

Champions

www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women

BREAKTHROUGHS AND RESOURCES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Spring/Summer 2005 Issue 1 Vol 8

The Search is On!



Do you know an exemplary woman entrepreneur – or perhaps you are one yourself? The search for qualified nominees for the **2005 RBC Canadian Woman Entrepreneur Awards** is underway, with RBC Financial Group pleased to be the lead sponsor of these preeminent awards for the first time.

The awards, which will be presented at a gala ceremony in Toronto on November 22, provide national recognition to Canada's women entrepreneurs. Since 1992 when the awards were launched, many RBC clients have been honoured.



Congratulations to RBC Royal Bank clients Marnie Walker [left], Founder of Student Express Limited, Toronto, Ont., and Joanne Papari [second from left], President, Biochem Environmental Solutions, Concord, Ont., shown here with other 2004 Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year award winners.

Winners are recognized for outstanding entrepreneurial achievement in the areas of Start-Up, Innovation, Momentum, Trailblazer and Lifetime Achievement. Nominate yourself or someone you admire. It's a great way to honour and profile successful Canadian women entrepreneurs. For insider tips from previous winners on how to prepare a winning submission, visit www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women.

The nomination deadline is August 2, 2005. See page 8 for nomination criteria and details or visit www.theawards.ca.

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Inside This Issue

Recently appointed to lead RBC Financial Group's women's market activities, I am excited to take on this opportunity and to announce our newest initiative – sponsorship of the **2005 RBC Canadian Woman Entrepreneur Awards**. This prestigious awards program recognizes the very best of the best, and allows us to celebrate Canada's women business owners in a highly-visible way. Be sure to watch for additional details on our website over the coming months.

The focus of this issue of *Champions* is on building your business in the U.S. Prior to taking on my new role, I spent three years as a Director at RBC Centura in

North Carolina, so it is my strong personal hope that sharing success stories both north and south of the border will facilitate relationship-building across borders. You'll also find a host of other resources in this issue that can help you build, sustain or grow your business in the U.S.

We continue to present profiles of amazing women entrepreneurs from across Canada, whose stories are so often missed by the mainstream business press. May their successes and insights inspire you to seek even greater heights!

Kristina Depencier

National Manager, Small Business and Women's Markets
RBC Financial Group

RBC Champions

We introduce you to one of our U.S. clients and her banker who are part of RBC Centura®, the personal and commercial banking operation in the U.S. for RBC Financial Group. RBC Centura (www.rbccentura.com) delivers a wide range of financial services through more than 250 retail and business banking centres in five southeastern states.



PENNY HULBERT

client | profile

Brenda Dohring Hicks

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Real Wired!, Inc.

Location: Tampa, Florida

813-349-2700 brenda@realwired.com www.realwired.com

If there is one word that best describes **Brenda Dohring Hicks**, it would have to be untraditional. This commercial real estate expert actually began her career as a bookkeeper in a family restaurant business and then as a dance instructor. “But I got my first real job in commercial real estate appraising after being referred by a neighbour,” says Brenda. Three years later, in 1986, she started her own appraisal company.

At the time that she received her designation from the Appraisal Institute, she was only one of three women to do so in the Tampa Bay market. “I selected the field intentionally because it was male-dominated and the money was good,” she explains. Yes, there was behind-the-scenes discrimination, but she simply ignored it. “If you focus on doing what you do well, you’ll get enough business.”

Streamlining Processes

Today Brenda is running her second appraisal company, The Dohring Group, as well as Real Wired!, Inc., a software business she started in 1995 to streamline transactions in the real estate industry. “The typical real estate deal can take six months to a year to close,” she says. RealWired!’s Internet-based suite of products, services

and information makes the commercial real estate transaction process faster and cheaper by allowing for the efficient automation of part or all of the process for complex, multi-party transactions. Although her customer base is primarily in the U.S., she does have some Canadian clients as well.

Dotcom Ride A Challenge

Her biggest growth challenge was the dotcom ride she experienced while travelling the country for 18 months to try to raise capital for RealWired!, Inc. Although her idea attracted the attention of venture capitalists, the stock market crashed before she was able to get any investment money. “In hindsight, it was the best thing because the venture capitalists would have pulled out and it made me recognize that a company that can bootstrap will last.” Her lesson learned? “Companies have to grow organically. You can’t skip through the phases.” She managed to start and grow RealWired! with financing she raised from private investors – including one of her early bosses, who had been a mentor.

