales outlets," says Mr. Robertson with pride, "this year's sales will definitely surpass last year's."





Team Canada Inc: Partnerships, Partnerships, Partnerships

In addition to International Trade Centres and Export Advisors, Team Canada Inc supports many unique partnerships to help Canadian businesses succeed in international markets.

These partners are crucial to the success of TCI. Following is a sampling of what they have achieved in Ontario.

Trucking company makes inroads into the United States

Based in Fort Frances, Ontario, Doug Kitowski Trucking has been in expansion mode for the past five years. In fact, operations manager Robert Kitowski says that the company's business has doubled every year during that period. Most of the growth, he says, has been in the United States; and helping to make it possible has been Geoff Gillon of the Rainy River Future Development Corporation, a Team Canada Inc partner.

Currently, Kitowski Trucking has a staff of 15 to 25, and operates six tractor units and 18 trailers. Situated about four hours by road from both Thunder Bay and Winnipeg, the company transports an ever-increasing amount of finished lumber from mills within 300 kilometres of Fort Frances to points south of the Canada-U.S. border. Kitowski trucks go mainly to Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Iowa and other destinations in the U.S. Midwest.

While loads heading south have been plentiful, Mr. Kitowski says the real challenge has been to find material to carry back, or at least part of the way back. Transport companies do not make money when trucks travel empty on return trips. With this in mind and with the overall goal of increasing business generally, Mr. Gillon advised Mr. Kitowski to attend the three-day Northern Networks trade show in Wausau, Wisconsin, in the summer of 1998. "It was a good opportunity for me to meet some big business contacts. I attended seminars and hooked up with the mayor of Wausau and toured some plants," says Mr. Kitowski. And was it productive? "Let me say this," he answers, "the business we got out of it definitely paid for the trip."

Aside from accepting an invitation to the Wausau trade show, Kitowski Trucking has used the services of the Rainy River Future Development Corporation to obtain marketing information. "We find that Geoff Gillon is a good guy to dig up research for us on who's doing what and where," says Mr. Kitowski. He credits Mr. Gillon for helping his company form a profitable business relationship with a major customer operating in the U.S. Midwest. Today, on the return trip to Fort Frances, Kitowski trucks routinely pick up loads in the United States and transport them to Canada.





The Rainy River Future Development Corporation is one of 52 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) in Ontario supported by Industry Canada and the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario (FedNor). To help Ontario's rural and northern communities expand their economies, CFDCs offer a variety of services, such as export counselling.

Mr. Kitowski won't hesitate to tell you that he is sold on the service provided by the Rainy River Future Development Corporation. When Mr. Gillon recently mentioned to him that he was organizing another trip to Wausau, Mr. Kitowski immediately signed up. In the longer term, he looks forward to taking full advantage of what the Rainy River Future Development Corporation has to offer. He says, "Once you've used the service, it just about becomes a necessity. If you use it, you can benefit from it."

Getting back to the land . . . in a big way

With today's fast pace of life, most people face a high level of stress.

Marc Saint-Onge recognized this as an opportunity. In his home town of Casselman, Ontario, right beneath the feet of residents was a valuable resource: peat. All it took was someone with vision to turn this raw material into a flourishing business that offers its thousands of customers wellness and relaxation.

Golden Moor Inc. markets peat-based Marc Saint-Onge Products, including bath packs, cellulite reduction creams and face masks. President and founder Marc Saint-Onge heads a firm that now does business far beyond his home town. Today, he focusses on technical training to explain how to use his products, and he is also developing foreign markets. "When I began exporting," he recalls, "I had to find resource people in the embassies and markets where I hoped to sell my products." Team Canada Inc smoothed his way.

"I made extensive use of TCI's consulting services, which told me about organizations such as the Export Development Corporation," says Mr. Saint-Onge.

Mr. Saint-Onge also attended the Casselman Small Business Conference and Info-Fair organized by Industry Canada in May 1999. "I was able to learn about the help available from the different levels of government," he says of the event.

That help, Mr. Saint-Onge stresses, has also benefited his community. On his trips around the world he extols the virtues of Casselman peat, raising the region's profile. For any business seeking to penetrate foreign markets, he strongly recommends the missions organized by Team Canada.

Assessing the services offered him, Mr. Saint-Onge says, "The word 'team' describes very well the leadership so essential to Canadian entrepreneurs, provided by Team Canada Inc."





Mirroring Team Canada Inc

Rather than try to re-invent the wheel, it's often best to take as a model something with a proven track record.

That's why Trade Team Niagara decided to model itself on Team Canada Inc.

