

Champions &

breakthroughs and resources for women entrepreneurs

comment | message

spotlight | showcase

Women are the backbone of an amazing global growth of entrepreneurs. That's the message that came through loud and clear at the inaugural Summit of the Global Banking Alliance for Women (see story opposite).

It was exciting – and inspiring – to hear first hand about the burgeoning growth of women entrepreneurs around the world – from more women getting involved in farm leadership in Ireland to women owning one-third of businesses in Australia to the exciting venture capital events in the USA. And I'm delighted that RBC Royal Bank has come together with other leading international banks to form this Alliance in order to accelerate women entrepreneurship globally.

But what will this mean to you?

Probably, most importantly for women entrepreneurs like you, the Global Alliance will open the door to more connections around the world. As one of our clients invited to a Summit roundtable put it: Women are creating their own networks now.

It was particularly gratifying for me to hear the praise for Canada's and RBC Royal Bank's initiatives for women entrepreneurs from our clients who participated in the Summit. And I appreciated their candid input on how we can continue to serve women business owners even better. We will not stand still.

One of the pillars of our commitment to helping women grow their businesses is our comprehensive Web site at www.royalbank.com/sme/women. If you haven't logged on yet, I encourage you to do so regularly and frequently...and to join our Virtual Network. It gives you an array of free resources and information and will keep you plugged in to news of interest...like the progress of the Global Banking Alliance for Women.

Betty Wood,

National Manager, Women Entrepreneurs Market
RBC Royal Bank

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Alliance captures momentum of global surge

Spearheading the Global Banking Alliance for Women to help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses and their wealth are (l to r): Ireland's Angela Leigh-Doyle, Bank of Ireland's Sector Manager for Small Business; Australia's Amanda Ellis, Westpac Banking Corporation's National Manager for Women in Business; America's Teri Cavanagh, Senior Vice President at FleetBoston Financial and Director of Women Entrepreneurs' Connection; and Canada's Betty Wood, National Manager, Women Entrepreneurs' Market, RBC Royal Bank.



Thanks for being part of our positive conspiracy." That's what **Gay Mitchell**, Executive VP, Ontario District, at RBC Royal Bank, told participants at the first Summit of the Global Banking Alliance for Women held in Toronto and Boston in June. As one of the four founding members of the Alliance – which also includes FleetBoston, Westpac (Australia) and Bank of Ireland, RBC Royal Bank hosted two exhilarating days of roundtable discussions in Toronto between the international bankers and Canadian women entrepreneurs.

"We are creating our own networks."

The goal of the Global Alliance is to learn from each other about the best practices for promoting access to finance, markets and information for women in business globally. And the message from its first Summit was clear: women worldwide are changing the business paradigm. Contributing one quarter to one third of the total business employment around the world, women entrepreneurs are becoming a significant force in the global business community. And they face similar challenges in accessing capital and networks, which is what the Global Alliance aims to change.

"We are very excited to be part of the Global Alliance," says **Betty Wood**, National Manager of the Women Entrepreneurs Market for RBC Royal Bank, who was instrumental in launching the Alliance and organizing the Toronto portion of the Summit. "It provokes us in a positive way to address how we can do things differently," she adds, referring to it as a specialized "brain trust."

Angela Leigh-Doyle, Sector Manager for Small Business at the Bank of Ireland, agrees. "It's a wonderful exchange of ideas and best practices and so re-energizing. The Global Alliance will enhance everything we do in Ireland. We have lots to learn and something to give."

Caroline Avery, CEO of VentureCluster Inc., was one of the women entrepreneurs invited to the roundtable to help paint a picture for the international bankers of the business environment in Canada for women business owners. "It was fascinating to realize how far we've come as women in business in Canada compared to other countries and really inspiring to hear there are so many women entrepreneurs around the globe...so many connections that can be established," she says of the experience. "We are creating our own networks."

"I was very encouraged to hear about the initiatives from banks worldwide to help women move forward," adds **Michele Bailey**, President of Blazing Design Inc. "We still have a long way to go, but it's good to see different countries helping each other out and networking."

