

Leadership and Canada

BY DONNA MESSER

I AM A Canadian Leader! What does that statement really mean? What is a Canadian and how do we maximize being not only Canadian, but also a leader?

To lead, according to the dictionary is to direct, to guide by persuasion, to provide access, to be first. Again, according to the dictionary, a leader is a person who leads, performs, and is an influential person. Are you a Canadian Leader?

If I am a Canadian and I am a leader, and if I want to share what I believe is truly important to my fellow Canadians, how can I do this?

Last month, Heritage Minister Sheila Copps and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Pettigrew introduced a federal initiative called *Trade Routes*. This is Canada's first multi-sectoral and market-driven strategy designed specifically to help the arts and cultural sectors take full advantage of rapidly expanding international business opportunities. As both ministers are leaders of our country, they, according to the dictionary, will provide us with access—access to federal funding to “brand Canada” and to help us become recognized as world class leaders in the sectors identified.

It has been determined by our government leaders that no one really knows who we are, or even what we have to offer as Canadians to the rest of the world. Trade Routes offers us, as Canadians, the opportunity to tap into federal resources and finally figure out whom we are and what we have to offer the world! As a Canadian, I welcome the chance finally to tell everyone what Canada is all about and who we really are!

I spent a great deal of time trying to figure out how I would position this article, because I really care about my country and I care about the people I connect with on a daily basis. How could I take advantage of the opportunity being offered to me through Trade Routes? It quickly dawned on me that it is all about “Who I know!”

In order to lead any initiative, you have to be able to understand where your

strengths are and recognize where you need help. Once you've made that assessment, you can gather the team that will make your leadership more effective. In this case—branding Canada, means knowing who I know, what they know, and how I can use those people and their knowledge. It sounds like another case for good networking skills!

Let me show how my leadership skills will not only benefit me, but how they will benefit everyone I know. Let me take you on a walk through the chain of connections that inevitably will be part of my business plan for Trade Routes and my participation in the initiative.

Trade Routes is a \$23 million dollar initiative to be spread over three years, that will enhance cultural trade and develop a “brand” recognition for Canada and it's cultural products internationally. The program will involve training, market studies, trade shows, conferences, and events. It will introduce export ready Canadian artists, performers, directors, designers and publishers, plus any other Canadian businesses that will meet the criteria for this initiative.

Who do I know?

As a Chair of NEXPRO—a Business Development Bank of Canada program—I know what BDC has to offer companies interested in becoming export ready, and I will tap into them and their products.

As the Managing Editor of *Business-Woman Canada Magazine*, I consistently profile government programs and initiatives in each issue. I can tap into those contacts

and make sure they are linked into the chain of connections that will showcase Canada and its products and services.

As a member of a number of industry associations who have members in the defined categories, I will connect with them and offer to provide training for their members who want to be part of this program. I can encourage them to participate in the branding of Canada.

As a member of a number of Chambers of Commerce, I can share the initiative and ask for the opportunity to spread the business opportunities to their members.

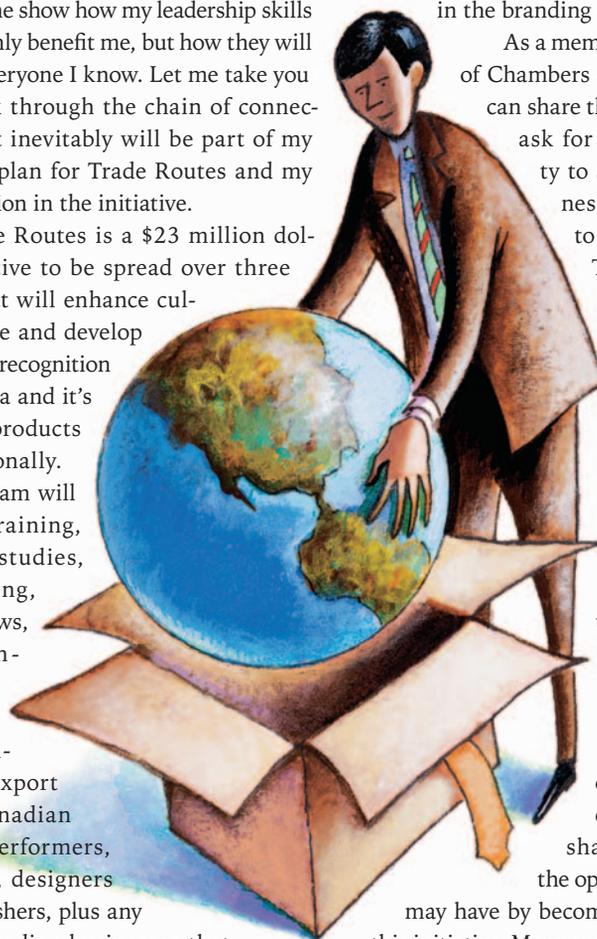
This will increase the value of membership in the Chamber and will create more brand awareness for the program.

