

Exporter

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Past Street Smart events have paid off for Ontario suppliers with increased sales to foreign buyers

When OFEX completed its latest Export Services Review, collecting feedback on the job we're doing from Ontario companies, it was clear that events such as Street Smart, the annual tabletop and networking event that gives Ontario suppliers a chance to showcase their products to US buyers, are succeeding in helping Ontario companies increase their exports south of the border.

Two-hundred and eighty-four unique Ontario suppliers have participated in

the Street Smart program since 1999, many returning several times. Many Ontario suppliers report success from their contact with buyers and their successes can be measured by their return to Street Smart each year.

The opportunity to meet directly with foreign buyers at Street Smart has proven invaluable for Ontario manufacturers. In some cases, the manufacturer has been dealing with a particular retailer via a broker. Having the opportunity to meet the buyer first hand further cements the relationship

and can lead to more interest in their products from the retailer. Attending the retailer introductions at Street Smart also gives Ontario suppliers a chance to gain first-hand knowledge regarding a retailer or distributor's company and their buying needs. This sets the stage for reconnecting at the tabletop session, when a supplier can showcase their products to buyers. With consistent follow-up with US-based buyers, the connections made at Street Smart can lead to considerable sales.

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Here are just a few examples of how Street Smart has paid off for participating Ontario companies:



As a result of national broker Daymon's participation in Street Smart in 2000, there has been over \$20 million in sales to US principals, within a two year period, including Costco, Harris Teeter, Kroger, Wegmans, Shaw's Supermarkets, Weis Markets, Topco Associates, A & P, Ahold USA, H.E.B., Wild Oats and Jewel.



At least five Ontario manufacturers who took part in past Street Smart events are doing substantial business with H.E.B., a Texas based retailer with over 300 stores. HEB has attended two Street Smart events.



One Ontario food manufacturer has participated in eight Street Smart events. As a result, their products are offered by retailers across the US.



Two Ontario suppliers that took part in Street Smart have sold multiple orders to Gourmet Garage, an independent chain in New York City which attended Street Smart in 2005.



Several Ontario products have been spotted on shelves in Ohio and Michigan, after their manufacturers connected with Lipari Foods, a Michigan deli and bakery distributor that attended Street Smart in 2006.



An Ontario snack manufacturer met with representatives of Hannaford Bros at Street Smart in 2004 and then followed up with the retailer afterward. After some further sampling and negotiations, several SKUs of the manufacture's snacks are now listed with the 150-store chain.

Market Tip

Private label products represented 1- 2% of a grocery store's sales in the 1970s but today they account for an average of 17%, representing \$107 billion in spending in the US. That's expected to grow to more than \$130 billion by 2010, according to ACNielsen.

The upcoming Street Smart session, on September 24-25, 2007, will focus on private label, as well as health, wellness and organic products. Large US retailers, including Target, Meijer and HEB, are expected to attend, and independent retailers and distributors from the Great Lakes and Southeastern regions, have also been invited. (For more info on attending buyers, see p 3)



Buyers attending

Street Smart

2 0 0 7



As the saying goes: knowledge is power. Knowing which retailers, distributors and brokers will be attending the upcoming Street Smart event can give you an advantage for scoring sales.

CONFIRMED RETAILERS:



Meijer Inc

www.meijer.com

Areas of Operation: IL, IN, KY, MI, OH
Total Units: 176

Representatives:

- Gary Harper – Director (DSD, Frozen, Dairy)
- Ralph Fisher – Group V.P. (Grocery Merchandising)



SuperTarget

www.target.com

Areas of Operation: AL, AZ, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KS, LA, MA, MN, MO, NE, NC, ND, OK, TN, TX, UT VA, WI
Total Units: 177

Attended Street Smart in 2004 and Bob Hickey attended in 2006.

Representatives:

- Bob Hickey – Own Brand Vendor Sourcing Leader (All P/L Categories)
- Rick McCall – Own Brand Vendor Sourcing Manager (All P/L Categories)



Hannaford Bros. Co.

www.hannaford.com

Areas of Operation: ME, MA, NH, NY, VT

Total Units: 149

John Herman attended Street Smart in 2004.