"RBC Royal Bank has a clear and well-defined strategy and presence in the women's market," **Elyse Allen**, President of the Toronto Board of Trade, told the international bankers. "They've taken a lot of risks with this sector – from sponsoring trade missions to supporting women's business organizations – and I applaud them."

But Betty Wood says the bank will not rest on its laurels. "We will continue to do more," she promises. "The key to that is our network and partnerships."

name: Connie Parsons (709) 754-2290 conniep@roadrunner.nf.net

job description: Owner, Connie Parsons School of Dance

location: St. John's, Newfoundland

quote: "Be a doer."

Connie Parsons was a cute ballerina at three years old, and by 14, her dance teacher wanted to take her beyond the recreational level. Mrs. Parson's reply: "I don't think we want to put her through the stress. It's not like she'll be a dance teacher or anything."

But that's exactly what she became. "Mom ate her words," says Connie, now 26 and owner of the highly successful Connie Parsons School of Dance.

During university, she taught dance part-time at a studio owned by her teacher, Judy Fagan. It didn't take her long to realize she wanted to teach dance as a career. She went on to do summer courses at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School and the National Ballet School, followed by three intense years of study in Newfoundland, where she was accredited to teach by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.

When Judy retired in 1996, Connie bought the assets, including the student list, and incorporated her own business. "When all my friends were still in university, I was a full-fledged adult in the business world," she remembers.

Starting with 80 students, Connie's business doubled in the first year, and now has well over 300 customers. "All the professional training I've gone through is a very important aspect because it demonstrates to people that I'm qualified," she says. Her teaching includes everything from ballet, tap, jazz and modern dancing to ballroom and Latin American dance. Her school has both a strong recreational program and a more disciplined examination program, designed for the more serious students.

Her love of teaching stems from her parents who were school teachers. "When I was little, I would teach all the kids on my street everything I knew," laughs Connie. Today her students range from three-year-olds to adults and, despite the long - often exhausting days - teaching invigorates her. "When little children or adults start out and think they can't do it, I help them learn and give them confidence. That's very rewarding."

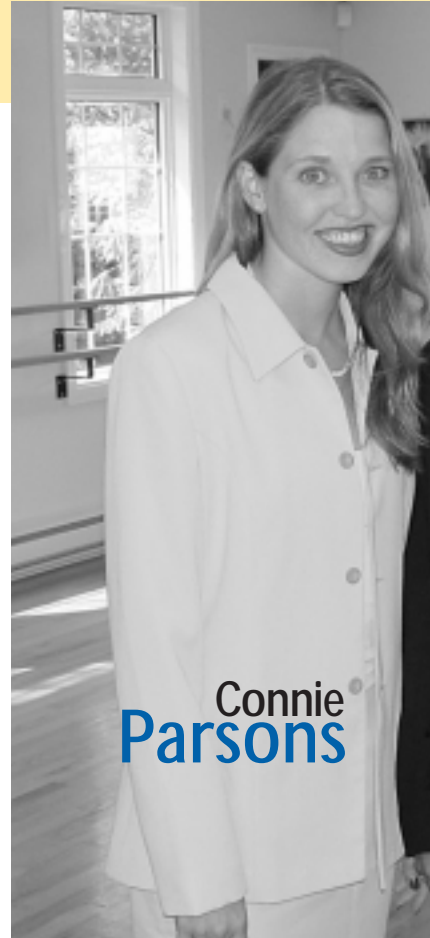
With siblings who are business graduates and relatives who are business owners, Connie is grateful for the help she has received from them in starting and growing her business. Support also comes from Danielle Harris, her account manager at RBC Royal Bank. When she first approached Danielle, she already had the business and rented space but wanted to buy a building. "Danielle was so helpful and had full faith in what I wanted to do," says Connie. She is now in the process of spinning off a retail business offering dancewear to students and customers. It will be located on

the main floor of her three-storey building, with the dance studio already on the second floor, and her own living quarters on the third.

"In growing the business. I want to maintain the close personal atmosphere I have here. I know the name of every parent and child," says Connie proudly. Down the road, she may expand to other towns, as long as she can find qualified employees who can learn the Connie Parsons touch - treating and respecting the students the same way she does.