“Companies have to grow organically. You can’t skip through the phases.”

Brenda seeks regular advice from her banker, **Penny Hulbert**. “The kind of support I get from Penny is amazing,” emphasizes Brenda. “We have regular meetings to swap strategies and share leads.” And Brenda even introduced Penny to the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network, an association she joined in the late 90’s, which has proven to be another good support system. “There



BRENDA DOHRING HICKS

are no rules or pecking orders in this group,” Brenda says. “It is very open, with everyone willing to share ideas and information.”

Penny particularly enjoys working with women entrepreneurs like Brenda, impressed by “their incredible ability to multi-task successfully and their focus.” She attributes Brenda’s business success to street smarts and a magnetic personality. “People gravitate to her and want to do business with her because she makes them feel good about being around her,” explains Penny, adding that Brenda is also savvy at sizing up and capitalizing on opportunities.

Time for More

With her businesses in a stabilized phase now, Brenda wants to enjoy what she has built and have some fun too. A sailing enthusiast (“I’m the boat queen!”), she recently started a sailing charter company with her family, based in St. John in the Caribbean. She also participates in triathlons and is learning to play piano. “It’s like tap dancing,” she insists. “Just another sound to master!”

Another of her newest ventures is the start-up of the Center for Smart Business (www.centerforsmartbusiness.com), a networking and educational forum for evolving businesses. “It’s my give-back,” she explains. This laid-back, dynamic entrepreneur is clearly passionate about helping people and loves having them around her – “as long as I can be the captain,” she admits with a wink.

For a profile of Penny and other bankers who champion women entrepreneurs, visit www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women/meet_champion.html

In the News



Rossana Magnotta



Adair Heuchan



Jessica LeCroy

Congratulations to...

...RBC Royal Bank client **Rossana Magnotta**, President and Co-founder, Magnotta Winery Corp., honoured in the Entrepreneurs category of *Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Awards* presented by the Women's Executive Network (www.wxnetwork.com). RBC Royal Bank is proud that four of our executives were honoured in the Corporate Executives category: **Elisabetta Bigsby**, Senior Executive VP, Human Resources and Public Affairs; **Janice Fukakusa**, Chief Financial Officer; **Gay Mitchell**, Executive VP, Ontario; and **Barbara Stymiest**, Chief Operating Officer.

...All the women who appeared in *PROFIT* magazine's *W100* ranking of top Canadian women business owners by revenue in 2004 (www.profitguide.com/w100/2004).

...*Woman of the Year* **Adair Heuchan**, Counsellor to the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the Government of Canada in Geneva, and Chapter of the Year OWIT-Alberta (www.owitalberta.org), chosen by the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) in Tampa, Florida in November 2004 (www.owit.org).

...**Jessica LeCroy**, appointed in the fall as the new Consul General at the United States Consulate General in Toronto.

Charlie Coffey [r], Executive VP, RBC Financial Group, welcomes Nellie McClung descendants [l-r] great-granddaughter Emily, grandson David and granddaughter Marcia, at a



ceremony in honour of the 75th anniversary of the 'Persons' Case', held at RBC Royal Bank in Toronto in October 2004. The Bank of Canada launched a \$50 bank note featuring the Famous 5 women pioneers – Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Muir Edwards and Irene Parlby – as well as human rights advocate and suffragist Thérèse Casgrain, who successfully appealed the case. The Famous 5 are best remembered for their work as suffragists, legislators and champions of the rights and welfare of women and children (www.famous5.org).

RBC Royal Bank Salutes Women Entrepreneurs Across Canada

Women entrepreneurs are thriving across Canada and, with the help of RBC Royal Bank, are finding the financing and advice they need to grow their businesses. Meet four of them...



Not Just Another Pretty Place

Deborah Scott, Managing Principal
Scott Morris Architects Inc.
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"You can't just offer beautiful buildings with beautiful interior spaces – you've got to do better than that," says **Deborah Scott**. A multiple award-winning national firm with a broad portfolio to its credit, Scott Morris Architects' original focus was in the highly technical fields of health care, laboratory and educational design. More recently, this diverse practice has added office/retail environments, residential and a construction management component.