Representatives:

- Tim Jacques – Director of Center Store & P/L
- Dave Ray – Director of Retail Systems and Finance
- Chris Sawyer – Category Sales Manager MMI
- John Herman – Director of P/L Sales MMI



H-E-B

www.heb.com

Areas of Operation: TX

Total Units: 303

Jodi Hall attended Street Smart in 2005 and Cristina Pena-Wells attended in 2006.

Representatives:

- Martin Stern – Import Development Manager (Cereals, Snacks, Breakfast, Coffee, Tea, Spices, Spreads, Honey)
- Jeff Ogan – Business Development Manager (Cocoa, Coffee, Tea, Honey, Cereals, Snacks)
- Darrell Taylor – Director of Product Development -Own Brand (All Categories)
- Cristina Pena-Walls or Jody Hall – Director of Global Sourcing (All Categories)

CONFIRMED RETAILERS:



Topco Associates LLC

www.topco.com

Areas of Operation: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MO, MS, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OR, PA, PR, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV

Number of Locations Served: 300

Attended Street Smart in 2002, 2004 and 2005.

Representatives:

- Christine Heffernan – Program Manager (Beverages)
- Michael Shehorn – Business Specialist



Richard's Whole Foods

www.richardswholefoods.com

Areas of Operation: FL

Total Units: 11

Representatives:

- John Rorer – Owner (All Categories)



K-VA-T Food Stores Inc

www.foodcity.com

Areas of Operation: KY, TN, VA

Total Units: 97

Representatives:

- Richard Gunn – Executive V.P. of Merchandising & Marketing (All Categories)
- Phillip Worely – Director of Grocery



Atalanta Corporation

www.atalantacorp.com

Areas of Operation: N/A

Number of Locations Served: Unknown

Representatives:

- Al Pish – Vice President (All Categories)



Earth Fare, The Healthy Supermarket

www.earthfare.com

Areas of Operation: GA, NC, SC, TN

Total Units: 13

Representatives:

- TBA – Buyer (Interested in Wellness/Organic, Frozen, Grocery)

CONFIRMED DISTRIBUTORS:



Lipari Foods Inc.

www.liparifoods.com

Areas of Operation: IL, IN, KY, MI, OH, PA, TN, WI, WV

Number of Locations Served: 600

Attended Street Smart in 2006.

Representatives:

- Tony Franchi – Director of Sales
- Kurt Burmeister – Director of Bakery

CONFIRMED NATIONAL BROKERS:

Marketing Management Incorporated

Marketing Management Inc.

www.mmi-home.com

Areas of Operation: National

Number of Locations Served:

Unknown

Attended Street Smart in 1999, 2004 and 2005.

Representatives:

- Ed Mieskoski – VP Sales for Delhaize, Wakefern, Duane Reade and Bj's (All P/L Categories)
- Jill Lipke or Linda Bender – Category Specialist



Club Marketing

www.clubmarketing.com

Areas of Operation: National

Number of Locations Served:

(Supplies exclusively to Wal-Mart and Sam's Club)

Attended an OFEX incoming mission in 2006.

Representatives:

- TBA



Daymon Worldwide

www.daymon.com

Areas of Operation: National

Number of Locations Served:

Unknown

Attended an OFEX incoming mission in 2003 and Street Smart in 2000, 2005 and 2006.

Representatives:

- Charlie Schnaars – Director Perishables
- Bobbi Gosselin – Vice President
- John Crocco – Bakery

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List is current as of July 20, 2006. Participation of individual retailers, distributors and brokers is subject to change

Market Tip

The central region of the US led the country with 15.8% growth in natural product sales while the northeast boasts the largest dollar share of the market (\$5.5 billion).

ARE you ready for Street Smart?

A little preparation ahead of time helps ensure success for Ontario suppliers attending Street Smart

Street Smart is an excellent opportunity for Ontario suppliers to make contact with US buyers. But just showing up isn't enough to make the event a success; Ontario suppliers need to prepare in advance and then work the event properly to make sure the connections they make with buyers translate into sales down the road. "First impressions make a big difference and this is your opportunity to tell buyers about your products in an efficient organized manner," says Murray Howatson, OFEX's geographic officer for the US.

"Being professional and organized on the day is important. You want to make sure buyers leave wanting more info and to move to the next step. Street Smart helps you make the initial contact with buyers so you have something to

talk about in subsequent contact."