The secret to her success? Connie says her #1 priority is customer service. "I listen to what people want and try to offer the best training I can. The business has grown because people like what they see and spread the word; I don't think a newspaper ad makes much difference."

Clearly, Connie has worked extremely hard to get to where she is today. "I'm the hardest boss I've ever worked for because I'm a perfectionist, which comes along with being a dancer," she says. And her determination has paid off - she is this year's Newfoundland winner of BDC's Young



Connie Parsons

Entrepreneur of the Year award. Five years after start-up, she admits it's been a huge learning curve, but "a great learning experience and I've enjoyed every minute of it -

from the bookkeeping to the promotion."

Connie's advice for women looking to start a business: "Have strong organizational skills and the will to make it happen. RBC Royal Bank has been really helpful with financing, but if I didn't push myself to make the things happen, then they wouldn't. It takes a lot of hard work, discipline and determination."

"If I didn't push myself to make the things happen, then they wouldn't."

nk Champions

champion | profile



name: Danielle Harris (709) 576-4816 danielle.harris@royalbank.com

job description: Senior Account Manager, Business Banking

location: St. John's, Newfoundland

quote: "It's a whole education process and I'm glad to be part of it."

If there is one person who carries the banner for women entrepreneurs in St. John's, Newfoundland, it's Danielle Harris. And she is well known for that.

It's obvious why. Promoted to Senior Account Manager last year after five years with RBC Royal Bank, Danielle also serves as a Women's Market Champion. "It's important to show that, although the bank's products don't need to be different for women, we understand there is a difference in the issues women face," she explains, pleased that the bank has developed tools to help.

"At any networking event I attend, the women are very appreciative, especially of our Web site at www.royalbank.com/sme/women," she says, stressing that women don't want special treatment, just recognition that they operate differently. "I do see different approaches between men and women entrepreneurs," she notes, adding that it's nice to go out to clients as a female banker.

"I try to ensure that people are fully aware of what financial institutions and players look for, so there are no surprises." She finds that as women entrepreneurs become more sophisticated and move along the growth curve, they are more willing to seek out information. "It's a whole education process and I'm glad to be part of it."

Danielle helps demystify banking as a board member of the Newfoundland & Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs (NLOWE). She plays an active role in membership growth, policy development and the planning of conferences for the women entrepreneur's market. She has also been involved in studies and focus groups on financing and exporting for women entrepreneurs. Women, both members of NLOWE and clients of the bank, look to Danielle to help them better understand banking and financing.

Describing the St. John's women's market as a dichotomous mix - from very small, home-based women entrepreneurs to well-established business owners and operators - Danielle has witnessed a growth in women entrepreneurs on the east coast as the economy shifts. She enjoys building individual relationships with her entrepreneurial clients like Connie Parsons and understanding their businesses and the challenges that go along with them. "When Connie came to me, we sat down and went through her whole plan together, which included purchasing a building. Her business continues to grow, year after year."

The secret to Connie's success, according to Danielle? "It's the passion she has for what she does, combined with her business acumen. She asks questions and does all the good, hands-on things a banker likes to see entrepreneurs do!"

Association Profile



NAME: Newfoundland & Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs - Women helping Women

WHAT IT IS: A not-for-profit organization that promotes and fosters women's success in business in Newfoundland and Labrador. The organization - with over 200

members - provides the information, services and links with mainstream programs that women entrepreneurs need to establish or grow their businesses. NLOWE is community-based with six regional facilitators providing assessment and business counselling referral services. NLOWE also works with various agencies to promote the role of women in community economic development, raise awareness of existing barriers and promote the successful enterprises created by women.

WHAT YOU GET: Information, counseling, and alternative financing options to start or grow your business; help in accessing small loans and building credit ratings; plus seminars, networking, mentoring and an annual conference (this year's conference *Smart Strategies - Connecting and Learning* will take place November 5 in St. John's). Subsidies are also available to hire consultants to assist with business plan development through NLOWE's Consultants' Subsidy Fund. NLOWE chapters throughout the province provide networking and development opportunities for members. NLOWE confers annual Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

COST: \$25 (for start-ups) to \$75 (for those established for two years or more in business).

