

# The new theory of connecting

Linking  
Businesspeople  
around the World

by Donna Messer

You do not have to imagine a world where we can “connect” with each other by just sitting down and talking, that world already exists via the Internet. However, do you know the demographics of that world? Do you know that our world consists of Africans, North and South Americans, Europeans and Asians? Do you understand the different cultures, and can you adapt your domestic business strategies to a global perspective? If you cannot, there are Web sites to help maximize your business opportunities internationally. One such Web site is [www.infoexport.gc.ca](http://www.infoexport.gc.ca) Access the reports, resources and cultural overviews on this site there is a wealth of information ready and waiting for you.

As businessmen and businesswomen, you can access that wealth through technology, through training and by building the relationships needed to foster profitable business growth. Recognize that building business internationally depends dramatically on your communication style and your ability to adapt to the culture and customs of the country you deal with. Be aware of your common interests, as well as your differences.

We know the world is rapidly changing. Information technology accelerated the process of connecting dramatically. We saw a shift from agriculture to industry to information processing. Now, in the developed world, we have taken information technology to innovation. A shift that is most significant.

Innovative technology has provided us with contacts, information, trends, training, and methods that enable us to communicate and compete in a world economy. We no longer have to imagine a world where we can “connect” with businesspersons everywhere—we have it! Today, we can lead the way, using our creativity and innovation as the building blocks for our economic future. If International Trade is the door to the future of world economy, then we, as small business owners and entrepreneurs, can provide the keys that will unlock the potential globally. In order to maximize our business opportunities worldwide utilize the Top Ten 10 points listed below:

## 10 KEY POINTS TO BUILD BUSINESS INTERNATIONALLY

**1. Be prepared.** Have plenty of business cards, a professional picture for use in a directory if you are participating in a trade show or conference, and an accurate and informative profile. If you want to succeed, provide information on who you are, what you do, who you know, and what you need. Effective connections can only happen when both parties know what is required and who they are dealing with.

**2. Be open-minded.** Everyone you meet has the potential to help you towards a goal. Be friendly, listen carefully, and use a little lateral thinking to see where the fit might be between you and the other person. It's who they know, that could be the important international connection.

**3. Don't be afraid to ask.** When you are participating in international events, do your homework. What do you need? Who do you want to meet? What is a good connection for you? On the reverse, what do you have to offer? Who do you know? By being prepared with a list of your contacts, you might be a more welcome match internationally.

**4. Give without expectation.** If you are at an international event, introduce yourself to as many delegates as possible; ask how you can help them. By building relationships between yourself and other participants, you will find common interests and this usually results in business opportunities.

**5. Set realistic and achievable goals.** Make sure you plan ahead. If you are a member of an international organization, connect with a local chapter. If you are a member of a Chamber of Commerce or a Board of Trade, connect with them in advance; ask for introductions in the conference area. These associations can help you realize your goals if you put them in the picture.

**6. Think laterally.** Learn to look at each new person you meet as a possible business alliance. Maximize your participation in every event by listening carefully and acting on what you hear. Ask questions that will give you a more in-depth picture of everyone you meet.

Use questions like: what makes your approach to the industry different? This is a great icebreaker and gives the speaker a chance to share a little information about themselves.

**7. Promote yourself effectively.** Understand your features and benefits (your strengths and how to use them) and learn how to express yourself. Perfect your infomercial. Use the SMILE and ASK formula. Start with a Smile, Make eye contact, Introduce yourself, Let people know what you do, Explain what you need, Ask how you can help, Say thank you, Keep in touch.

**8. Communicate.** Be articulate, concise, enthusiastic, honest, and open. Use language that is comfortable and acceptable for the event, and for the culture. Do not forget that the other side of communicating is listening. This is as important as speaking. Be aware of your body language.

**9. Organize.** Organize yourself thoroughly, your thoughts, your notes, your files, your time. This takes time in the short-run, but will save you tenfold in the end. Bring your database with you, organize it by category, and use codes to help you identify who you know and what they know.

**10. Teamwork.** Work hard for others and the rewards will come back to you ten times over. Each time you meet someone new, remember who they are and who they want to connect with. Try to be part of a team, where everyone is working together helping each other connect and build better international business relationships. SBCM

*Donna Messer is an international trade expert. She is on the board of directors for Women in*

*International Trade—[www.wito.ca](http://www.wito.ca). She is the founder of ConnectUs Communications Canada, author of Effective Networking Strategies, a keynote speaker and seminar leader. Donna travels across Canada and throughout the world building bridges for better business using her effective networking skills.*



[WWW.CONNECTUSCANADA.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTUSCANADA.COM)