



Home > CanadExport



Home

Search

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Trade News

Podcasts

Success Stories

Trade Events

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Trade News

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Year-round exhibit space for exporters

While international trade shows offer a good way for companies to make contacts with foreign buyers, they are often time-consuming and expensive to participate in, especially for smaller businesses. The **Canada Export Centre** could be an effective alternative.

The Centre opened its doors in Vancouver in 2005 and offers a year-round exhibition hall for Canadian exporters to attract potential foreign customers.

The Centre's multilingual staff promotes its clients' activities to visiting delegations from around the world. This means that Canadian companies don't have to be on-site or speak the language of foreign visitors to get leads and inquiries from qualified prospects.

The facility has more than 17,000 square feet of exhibition space and can accommodate up to 370 display units of Canadian products, services and capabilities. The Centre also provides exhibitors with export support including meeting space, competitive intelligence, market research and foreign language translation.



"Our clients treat us as more than just an exhibition facility, but as a practical resource for international business development, information and ideas," says the Centre's co-founder and CEO Mark Mensing. "They have questions about the culture of business abroad, how to develop a joint venture with foreign companies, and we'll even proactively find them buyers or distributors in their priority markets."

And there are plenty of success stories coming out of the Centre. For example, International Composting Corporation built \$100 million in proposals from leads generated at the Canada Export Centre in just the first 6 months, something the company says takes them about a year to do on their own. And the Centre's staff helped the company secure \$1.6 million in financing.

Also, David A. Redmond, President of Iron Mountain Mineral Corporation, says in a letter to Mensing, "Quite simply, without the exposure my company receives through the Canada Export Centre, progress such as this (a government-sponsored and funded test for his product in Inner Mongolia) would have been impossible in such a short time period and certainly only after a cash outlay significantly larger than my subscription fee to the Centre."

The Canada Export Centre is commission-based. However, to cover the basic costs of provide these services, a retainer against commissions is applied and fully deducted from the very first

commissions. Commission rates vary but they are usually between 1% for commodities and 5% for higher-margin products.

"Our clients determine an appropriate commission rate for our international business match-making services," says Michael Lyons, the Centre's other co-founder and President. "They know their margins and sales model better than we do. We expect only that the rate chosen provides incentive to invest our time and resources."

The annual retainer for the Basic Service Package is \$7,900 and includes both a virtual and physical presence. Companies get profiled on www.canadaexportcentre.com for 1 year and in monthly Internet marketing campaigns to the Centre's international buyer database and network of international trade professionals, which includes Trade Commissioners in Canada and at our embassies and consulates abroad.

Companies will also be able to exhibit at the Canada Export Centre trade show for 1 year, gaining exposure to all incoming business visitors and trade missions. The Centre's trade specialists introduce entrepreneurs to interested parties and provide follow-up support as they encounter international business challenges.

Last year, the Centre attracted nearly 100 trade missions, 50 international mayors' groups and other foreign delegations. Canadian trade commissioners from around the world often refer foreign visitors to the Centre. The Canada Export Centre also makes referrals to its partners and sponsors such as HSBC, the Port of Vancouver, the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, Export Development Canada and federal and provincial government departments.

For more information, visit www.canadaexportcentre.com.

Trade shows compared to the Canada Export Centre:

	One Trade Show	Canada Export Centre
Average traffic	10,000 (<i>high average</i>)	35,000+ (<i>average per year</i>)
Exposure	Generally Domestic	International and Domestic
Hosted trade missions	0	100+ <i>Government sponsored</i> 75+ <i>Industry sponsored</i>
Duration	3 days average	Open all year-round!
Display Booth Fee	\$ 3,500 (<i>low average</i>)	\$ 7,900 retainer against commissions
Staffing	\$ 1,200 (<i>2 staff, 4 days each</i>)	\$0 (<i>we staff the Centre and screen leads</i>)
Accommodation	\$ 1,200	\$0
Meals	\$ 600	\$0
Flights	\$ 1,400 (<i>low average</i>)	\$0
Additional Event Advertising	\$ 1,700 (<i>event program, internet, etc</i>)	\$ 0 (<i>promo lit, Internet, print-ad, newsletter</i>)
Rentals (<i>Lights, table, power, etc.</i>)	\$ 400	\$ 0
Guest entertainment	\$ (<i>the sky's the limit</i>)	\$ 0 (<i>Let us entertain them</i>)
Booth Freight	\$ 500	\$ 0
Grand Total	\$ 10,500 plus (\$ 3,500 per day)	\$ 7,900 retainer (\$ 21.64 per day)

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