INFO: Patricia Murphy, Manager, Program Development at 709-754-5555 or e-mail to murphy@nfld.net Or visit www.nlowe.org

women's market champion leaders

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

British Columbia:

Rosemary Lee
BC District - Vancouver
Tel (604) 665-0717
rosemary.lee@royalbank.com

Candace Cousins
Vancouver North Shore
Tel (604) 665-4032
candace.cousins@royalbank.com

Sue Rynsewyn - Prince George
Tel (604) 960-4532
sue.rynsewyn@royalbank.com

Alberta:

Murray Gartner
Prairies District - Calgary
Tel (403) 292-3189
murray.gartner@royalbank.com

Debbie Wilton - Edmonton
Tel (780) 448-6608
debbie.wilton@royalbank.com

Manitoba:

Vi Desrochers - Winnipeg
Tel (204) 988-4268
vi.desrochers@royalbank.com

Saskatchewan:

Tina Gatward - Regina
Tel (306) 780-2697
tina.gatward@royalbank.com

Ontario:

Lynne Bain
Ontario District - Toronto
Tel (416) 974-5434
lynne.bain@royalbank.com

Janie Frank - Brampton
Tel (905) 458-3159
janie.frank@royalbank.com

Kathie Emms - Ottawa
Tel (613) 564-4884
kathie.emms@royalbank.com

Quebec:

Maryse Gosselin
Quebec District - Montreal
Tel (514) 874-8411
maryse.gosselin@royalbank.com

Atlantic:

Colleen Ivimey
Atlantic District - Halifax
Tel (902) 421-8234
colleen.ivimey@royalbank.com

Susan Boyle - Saint John, NB
Tel (506) 632-0713
susan.boyle@royalbank.com

Danielle Harris - St. John's, NF
Tel (709) 576-4816
danielle.harris@royalbank.com

* Not all Champions are listed. Contact the District Representative for additional names.

RBC Royal Bank Salutes Our Women Entrepreneurs



Meet a few of the growing number of dynamic women entrepreneurs across Canada who tap into our resources, services and networks to improve and expand their businesses:



Name: Rhondalynn Korolak, President

Company: From Here to Maternity, Calgary, AB
(403) 262-3511 rkorolak@fromheretomaternity.com www.fromheretomaternity.com

Description: Caters to the demanding lifestyles of professional women by providing stylish, top quality maternity wear through a boutique, print catalogue and dynamic E-commerce Web site.

A tax lawyer and CA, Rhondalynn started her company in 1999 when she became very interested in the concept of an Internet business and began researching for underserved market niches. "Although I've never had kids, I listened...and I know a good idea when I hear one." Today, From Here to Maternity has seven employees and boasts an international clientele, with 60% of its sales coming from the Web (85% of those sales are from the U.S. and abroad). This year it was chosen as Small Business Innovative Retailer of the Year and Retail Marketer of the Year by the Retail Council of Canada for its innovative 'bricks and clicks' concept.

Business Challenge: "In order to achieve success, I had to develop a strategy that would allow me to make our exclusive collection of maternity clothing accessible to all women. E-commerce had to be a crucial part of that equation. But I had nowhere to go for help in starting an Internet business - plus retail and dot.com are almost like two swear words together, so it's difficult getting people to understand that my concept works."

Service Used: Moneris Solutions for electronic processing payment (*see page 8*)

How It Helped: "Moneris did most of the background work to get us up and running. And RBC Royal Bank is pretty progressive in understanding the risks of an online business and prepared to set up the processing for U.S. and foreign currencies. I rely on the bank to be the expert in this area, so I'm very pleased they know how to do this well."



Name: Anne Rose, President

Company: Taylor + Rose Consulting, Toronto, ON
(416) 487-5204 anne.rose@sympatico.ca

Description: Since 1991, Taylor + Rose Consulting has been providing multi-faceted consulting services - primarily in the areas of international trade and development and strategic business planning - to clients in a variety of sectors, both in Canada and abroad. A Certified Management Consultant with over 20 years experience in public and private sector business development, Anne works with small companies that lack marketing and trade development skills. "I act as their mentor, coach and strategist to help them enter new markets."

