



Getting Connected E – News Fall 2003

Welcome to Getting Connected, the Fall 2003 Edition. The season marked a busy time for OWIT – Toronto. A new slate of directors, a name change and many exciting upcoming events illustrate the exciting work of OWIT – Toronto.

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*** Breaking News**

New faces and a new name at OWIT – Toronto

Members of the Organization of Women in International Trade-Toronto (OWIT-Toronto) voted in a new slate of officers at our annual general meeting. They include: Mary Anderson, Co-President; Susan Baka, Co-President; Candice Rice, Past President; Gail Morris, Secretary and VP, Membership; Ann Watterworth, VP, Legal; Donna Messer, VP, International; Nancy Ward, VP, Communications; Alma Ferias, Treasurer; and Kerri Beaulieu, VP, Web site Development.

Members also voted to change the name of the organization to Organization of Women in International Trade – Toronto. The change better reflects our geographic orientation.

We also welcome Barbara Vink, who is overseeing our Programs for the coming year.

OWIT – Toronto nominated for two awards

We are proud to report that our Chapter was nominated for two distinctive awards this year, primarily for our role in mentoring the start-up of Australia's first chapter of OWIT.

OWIT – Australia nominated us for OWIT International' "Chapter of the Year" and lauded us for "helping to make OWIT more of an international organization and helping to facilitate valuable networking for women across borders." As one of the new Australian Board members – Robyn Henderson - put it, "Canada has given Australian businesswomen such a gift by mentoring our new Chapter."

This 'gift' has been extended through the Virtual Trade Mission (VTM) launched by OWIT Ontario, with the assistance of Industry Canada and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade. Visit:

www.dfaitmaeci.gc.ca/trade/missions/oltm/AusCan

This initiative was developed to capitalize on the special relationship between the two chapters and to further develop the potential for trade and partnership between our members. OWIT-Toronto secured several sponsors, including Westpac Bank, RBC Royal Bank, Industry Canada and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade; this example helped OWIT – Australia bring on Austrade as a sponsor as well. The combined support enabled the trade mission registrants to participate in a video-conference in May – held simultaneously in Toronto and Sydney - where they had the opportunity to meet each other 'face-to-face' and to further explore their business potential. This innovative concept was a huge success in encouraging relationship building and has already resulted in the establishment of partnerships between some participants. Another video-conference is planned for February 24th, 2004.

OWIT - Toronto has also been proactive in encouraging chapter development elsewhere – specifically in London, England, as well as in Ottawa.

Our chapter has also been nominated for a Global Traders Award, Ontario's first and only awards that celebrate the export achievements of small and medium-sized companies, leaders and students. We earned the nomination for our leadership in

helping to mentor Australia's first chapter of OWIT and for spearheading the first Virtual Trade Mission for Canadian and Australian businesswomen at www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/trade/missions/oltm/AusCan. The Ontario Global Traders Awards have already attracted over 1,100 high-quality submissions from across Ontario over the past five years. See the Global Traders Awards online for more information.

OWIT – Toronto nominated Antoinette Marwitz, U.S. Consul General in Toronto, for OWIT Woman of the Year

U.S. Consul General Antoinette Marwitz was nominated by OWIT- Toronto as OWIT International's Woman of the Year for her extraordinary contributions to promoting women's entrepreneurship and international trade activity. Antoinette is the first woman to hold the position of Consul General in Toronto. A member of the senior Foreign Service, Antoinette's assignments have included Panama, Liberia, Barbados and Toronto. Most recently, she was the Director of Foreign Service assignments in the U.S. Department of State.

Final Report from the The Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs released

The Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs released its final report October 29th, calling on the federal government to create a new Office of Women's Business Ownership and to expand its programs for women entrepreneurs across Canada. Key recommendations from the report include:

- Establishment of an Office of Women's Business Ownership linked to a government department with key business-related responsibilities, together with the establishment of a Women's Business Advocate and a National Women's Business Advisory Council
- The creation of Women's Business Centres across Canada to provide better access to training, financing, marketing and other business services
- A federal government review of the mandate and lending criteria of its Commercial Crown Corporations, including the Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada, together with amendments to the Canada Small Business Financing Act.
- Access to maternity benefits and a review of other social safety net programs to extend Employment Insurance (EI) and other benefits to entrepreneurs
- Facilitated access to government procurement opportunities
- Development of a national research agenda and data collection program on women entrepreneurs.

See the full report online.

OWIT – Toronto's contribution to the Task Force

OWIT – Toronto made a submission to the task force earlier this year, identifying key issues that face women entrepreneurs- see http://www.liberal.parl.gc.ca/entrepreneur/documents/030618_feedback_089.doc.