As a mentor for many of the government initiatives involving men and women who are unemployed, I will share with them the opportunities they

may have by becoming involved in this initiative. Many are new Canadians, with incredible contacts in foreign countries—they can be invaluable in helping us brand Canada. They can share with us their perspective of Canada and what we can offer to enhance brand awareness.

As a mentor with youth, Aboriginals, and women in business, I can share this information with educators and specific diversity programs, and I can ask for their help and their support. This will create more brand awareness and an opportuni-

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ty to tap into the initiative from their perspective. Women in business, young entrepreneurs, and Aboriginals are all target markets for Trade Routes.

As a good leader I share my resources, I find the team, and I fill the needs. I am always willing to see a win for both sides of every equation.

In this case, I will re-establish my contacts with the BDC, and redefine the program for companies interested exporting their products and services specifically for the Trade Routes initiative.

I will apply for funding through Heritage Canada to provide the training, market research, and the counselling needed to make the initiative successful. We will make sure that the team in place can provide the results needed to justify approval. Strategic alliances will be an important part of the success of the program.

I will tap into my resources at HRDC to find out if the Trade Routes initiative can work together with some of the programs already in place for downsized Canadians. Bringing the initiative to the attention of participants and graduates from The Self Employment Benefits Programs, could create stronger brand awareness. It will also show Canadians that there is a link between federal agencies.

I will connect with many of my colleagues that are part of my database, who are trainers, market researchers, and counsellors and share the opportunity. A good leader does not have to lead all of the time, a good leader gains strength by working with other leaders. Many of my colleagues will add tremendous value to the program by sharing their resources and expertise.

In the last issue of BusinessWoman Canada, we included an article that was based on a story that was sent to me years ago. The article written by Janice Cockburn, was entitled *Women as Geese—Geese as Today's Leaders*.

The adaptation below is from my book *Effective Networking Strategies* and is not gender specific.

The Canada Goose— an example of good leadership

When you see geese heading south for the winter, flying in "V" formation, you might consider what science has discovered... Why do they fly this way?

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range, than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily if they travel on the thrust of one another. Trade Routes and the desire to "brand" Canada will happen more quickly and efficiently with all of us travelling in the same direction, working together, instead of each of us working on our own initiative.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds in front.

If we had as much sense as the goose, we would stay in formation, travelling with those who are headed in the same direction. By working together, we get farther, faster.

When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing, taking advantage of the lift from the rest in formation. Another goose flies point taking a turn at leading the way.

It makes sense to take turns doing demanding jobs. By sharing the responsibilities, no one gets over-tired. No one has to lead all of the time. Perhaps that is Canada's strength and the brand we can share with our colleagues in other countries. We are Canadians, and we can all take a share of the leadership responsibilities.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

What do we do when we hear a honk from behind? Maybe it is time to start blowing our own horn, to start encouraging Canadians to shout out, "We are proud Canadians!"

Perhaps like the goose, we should look at the sounds as encouragement and not as criticism. Trade Routes can provide us with the tools we need to work together, to travel in formation, and to encourage each other keep up our speed as we move into the international market.

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with the injured goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with

the fallen goose until it is able to fly and return to formation or until it dies. Only then do the geese launch out on their own rejoining their flock or looking for another formation to join.

If we had the sense of a goose, we would stand by each other in the same way. September 11 is not a date we will soon forget, we are Canadians, we care about our country and our citizens—let's take a lesson for the Canada Goose—fly together, share our resources and show everyone around the world what Canada is really all about!

For information on the Trade Routes Initiative go to www.canadianheritage.gc.ca.

To join the ConnectUs Team and be part of the program to showcase Canadian arts and cultural products and services internationally go to our Website and register. Tell us your strengths and what you are willing to share. A good leader doesn't have to lead all the time! **SBCM**

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CLARIFICATION REGARDING WINDOWS XP ARTICLE IN JAN/ FEB 2002 SBC MAGAZINE:

Although Windows XP Home edition box and screen shots were shown in our Jan/Feb issue, the accompanying article dealt specifically with Windows XP Professional which contains additional features not available in Windows XP Home edition including network domain support, enhanced security features, and enhanced flexibility for mobile PC users (Remote Desktop). We at Small Business Canada Magazine strongly recommend Windows XP Professional edition for small business use.