Business Challenge: With a goal to double the amount of international trade work she does, Anne's biggest challenge is identifying companies that need her kind of expertise.

Association Participation: Anne is an active member - and sits on the Board - of Women in International Trade - Ontario (WITO), which is dedicated to increasing global trade opportunities for women.

How It Helps: Association events and speaking engagements are among the key marketing tools in Anne's own business development arsenal. "WITO is an excellent place to connect with companies interested in my international trade expertise. And RBC Royal Bank's support of business women through organizations like this and through sponsoring informative events is tremendous. The Bank has gone a long way to help build the women's business market and encourage women in export market development."



Name: Laraine Kaminsky, President

Company: MALKAM Cross-Cultural Training, Ottawa, ON
(613) 761-7440 kaminsky@malkam.com www.malkam.com

Description: As specialists in customized language and cross-cultural training, MALKAM promotes linguistic and cultural diversity to further employee communication and management effectiveness. By offering diversity research, training and consulting, as well as pre-employment programs, MALKAM's goal is to help individuals and organizations succeed in the diverse global marketplace.

Business Challenge: "We sell a service that is not seen as essential, so we must constantly address the return on investment and help people understand the importance of cross-cultural issues in a global economy." Since her start-up in 1989, Laraine has navigated her business through many changes in the economy nationally and internationally. "You must look for the opportunities in a changing economy and adjust your business."

Services/Programs Accessed: Internet banking, virtual trade missions, networking events

Bank Relationship: An international speaker and consultant who travels widely to share her expertise on culture and business, Laraine promotes the message that women in business need to work with professional suppliers, like their bankers. She also invites bankers in to her training sessions to explain the Canadian banking system to new Canadians. In turn, she says the bank is sensitive to the complications of her business banking needs. And she takes advantage of bank-sponsored events like virtual trade missions. "I'm always interested in anything that provides me with a bigger network."



Name: Thérèse Fredette, President

Company: Corporate Research & Analysis Centre Ltd. (C.R.A.C.), Montreal, QC 1-800-361-5744 tfredette@crac.com www.crac.com

Description: As a legal and corporate service and search house, C.R.A.C. has helped companies make sense of increasingly complex corporate regulations since 1979. It offers searches on corporate files and existing businesses, and helps clients incorporate companies, research and register company names, domains and trade-marks, and obtain appropriate legal documents. Thérèse saw a need for these services in the market after graduating from law school in 1978. And

since the entrepreneurial interest was already in her blood - her father and grandfather were both entrepreneurs - she started her own business. Today the company has 40 employees and boasts annual revenues of over \$5 million.

Business Challenge: After developing successful business-to-business services, Thérèse is now converting C.R.A.C. into an interactive Internet service that anyone can access. The challenge is to convince her existing clients - mostly lawyers and accountants - to use it.

Services Accessed: From Internet banking to foreign exchange services, Thérèse has relied on the resources, expertise and financial support offered by RBC Royal Bank since opening her business. Now she says, "They will certainly be helpful in the electronic payment processing for my Web service."

Bank Relationship: Thérèse believes it is important to have a close relationship with your banker. She often receives newsletters and invitations to financial planning events from RBC Royal Bank. Most importantly, her banker helps her make the right financial decisions. "The bank does a lot for women entrepreneurs now."

A Special Salute



Canadians from coast to coast responded to the tragedy and sorrow of the New York terrorist attack with incredible goodwill and generosity. RBC Royal Bank extends a special salute to our

client, *Marianne Bertrand*, for her humanitarian gesture. Along with pet mail-order house Drs. Foster & Smith, Marianne, who is President of Muttluks (www.muttluks.com) in Toronto, donated 800 pairs of her product - protective dog boots - for the New York Police Department canine unit and other dogs searching through the rubble of the World Trade Center.