But what really makes Scott Morris unique is the market knowledge Deborah possesses. "Clients want architects who understand what's going on out there – how a city taxes business, the transportation network, real estate

demand – so that they're not over-building or under-building. The more knowledgeable I am about the market or how Canada fits into the rest of the world, the better it is for my clients," she explains.

➤ "Architecture and design are all about improving the quality of life."

Ownership means flexibility

"When I came to Ontario as a single mom with two kids, it was just like starting all over again, even though I had practised out west for 14 years," says Deborah. What attracts her to business ownership is flexibility. "That was really important to me in terms of raising my kids," she insists.

Deborah has always been an RBC client. "My bank has been great and has always believed in me as I've relocated around the country."

Check out our web site to discover how Deborah tackles roadblocks in her profession.

Flush with Success

Claudette Paré, Owner, Sani Bleu Inc.
Saint-Romuald, Quebec, 418-834-0999
cpare@sanibleu.com www.sanibleu.com

A visionary, **Claudette Paré** anticipated the growth opportunities in the portable toilet rental business when she worked for an industrial cleaning business in the '80s. She knew the development of outdoor events in the Quebec City area would create a demand. In 1991, she and her companion founded a portable toilet rental and sales business in a joint venture with her employer. "We started with one truck and 18 toilets," she recalls. They became sole owners of the company in 1998 and today Sani Bleu Inc. is number one in the industry in Quebec City.

➤ "In this business, you have to be available 24/7."

Women are a rarity

Needless to say, women are few and far between in this line of business. "Some women don't understand how I can

be interested in the toilet business, until I explain our different products to them, which are often misunderstood by the public," says Claudette, who is proud to have built up a business from scratch.

RBC Royal Bank supported Claudette from the outset, but it was in the late '90s that the bank played its biggest role in the success of her business. "When we acquired our competitor in 1999, the bank made a real difference," she notes.

Major events serviced

Sani Bleu meets the needs of some of the area's biggest events, such as the Saint-Jean Baptiste festivities. "What sets us apart are service, quality, cleanliness, which is our top priority, and the variety of our toilet models – we have nine, even a white one for weddings!"

What's the best thing about Claudette's line of business? Visit our web site to find out.





If You Build It, They Will Come

Sal Howell, Proprietor, River Café
Calgary, Alberta
403-261-7670 sal@river-cafe.com
www.river-cafe.com

What would it take to entice customers to walk across a footbridge in the middle of a frigid Calgary winter day just to get a meal? Meet River Café owner **Sal Howell**. Not only has

this savvy restaurateur successfully transferred her fine art background to the creation of a high-end, award-winning restaurant in a unique setting, she has also crafted a dining experience so exquisite and memorable that customers keep returning – even when it is 25 degrees below zero.

Cultivating repeat clientele

But Sal never rests on her laurels. River Café – located on an island park in downtown Calgary and featuring regional Canadian cuisine with naturally produced ingredients sourced from small local farms and producers – has an entrenched culture of continuous improvement. “We constantly ask for feedback, rework our internal systems, explore new ingredients and presentations and push ourselves to do better,” explains Sal, whose passion is driven by seeing people enjoy the River Café experience. “We work hard to be a destination worth the walk.”

➤ **“I love food and the stories behind food.”**

In the early 90’s, Sal saw the potential of River Café and oversaw the redevelopment – doing the concept design, raising the funds and supervising the construction of what is today’s unique restaurant, with the help of a loan from RBC Royal Bank.

Goal setter

The restaurant’s success can be attributed in part to Sal’s vigilant attention to the numbers side of the business, with the result that sales have increased each year. She regularly sets goals. “Envisioning the future is a very powerful tool. You’ll find people who are aligned and then anything is possible!”

Visit our web site for Sal’s tips on creating a culture that attracts and retains talented people.

Making a Difference by Telling the Truth

Lynda Powless, Publisher/Editor, Turtle Island News,
Six Nations of the Grand River, Ohsweken, Ontario
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www.theturtleislandnews.com

Not many business owners can claim a road to business growth as eventful as **Lynda Powless’**. She’s been arrested twice, had her house mortgage threatened and even her business property shot up – all because she reports the news. This award-winning journalist owns *Turtle Island News*, the only national native weekly newspaper in Canada. She started it a decade ago in the basement of her home, while juggling a day job and raising three sons as a single parent.