Some of our recommendations included:

- More financial support for women's trade initiatives such as virtual trade missions, face-to-face trade missions, and conferences
- Enhanced support to women through assistance similar to programs available in the U.S. from the SBA.
- Regular, affordable training programs for women on how to maximize existing resources
- Some of our suggestions were incorporated in the final recommendations. Co - President Susan Baka and Past President Candice Rice attended the presentation of the report to the Prime Minister in Ottawa, Oct 29. Over 400 women entrepreneurs from across Canada attended the event.
- International networking opportunity available to all members of OWIT - Toronto

OWIT International has developed an exciting online networking forum for all members. The www.owit.org site will feature a place where OWIT members from around the world may network. The site will offer a place to include company name, occupation, company and contact information and the kind of service offered. This will be password protected for the use of members only.

OWIT International Annual Conference

Women's trade group rolls out welcome mat to Russia, Bulgaria, South Carolina and Texas chapters of OWIT

Vladimir, (Russia), Sofia, (Bulgaria), Charleston, South Carolina (U.S.) and Austin, Texas (U.S.) joined the growing list of world-wide chapters of The Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT). They were voted in at the 2003 OWIT Annual International Conference, held in Calgary, Alberta September 10-12, the first time this annual event was held in Canada. The new chapters join 28 chapters in countries including the U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe, Latin America and Africa and are part of a global trend that marks the surging growth of women exporters.

The OWIT delegates from around the world came together in Calgary to explore the integral link between innovation and international trade. Conference sessions highlighted both public and private strategies towards fostering innovation. OWIT – Toronto Co-Presidents Susan Baka and Mary Anderson presented a session on Virtual Trade Missions as a chapter-building strategy, and invited a U.S. chapter to collaborate with us in conducting a VTM next year between Canada and the U.S. Interest was high, and our chapter has even been approached by the new OWIT chapter in Denmark.

Other sessions at the conference focused on the importance of branding in international markets, regional Trading blocs including Free Trade in the Americas, and opportunities in the European Union and the Asia – Pacific. Sales and marketing sessions were offered in the areas of mitigating risk, customs and cultural training, logistics and innovative ways to make sales globally. See the OWIT International site for more information about the conference.

Members to Watch

Eiko Shaul, member of OWIT – Toronto and Principal of Shaul Inforesearch, was featured in the September 8-14, 2003 issue of the U.S. Journal of Commerce (www.joc.com) as an example of a woman who is making strides and finding success in international trade. Congratulations, Eiko!

Mary Anderson, our Co-President, has had several meetings to explore developing alliances with other related associations and organizations. Stay tuned.

Candice Rice, Past President is working on the development of the new Women's Enterprise Centre to be located in Toronto. This centre is as result of recommendations made in the recently released PM's Task Force Report on Women Entrepreneurs – see the related story in Breaking News. While in her role as President of OWIT-Toronto, Candice had several meetings in Ottawa with Deborah Steger, an Ottawa-based lawyer who was formerly with the World Trade Organization as director of the appellate body, to discuss start-up of an Ottawa chapter.

Member **Andrina Lever** was honoured with **The 2003 World of Difference Award** from The International Alliance for Women (TIAW) in Washington this fall. This award honours a woman whose actions, efforts and inspiration have made a difference in advancing women globally. Well done, Andrina!

Our VP – International, Donna Messer, President of ConnectUs Communications, will be presenting a seminar on 'Maximizing Your Contacts Internationally' to OWIT's Alberta Chapter on January 13, 2004. See www.owit.org for more info. Donna has also co-authored a publication - "Mobilizing Mentoring", which is a roadmap for anyone needing a guide on their journey to success. See Donna's website to contact her for more information.

Upcoming Events

- December 11th: Don't miss "[Strangers in a Strange Land: Global Girls Meet Backward Boys.](#)" Former Second City comedienne Lorraine Behnan is our guest speaker. This is a lighthearted look at the challenges women face in doing business internationally. At the same time you can relax, network and escape the holiday bustle for a bit. A silent auction will also take place, coordinated by Cassels, Brock & Blackwell, and LLP – hosts of our event - with all proceeds going to the Canadian Women's Foundation. Register online at www.wito.ca
- For those of you registered in our Virtual Trade Mission (VTM) with Australia, note that the next videoconference will be held Feb. 24th, 2004. This is a great opportunity to meet businesswomen from the OWIT – Australia chapter to exchange ideas and business opportunities. The Videoconference will be held at RBC Royal Bank, 200 Bay Street - 40th floor, in Toronto. The session will get underway at 6:30 pm.
- Women Trading Globally Trade Mission – March 31st to April 2nd, 2004. This live mission will be the culmination of our VTM with Australia. The Women Trading Globally Mission, presented by RBC Financial Group and the Global Banking Alliance for Women (GBA), will be held in Vancouver from March 31-April 2, 2004. (Additional business matching for interested participants will take place in Toronto April 5 & 6.) If you are export-ready and interested in expanding your business with

like-minded women entrepreneurs from Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and the United States, then plan to participate. See the website for more information.