Initiatives for Women Entrepreneurs

Whether you are a home-based business or a large-scale entrepreneur trading on the global stage, you can rely on RBC Royal Bank's commitment to support women-owned businesses through various programs and events. We know that expanding your business is about more than financing. That is why we're associated with these and other initiatives:



The Uniquely Creative Arts Shows

An innovative business development program to help gift producers break into wholesale markets and access global opportunities. The program peaks with trade shows in B.C., the Prairies and Ontario. *Info: Barbara Mowat 1 800 672-0103* www.uniquelycanada.com



Women in International Trade - Ontario (WITO)

The first Canadian chapter of a worldwide organization dedicated to increasing global trade opportunities for women in over 30 countries. *Info: Anne Rose, Membership VP, at (416) 487-5204 or anne.rose@sympatico.ca* www.wito.ca



BusinessMatchMaker™

A match-up software program for domestic and global networking, available online. Get a free trial by joining RBC Royal Bank's network for women entrepreneurs at www.royalbank.com/sme/women/become_member.html *Info: (905) 940-1649 or info@businesstree.net*

*For local initiatives geared to women in business, check with the **Champion** in your area (see list on page 4).*

Tips For Charitable Giving

Women traditionally don't see themselves as philanthropists and often do their giving anonymously and with little fanfare. The power of money is a tool for making a difference in the world and the potential for this is increased by giving strategically. "When women come together to make a public declaration, they can fix a problem, however daunting," says journalist and award-winning author **Sally Armstrong**, Board member of the Canadian Women's Foundation. "Women are fixers. We can use our dollars to make a difference in the lives of others. Don't just give 10 bucks here and there to anyone who asks. Decide on the issues most important to you and put your money there."

Developing a strategic giving plan also makes it easier to balance the costs of donations and deal with receipts at income tax time. Here are a few tips to help you create your own personal giving plan:

- **Connect your giving to what you want to see changed in the world.** Reflect on what you value. Think of a problem in society that makes you say "this has to change."
- **Match your interests to what society needs.** Your personal giving has more impact when it is pooled with other donors who share your desire to make a difference around particular issues. When narrowing your research to specific organizations, keep in mind the distribution of local, provincial, national and international groups. Local groups accomplish results in your own community, while larger groups have an impact on broader economic and social systems.

- **Allocate your money and time.**

Consider whether you want to support more than one organization, based on your assessment of the importance of each to your values and interests. Allocate a percentage of your total planned donation (money and/or volunteer time) to each. With larger monetary gifts, you may want to think about a pledge of monthly or multi-year support, which provides greater stability to organizations, and helps you to plan ahead by spreading out the cost. Consider setting aside some funds for spontaneous or emergency gifts.

- **Review your giving amount annually**

At the end of the year, re-evaluate and see if you gave what you intended to. On average, Canadians give away under two percent of their annual income. Of course, many people give more than that. How much you give will change as your income, obligations and lifestyle changes. Plan it as you would any other investment.

Source: Canadian Women's Foundation, which raises funds and makes grants to local projects across Canada that support women and girls in order to create social and economic change (Tel: toll free 1-866-293-4483 or www.cdnwomen.org)

FONDATION DES
FEMMES
CANADIENNES

Taking charge of your financial future



It's the week before RRSP deadline time; you meant to do some research on the best investment choice, but somehow there was never a spare moment. Oh well, you decide you can just do the same thing as last year, and maybe next year you'll have time to be more strategic about it....Sound familiar?

"I often find that women have wonderful intentions, but the reality is they lack the time, end up investing on a rush, last minute basis, or in dribs and drabs, and often don't get the highest value for their investment dollars," explains **Marguerite Stewart**. As one of over 500 Investment & Retirement Planners for RBC Financial Group, Marguerite works with clients to bring all the pieces of their investment strategy together. "Many people find the investment planning process a bit puzzling...it doesn't have to be," she says. "With our experience, and the resources and support of RBC Financial Group, we provide trusted investment advice and help put financial futures in perspective, providing peace of mind."

Through a comprehensive, private consultation and planning process, Marguerite works with her clients - a large number of the females she serves are self-employed - to develop a well-balanced investment strategy. Creating a framework to build and maintain wealth includes essentials such as:

- The life cycle approach to investing
- Proper asset allocation and balancing risk and return
- Evaluation of a wide range of investment alternatives.

Investment and Retirement Planners serve time-pressed business owners and individuals anytime and anywhere. Marguerite Stewart serves the Toronto Central/Downtown Area (Tel: 416-974-1806; e-mail: marg.stewart@royalbank.com). To contact an Investment & Retirement Planner in your region, call 1-800-Royal 1-1.