If you'll be attending Street Smart this September, here are 10 tips to help you prepare ahead of time and make a good impression at the event:

1. **Know the numbers and names:** You should be able to answer questions from potential buyers about the production run minimum of your product; the minimum film/packaging of a SKU or product; the costs of your packaging and the names of the retailers you're currently shipping to in the US.
2. **Understand the buyer:** Review each buyer's profile (see page 2) and attend the buyer introductory remarks so you don't waste precious table-top meeting time having the buyer explain their company to you.
3. **Bring up-to-date point of sale material:** Make sure your product spec sheets are up to date and include a picture of the product. OFEX is providing a courier service to its US guests to forward them the literature they collect during the event. Use standard 8 1/2x11 formats to help ensure your POS material doesn't get lost.
4. **Get pix in the right format:** You should have the capability to send a PDF file with your products specs and pictures to buyers for their supplier databases.
5. **Bring your business card:** Make sure it reflects your current job function. Don't forget your stapler so you can attach it to all POS material.
6. **Shut out distractions:** Turn your cell phone or Blackberry off during meetings with buyers.
7. **Look the part:** Dress professionally and stand when speaking with buyers.
8. **Bring samples:** You want to give buyers a chance to sample the taste attributes of your product. Besides, sending samples is expensive so bringing them to Street Smart means you can bypass that by having them on hand. Make sure you present them the way they are meant to be eaten. For example, if your product is best served in a dish, bring dishes. Or if your beans are best showcased in a bean salad, bring the makings for that.
9. **Test the competition:** If you're confident that your product will outperform a competitor's product, set up a taste test for buyers.
10. **Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up:** "No" may mean "no, right now" but it doesn't necessarily mean "no" in the future. Once you've made the initial contact at Street Smart, you have something to talk about with potential buyers. Make sure they remember you and your product.

Market Tip

Food sales in natural products in the US were up 11.7% in 2006, with produce, fresh meat, seafood, wine and beer being the hottest categories. Coffee, tea and nutrition bars are also showing strong growth according to *The Natural Foods Merchandiser*.



PROFIT Plus tackles exporting issues facing Ontario suppliers

The upcoming session will address exporters' current concerns and questions

In an effort to make sure its programs meet Ontario suppliers' needs, OFEX wants your input to help design the upcoming PROFIT Plus seminar, PROFIT Plus Agri-Food Border Forum, to be held November 7, 2007 at the Burlington Convention Centre in Burlington, Ont.

Based on OFEX's most recent Export Services Review, plus anecdotal evidence from clients, it's clear that Ontario agri-food exports continue to face challenges at the border. For example, since the Canadian dollar is almost at par with the US dollar, exporters 'feel' each inspection and FDA hold they experience at the Canada-US border. As a result Ontario exporters wish to minimize each delay in delivery to their US customers. To help suppliers cope with exporting issues, OFEX is partnering with the Canadian

Consulate in Buffalo to present the one-day PROFIT Plus seminar. Representatives/speakers will include the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), CBP Agricultural Specialists, the US Department of Agriculture--Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS), as well as some key industry speakers.

The morning session will focus on some common border issues and include presentations from CBP and the FDA on new policies that are being implemented this fall. The afternoon session will include a panel discussion to give participants the opportunity to have their issues and questions addressed and information sessions tailored specifically for those companies exporting meat products, fruit, vegetable or horticultural products (all subject to change).

What's keeping you up at night?

In the coming months, OFEX staff will be canvassing the industry, speaking to Ontario exporters to learn more about the border issues they're facing and whether solutions can be found. We want to know what keeps you awake at night; to stand in your shoes and see the issues (and possible solutions) from your perspective. For example, we know that sample shipments continue to be a concern for the industry and OFEX is once again investigating the issue to find possible solutions. We'll also be in contact with CBP, the FDA and other industry insiders to fine-tune the PROFIT Plus session and agenda. Watch for more information in September.

ONTARIO Food Exports (OFEX) Trade Events

Increase your export potential by participating in an OFEX trade-related event. Our seminars, incoming and outgoing missions and international trade show participation are all geared to developing and maximizing export opportunities for Ontario companies. Through them, we can help you generate export sales, get in-market exposure, meet buyers face-to-face and gather first-hand information about export markets. If any of these events fit your strategies, contact your client account officer for further details on how your company may participate (see the contact list on page 7).