This regionally based group was established jointly by Niagara College and the Niagara Economic Development and Tourism Corporation (NETC). As a TCI partner, Trade Team Niagara works to expand exports from the Niagara region. For local small and medium-sized enterprises, it offers a full range of export development services, including skills development, market research, export counselling and market entry services. With local partnership support, the college and NETC offer a one-stop service featuring a Global Help Desk, skills development programs (including the Forum for International Trade Training, or FITT) and market entry services.

Under this initiative, Niagara College concentrates on providing the training and counselling needed by firms not yet exporting. Many of these firms are operated by graduates of the college's Self Employment Benefit Program — a Human Resources Development Canada program that offers training, counselling and income support to new entrepreneurs. Graduates and local businesspeople can attend other training courses, such as the Going Global FITT workshops and Hello Neighbour seminars on the basics of exporting. Hello Neighbour is a series of 11 seminars explaining exporting especially for businesses in the arts and crafts, and food and beverage industries.

Niagara College also offers a postgraduate academic program in international trade. Courses are based on the FITT skills workshops, and students in the program undertake internships with local firms, assisting them with their international business development.

For businesses that are already exporting, NETC provides various support services, including sophisticated market entry support. During the first year of operation, many client companies achieved significant exporting success.

As Vice-President for Enterprise and Student Services at Niagara College and Co-Chair of Trade Team Niagara, Martha Casson has had a close-up look at the work being done. She says, "All in all, this partnership is a wonderful example of a broad, regionally based initiative that capitalizes on the leadership, program development and product development resources of Team Canada Inc in its goal to help Canadian businesses to export."





Manufacturing gets a boost

Located in St. Thomas, Ontario, the Entrepreneurial Manufacturing Generator (EMG), is a non-profit foundation created as an incubator to help people who want to start their own manufacturing business.

EMG offers a year-long program, beginning with a three-month intensive academic module taught by professors from the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario, and by hands-on experts from manufacturing plants in the area. The program takes the best from the Ivey case system, federal and provincial government programs, and industry.

After the program ends, participants receive between two and five years of mentoring and monitoring to cover the critical growth of each manufacturing enterprise. EMG helps with every stage in the process, including writing business plans, seeking capital investment, creating and debugging prototypes, maximizing production efficiencies, and pursuing national and international markets.

Participants are also trained by Export Development Corporation (EDC), a Team Canada Inc member, to be export-ready. Lectures at the EMG facility focus on EDC services, including export credits, global transaction and domestic insurance, documentary credits, direct buyer loans, product financing, leasing lines of credit, note purchases and preshipments. Another TCI member, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, explains all the aspects of conducting business in a foreign country. Participants learn about the Program for Export Market Development, the Progressive Payments Program, International Letters of Credit and more.

The program is open to potential entrepreneurs with a viable manufacturing idea. Applicants who meet the criteria established by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), yet another TCI member, are eligible to have their one-year tuition paid in full and may also receive a 52-week living allowance while in the program. When participants are ready to hire employees, EMG has a direct link to all wage subsidy programs through HRDC. An EMG representative will travel to trade shows and oversee markets to ensure that distribution contracts and export programs are set up specifically to help the company become stabilized and achieve a positive cash flow.

In the two and a half years since the EMG program began, more than 40 new businesses have been created, manufacturing electronic highway signs, dried flowers, landscaping materials made from recycled tires, and many other products.

“Due to the training provided by EMG and its subsequent assistance, we have managed to position ourselves within our industry for expansion and growth, all under two years,” says President and CEO James Taylor of Jatati Recovery and Manufacturing Ltd., a firm specializing in the disposal of scrap heavy truck and tractor trailers, and the manufacture of environmentally friendly products for the landscape and industrial sectors.

“This progress can directly be attributed to the program’s training and its ongoing mentoring,” continues Mr. Taylor. “We are presently exploring our export capabilities, as well as future expansion in operations into the U.S. and abroad.”





Appendix

Team Canada Inc Members and Partners in Ontario

Members

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Business Development Bank of Canada
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency
Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Canadian Commercial Corporation
Canadian International Development Agency
Department of Canadian Heritage
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Environment Canada
Export Development Corporation
Human Resources Development Canada
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Industry Canada
National Farm Products Council
National Research Council Canada
Natural Resources Canada
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Statistics Canada
Transport Canada
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Partners

Alliance of Manufacturers & Exporters of Canada
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada
Canada–Ontario Business Service Centre
Canadian Bankers Association
Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Canadian Council for the Americas
City of Toronto
Community Futures Development Corporations
Economic Developers Council of Ontario
Entrepreneurial Manufacturing Generator
FedNor
Forum for International Trade Training
Mississauga Board of Trade
Ontario Chamber of Commerce
Ontario Exports Inc. (the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade)
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
Ontario Region Export Development Initiative
Toronto Board of Trade
Trade Team Niagara

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