Investment advice is provided by Royal Mutual Funds Inc., a member company of RBC Financial Group. Royal Mutual Funds Inc. and Royal Bank of Canada are separate corporate entities, which are affiliated. Royal Mutual Funds Inc. is licensed as a financial services firm in the province of Quebec.



Get Culturally Savvy

International trade offers one of the most exciting growth opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Having an exportable product or service, marketing strategy and long-term commitment are essential to success. But another key and often overlooked ingredient to expanding and sustaining your business abroad is cultural awareness. By learning and respecting cultural differences, you'll have an edge in foreign markets. **Laraine Kaminsky**, President of Ottawa-based MALKAM Cross-Cultural Training, shares her techniques for developing cultural competence:

- **Educate yourself about cultural do's and don'ts.**

It's important not to assume North American ways are universal. For example, use humour carefully across cultures. Some cultures may rely on demonstrations of politeness or respect, not laughter, to break the ice. They may also avoid doing business deals during religious festivals, which can last from three days to a month. Religious customs may also dictate differences in male and female roles, so aim for conservatism and formality in tone and dress.

- **Find allies.**

Look for women's networks in foreign markets since these contacts can be very helpful. A solid starting point is the Associations section at www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen. And, remember not to make assumptions. Your business partners in India or Pakistan may have been educated in the U.K. or the U.S.A.

- **Prepare to adjust your business practices.**

Add about one-third more time than you'd expect to cut a deal abroad. In many countries, business transactions are put on hold until partners develop a social relationship. Some cultures are also group-oriented and must consult with other parties first. Other tips: build contingencies into negotiations and pricing; include large margins when signing contracts; and put all agreements and deliverables in writing.

- **Be aware of prejudices and prepare yourself to deal with them.**

As a woman, you may have to build your credibility first - for example by bringing a video or another item that demonstrates your position in the company. In some countries, you might need a male you trust to represent you.

One of the most fun and rewarding aspects of doing business internationally is learning about various cultures. Follow Laraine's advice and you'll be well on your way.

For more information, contact Laraine Kaminsky at (613) 761-7440 or kaminsky@malkam.com or visit www.malkam.com.

Virtual experts offer solid advice

Starting up your own business is never easy. Keeping it running smoothly is even more challenging. RBC Royal Bank, Chatelaine and Step Ahead* give businesswomen the chance to share questions, ideas and concerns with small business specialists in a series of on-line talk forums at <http://royalbank.chatelaine.com>. Here's a sample of the insights shared by our experts during these virtual chats this year:

On Mentoring:

Q: *Is it all right to have multiple mentors or will this only confuse me?*

A: Start with one mentor and develop that relationship to the fullest. If you find after a period of time that your mentor does not have expertise in a specific area you want, seek out others who can help.

On Marketing:

Q: *Do you have any Web marketing suggestions?*

A: Create a 'go to and click through' site by promoting your product/service off-line and through e-mail, featuring your e-mail address prominently. Make sure people can buy from your site or tell them how they can obtain your product or service. Provide interesting content and product/service information and have a page of links to other related products to increase your exposure through search engines.

On Recruitment:

Q: *I would like someone to help me out with my home-based business but I'm not sure how to recruit them.*

A: Placing an ad in the paper can be costly and can result in many responses. More cost-effective ways of recruiting are: scanning the job boards on the Internet; working your network; posting at universities and colleges; and posting at relevant associations.

On Interviewing:

Q: *What questions should I ask potential employees to elicit the most telling responses/reactions and bring out their true personality?*

A: Work from the resume. Ask questions that require an explanation, not just a yes or no: Describe your previous job in your own words; What did you not like about it? What would your supervisor say about your performance? About your attendance? Your reliability?