Today, the business employs 12, operates from a building financed by a loan from RBC Royal Bank (“Quite frankly, I don’t think we’d be here if it hadn’t been for RBC Royal Bank.”) and has even opened its first bureau, in London, Ontario, with plans for more to come in Ontario and the U.S.

➤ **“Through the paper, we reinforce the rights of the public – our readers.”**

Powerful impact

Right from the beginning, *Turtle Island News* made an impact – winning awards in its first year and ever since. The paper’s success is largely due to breaking new ground in native journalism with its timely and incisive approach to aboriginal news and its challenge to aboriginal politicians to be accountable for their actions. Lynda is proud of the impact the paper has made. “Today, people are talking about the issues.”

Tough moments

But it’s been far from smooth sailing. Lynda’s building has been shot up in the middle of the night and she was arrested twice after attempting to attend Band council meetings on health issues. Along the way, her three sons – who work at the paper and will eventually take over – have learned both the importance of human rights and the ups and downs of running a newspaper.

To find out how Lynda prepared her sons to understand the business, visit our web site.



Growing Your

Although the U.S. market may seem big and complex, it is full of opportunity and can be approached gradually. Regardless of where you are on the growth spectrum, there is plenty of help for entrepreneurs. Read on for tips and resources.

Legal Considerations

Doing business in the U.S. is “both a progression and puzzle,” says cross-border trade specialist **Pamela Davis Heilman**, a Partner at Hodgson Russ Attorneys LLP, which has offices in the U.S. and Toronto (pheilman@hodgsonruss.com). Initially there may not be much paperwork or licensing required, but, once you need an office and potentially employees in the U.S., things get a bit more complicated because of tax, immigration and structuring issues. Pamela offers these guidelines:

- Do your homework and have a business plan.
- Have the right visa. Note that frequent, low-risk travellers can get a NEXUS pass to pre-clear border crossing easily. Application forms can be found at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel/nexus/menu-e.html, and enrolment centres are located at the border.
- When you start selling products or services, consider issues like insurance, product labelling, customs, duties, FDA registration, banking, a 1 800 number that works in the U.S. and even a .com domain rather than a .ca.
- Utilize professionals on both sides of the border.

Selling to the U.S. Government: a Potential Market for You?

The U.S. federal government spends \$250 billion annually on goods and services, with this number doubling when state and local government procurement is added. That kind of buying power drives steady long-term revenue for well-qualified vendors. **Judy Bradt**, Principal and CEO of Summit Insight (www.summitinsight.com), which assists Canadian firms win U.S. government contracts, offers these five clues to tell you whether you are ready to sell to the world’s largest buyer.

1. Already doing business in U.S. commercial market. U.S. government customers want the assurance that your products or services will arrive at the right time and place. That’s easier if you have smoothly-operating procedures for customs and border logistics and – if you are a professional services firm – have arranged for the appropriate visas or work permits that will allow employees hassle-free border crossings.

2. Already selling to government in Canada. The American system is certainly different from Canada’s but the concept will seem familiar. If you’ve learned the procurement ropes at home, you’ll know what to expect.

3. Strong government reference accounts. If you’ve worked for the smaller-scale Canadian government, you may have developed innovative concepts and solutions that you can propose to a U.S. government prospect. As well, your Canadian contacts may know their U.S. counterpart and could introduce you.

4. Prepared to grow. It can take as long as two years before you will begin to see a return on your investment in U.S. government business. You’ll be poised for success if you have considered a variety of ways to grow, U.S. government markets among them, and are prepared to invest the resources – including time, money, people, and executive commitment – to win.

5. Facing few barriers. Canadian firms have a level playing field in the American government market for many products and services, and in many government departments, but not all. A sound market entry decision includes knowing whether to expect unfettered market access. Learn more in NAFTA Chapter 10 (see www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/nafta-alena/chap10-en.asp).

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Visit www.international.gc.ca/sell2usgov to find excellent introductory resources or seek the advice of a trade commissioner – via www.infoexport.gc.ca – or other specialists before making a market entry decision.

For tips from Judy on how to meet and team with American woman-owned small businesses, which get preferred access to government contacts, visit our Web site at www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women/exporting.html.

Business in the U.S.

Banking Services

Business Banking

Through our network of banking specialists in the U.S., we can also help you establish banking services there. Whether you are exporting from Canada, setting up a U.S. sales office or opening a U.S. operation, we can provide value-added

financial solutions and advice. These include:

- U.S.-based banking accounts
- Merchant credit card service
- Corporate credit card for travel
- And more...