- **Coming Soon:** Watch for more information about breakfast roundtables focusing on pertinent business topics. This informational networking program will be launched by OWIT – Toronto in early 2004.
And, if you have programming ideas for us, please contact Barbara Vink.

Fall Activity Summary

2003 OWIT Annual International Conference

Summer BBQ & Annual Meeting

Our Summer BBQ & Annual Meeting, sponsored by Grant Thornton, brought together members and guests at the Island Yacht Club, located on Toronto Island. This was a great venue to network and gain from the expertise of the featured speaker Kerry Mitchell, Publisher of Profit Magazine.

Kerry shared the top 10 secrets for success from Canada's premier women entrepreneurs. Her inspired presentation included these tips:

1. Put yourself first. Do what you love and success will follow. Ensure your values and priorities, who you are and what you stand for, are reflected in your business.
2. Find the right banker. Shop around and find one genuinely interested in your business and with whom you are comfortable sharing financials and forecasts.
3. Be careful what you wish for. Know your limitations if you land the significant piece of business you've been chasing, can your company handle it?
4. Open the books. It may not be easy to share financials with your employees, but this will help them understand and appreciate the bottom line. Sharing details with suppliers also gives them the opportunity to help you through the tough times.
5. Hire a mentor. If you don't have one, buy one. Identify experienced or semi-retired business people who can advise you and pay them for their time.
6. Get paid what you're owed. Payment policies and collections can make or break you.
7. Protect your partnerships. Of the quarter million working couples running businesses together in Canada, the most successful partnerships rely upon clearly defined roles and responsibilities. While conflict is inevitable, it's how you resolve disagreements that is critical.
8. Expect the best, but plan for the worst. Always plan for worst-case scenarios and be prepared to act.
9. Act globally. The vast majority of successful businesses are exporters. The key is creating an advantage that will give you an edge in the global marketplace.

10. Sell yourself. But don't sell your self short. As successful, ambitious and talented as many women business owners are, many stumble over self-promotion.

All this considered, "The best advice," says Kerry, "is to be brave and have fun."

Trade Without Travel – Virtual Trade Mission Presentation with the International Trade Club: October 30th, 2003

Virtual Trade Missions Build Rapport

This joint event focused on the power of networking through a Virtual Trade Mission (VTM). The ongoing VTM that is currently building relationships between Australian and Canadian companies to provides a key example of the benefits of such an activity (visit the dedicated Web site at www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/trade/missions/oltm/AusCan).

Guest speaker Susan Baka, Co-President of OWIT – Toronto and President of Bay Communications & Marketing Inc., introduced the concept of the VTM and provided best practices for maximizing the benefits of participation. Donna Messer, Vice President of International at OWIT –Toronto and President of ConnectUs International and BusinessWoman Canada Magazine, provided a personal case study of participation in a VTM.

Susan talked specifically about the VTM developed between Australian and Canadian businesswomen. She discussed how the VTM concept offers a cost-effective way to introduce companies without the expense and time required to travel. The current VTM uses a website featuring company profiles, online bulletin boards and videoconferences to connect potential partners. In addition, an email list connects participants on an ongoing basis. The site offers additional information to participants on how to do business globally.

Donna spoke about her own experience as a participant in the Canada/Australia VTM and how it benefited her. She focused on quickly learning the common denominators that connect you and a potential partner in a VTM. She added that the real value of the VTM wasn't about immediate buying and selling, but more about building a relationship and discerning what you are willing to share in terms of resources and contacts. Donna also provided tips on maximizing the VTM, specifically stressing timely and concise follow up and the necessity of a good facilitator during the videoconference portion of the VTM.

Web Updates

OWIT – Toronto has partnered with ITAC Ontario to provide online registration for upcoming events. This provides a convenient option to traditional payment methods. Visit www.owit-toronto.ca regularly for information on past and upcoming events and news and tips for women in business. We are constantly updating and enhancing our website, so visit often! And watch for an announcement about a new feature for members seeking international connections that will build on the lessons we have learned from our VTM with Australia.

Membership - New Members

Do you know any individuals who might like to join our chapter? We encourage all women who are interested in trade and want to expand their networking opportunities to contact Gail Morris at gail.morris@sympatico.ca A reminder that your membership renewal comes due on the anniversary of the date that you originally joined.

Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers for our various committees, including programming, membership, sponsorship, and communications/public relations. This is a great opportunity to get involved with OWIT – Toronto, learn about the organization and gain valuable knowledge and contacts!

Contact: Susan Baka at 416-410-1654, or
Mary Anderson at 905-469-0277 for more information.