For more tips from these virtual experts, visit www.royalbank.com/sme/women/biz_strategies.html

* *Step Ahead* is a year-long one-on-one mentoring and educational program that matches women who want to grow their businesses with established women entrepreneurs who've gone through a growth cycle. For more information on this Greater Metropolitan Toronto area initiative, contact Marie Bordeleau at (416) 410-5802 or e-mail mbordeleau@baseconsulting.ca

Maxine Westaway, Executive Vice President of America-Asian & Associates Corp, will become the first non-American President of The International Alliance of Professional and Executive Women, an umbrella group for women's business organizations around the world. Maxine is immediate Past President of the Canadian Association of Women Executives & Entrepreneurs.... In another first for a Canadian, **Astrid Pregel**, Canada's Consul General in Atlanta, is the first Canadian to win the prestigious Woman of the Year Award from the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT). This honour recognizes women who have enhanced the status of women in

international trade through excellence and innovation. Astrid has spearheaded landmark trade missions for Canadian women exporters, sponsored by RBC Royal Bank. As a result, she has opened the doors for more women to do business across more borders....

Shauneen Bruder of RBC Royal Bank was named President of RBC Centura Banks Inc. in North Carolina in July, becoming the first woman to have such a senior role at Centura. RBC Royal Bank purchased Centura - a US\$12 billion-asset financial services company - this summer in order to create a retail banking platform in the U.S.

resources

Moneris Streamlines Electronic Payment Processing



If you provide your customers with the choice and convenience of making payments with credit and debit cards, a new service is available to simplify electronic payment processing for you. Gone are the days of multiple accounts, multiple service fees and multiple bank statements at more than one financial institution.

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Royal Bank customers who sign up for Moneris between October 1 and December 31, 2001 pay no signup fees and are automatically eligible to win an IBM ThinkPad2. For more information on this special offer, visit www.royalbank.com/merchantservices/index.html.



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Women's trade Web site revamped

Check out www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen for the relaunched Businesswomen in Trade Web site from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade



(DFAIT). This comprehensive, one-stop trade resource is tailored to women entrepreneurs who want to prepare for - and succeed in - the export marketplace. The revamped site includes dynamic new content like WitWisdom from experienced women exporters and consultants, hundreds of key contacts, advance notice of trade events, and market leads and opportunities. Info: Andrea Kucey at (613) 996-4785 or andrea.kucey@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

October 21 -22, 2001

The Power of Innovation: Driving Small Business Growth, Sydney, Nova Scotia

This Women in Business conference includes a trade show and workshops on innovation, marketing and finance. Info: (902) 564-6453 or asingler@icbot.com

November 7, 2001

Ethics for Entrepreneurs, Toronto Step Ahead, a one-on-one mentoring program for women business owners, presents this workshop on ethical challenges when pursuing new directions and how to establish a code of ethics. Info: Marie Bordeleau at (416) 410-5802 or mbordeleau@baseconsulting.ca

November 22, 2001

Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Ceremony, Toronto Honouring Canada's top women entrepreneurs.

Contact: PowerPoint Group at (416) 923-1688 or 1 800 354-3303 www.cweya.com

December 5, 2001

Women in International Trade - Tales from Abroad, Toronto

Featuring high-profile women from government, industry and the media who will share their stories. Contact: Vicki Saunders at (416) 640-4733, ext. 222 or vicki@vmsaunders.com www.wito.ca

2002

Uniquely Creative Arts Show

A business training and development program to help micro-entrepreneurs access global markets. 2002 shows: Uniquely Ontario, Toronto, January 26-29 and August 10-13; Uniquely BC, Vancouver, March 10-12 and September 8-10; Uniquely Prairies, Edmonton, August 18-21. Info: Paula Mowat at 1 800 672-0103 or iclcanada@aol.com www.uniquelycanada.com

We want to hear from you.



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Contact Us. If you have content suggestions or business tips to share, contact Susan Baka, Editor, at:

Tel: (416) 410-1654 Fax: (416) 467-4630 e-mail: sbaka@interlog.com

For further information about RBC Royal Bank's women's market initiatives, contact Betty Wood, National Manager, Women Entrepreneurs Market, Personal & Commercial Banking, RBC Royal Bank at:

Tel: (416) 974-0669 Fax: (416) 974-5155 e-mail: betty.wood@royalbank.com

RBC Royal Bank, Personal & Commercial Banking

200 Bay Street, 14th Floor, South Tower, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 2J5

www.royalbank.com/sme/women