Ask your RBC account representative for more information.

Personal Banking

RBC Access USA™ – U.S. Banking for Canadians: As a Canadian who visits or travels to the U.S. regularly, you have a very specific and unique set of banking needs. Now you can take full advantage of RBC services when you are in the U.S. through RBC Centura Bank®, a member of RBC Financial Group. As an RBC Access USA client, you can:

- Enrol at no extra charge for RBC Centura Web Banking.
- Transfer money instantly between your RBC Royal Bank account in Canada and your RBC Centura account in the U.S.
- Access an extensive network of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs).
- Purchase or refinance a home in the U.S. more easily by taking advantage of a range of U.S. mortgage and lending products that are tailored to the unique needs of Canadians.
- Access your Canadian credit history, so the process of taking out a loan or acquiring a mortgage in the U.S. can be easier.

For More Information...

Whether you're just thinking about expanding to the U.S., or you're already doing business there, here are some valuable resources to tap into to help you:

Government

- www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/can-am/export – Check out the ExportUSA program.
- www.infoexport.gc.ca – The Trade Commissioner Service site from International Trade Canada offers practical advice, links to trade events, market leads and opportunities. Register here for the Virtual Trade Commissioner.
- **International Trade Canada U.S. Business Development Division** – 613-944-6566.
- www.exporthsource.ca – Team Canada's comprehensive source of on-line information on exporting, including a practical handbook, *Exporting to the United States – A Guide for Canadian Businesses* (www.exporthsource.ca/gol/exporthsource/site.nsf/en/es02631.html). Or call 1-888-811-1119.
- www.edc.ca/womex – Export Development Canada (EDC) offers both a special team of employees who work with women exporters as well as products to mitigate export risk, including accounts receivable insurance.
- www.usembassycanada.gov – Check here for visa and immigration information.

Organizations

- www.owit.org – The Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT), dedicated to advancing global trade opportunities for women, has 22 U.S. chapters and two in Canada (www.owit-toronto.ca and www.owitalberta.org).
- www.crewnetwork.org – The Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network, focused on advancing the success of women in the industry, has 53 U.S. chapters and two in Canada (www.crewmontreal.com and www.torontocrew.org).



When you are travelling in the southeastern states, remember that RBC Centura has over 250 banking centres to serve you in person if you are an RBC Access USA client. To find out more about RBC Access USA, visit www.rbcroyalbank.com/usbanking, call 1-800-ROYAL 5-3 (1-800-769-2553), or visit any RBC Royal Bank branch.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2005 RBC CANADIAN WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS

Purpose: To provide national recognition to successful Canadian women entrepreneurs.

Nomination Deadline: August 2, 2005

Application Deadline: August 15, 2005
(All nominees will be sent a package.)

Eligibility: Any woman who owns a profitable business (not a franchise) that has been registered and operating in Canada for three full years as of May 30, 2005, earns her primary income from it and is responsible for its day-to-day management. Nominated businesses must have three complete 12-month periods of financial statements.

Awards Ceremony: November 22, 2005, Toronto

Info: To nominate yourself or a candidate, visit www.theawards.ca, e-mail: info@powerpointgroup.com or tel: 416-923-1688, toll-free at 1-800-354-3303.

For tips from past winners, visit www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women



Find it on the Web!

Everybody Needs a Holiday!

"I'm so busy before I go and so overloaded when I return that it's almost not worth it to go away in the first place."

Sound familiar? For tips from Canada's work-life balance expert,



Nora Spinks, President of Work-Life Harmony Enterprises, on how to ensure a smooth

come-back after that great vacation, go online to www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women/time_4u.html



You'll find even more news, tips and resources on our Web site...a single source of information for Canadian women interested in growing their businesses.

Updated regularly! Visit us often!
www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women

Calendar/Events

For an up-to-date listing of events for women entrepreneurs, check out the Events page on our Web site at www.rbcroyalbank.com/sme/women.



Women's Market Champions

For further information on RBC Royal Bank services and on local initiatives for women entrepreneurs, please contact the Champion coordinator in your area:

ATLANTIC

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Do you have content suggestions or business tips to share?
E-mail: womensvirtualnetwork@rbc.com or call the Editor at 416-410-1654.

For more information on our products or services, call 1-800-ROYAL@ 2-0 (1-800-769-2520).