Incoming Missions

Japanese Retailer (Isetan) Buyer Mission, August 23, 2007

An Isetan buyer will be visiting Toronto to source unique and specialty products. Isetan is an upscale Japanese department store known for its cutting-edge products. It sells apparel, personal items, food, and household goods. With seven department stores in the Tokyo market, Isetan is very well known as a high-end retailer. The company has been buying Ontario ice wine for the past 3-4 years and this meeting is therefore a great opportunity for Ontario companies to join Isetan's portfolio of Ontario products. For more information about Isetan visit their website (www.isetan.co.jp)

Contact Amos Tin for more information.

Taiwan Nutraceutical and Functional Products VTM, September 12, 2007

In cooperation with the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, OFEX is working to promote nutraceutical and functional products to Taiwan. A virtual trade mission (video conference) connecting the functional food industries in Taiwan and Canada will be held on September 12 (Toronto time). Approximately 10 Canadian companies will be selected to present their products and technologies to over 50 Taiwan companies at the VTM.

Functional and nutraceutical companies offering products with the attributes of: Exercise/Slim, Arthritis-Health, Immune enhancement, cardiology, anti-cancer, diabetes,

entero-Health, insomnia, anti-aging, etc. are welcomed to participate in the VTM. Contact your client account officer for more information.

Street Smart, September 24-25, 2007

OFEX's popular Street Smart event returns with a focus on the US private label market as well as health and wellness (including organics) market. The tabletop session will provide qualified Ontario exporters with the opportunity to showcase their products to US retail representatives. For information on the US buyers attending the session, see page 2. Review our list of tips to get you ready for the event on page 4. To learn more about this robust exporting opportunity contact your client account officer.

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IN GOOD COMPANY:

Sweet success in the US

Attending Street Smart and other OFEX events helped this Ontario fruit spread manufacturer find success south of the border

When Crofters Food Ltd. started making its organic fruit spreads in 1989, organic food was still a new concept to major retailers and the company's market consisted mainly of natural food stores. Thanks in part to the growing popularity of organics in recent years and Crofters' innovative safety practices for its products, today, its jams and fruit spreads now grace the shelves of major supermarkets in both Canada and the US.

At Crofters 22,000 square-foot plant, the company produces its jams, preserves and fruit spreads, including kosher products, for retail, foodservice and food processor customers. Equipped with top-of-the-line food processing equipment, the plant is HACCP certified and QAI (Quality Assurance International) certified organic. Crofters has an on-site quality control laboratory for chemical residue testing of incoming raw products and microbiological testing of finished products. "We've always taken pride in being innovative," says President Gerhard Latka. "And even when organic wasn't really regulated, we wanted to be proactive so we

The company: Crofters Food Ltd.

The challenge: Breaking into the natural foods market in the US during the 1990s

How OFEX helped: Inviting Crofters to Street Smart, trade shows and connecting the company with key US buyers paved the way for US exporting success

Words to grow by: "OFEX events make exporting simpler," says Crofters president Gerhard Latka. "It's tough to get started but they introduce you to the buyers so you can take your first steps."



screen for the 60 most commonly used pesticides and herbicides and now we have equipment in-house to validate the amount of antioxidants in our products. We like to back our claims, which not everybody does."

Aside from manufacturing the Crofters brand, the company makes 15 to 20 private labels for retailers in Canada and the US. Crofters also sells to industrial customers, for example, manufacturing fruit bottoms for yogurt companies.

Very early on, Crofters started exporting to Japan. "That's tricky now because they have their own organic agricultural standard (IAS) which makes it tough," says Latka. The company continues to export to retail customers in other Asian markets, including Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia. By far, Crofters' largest exporting market is the US, which it started exporting to in 1991 after Latka made contact with OFEX. "They invited us to a food show in New York," recalls Latka. "We knew nothing then about exporting and it was a real eye opener to see the huge market."

In the years that followed, Crofters continued to attend OFEX organized pavilions at various trade shows. "The Trade Commissioner in the US helped us learn about

who was in the marketplace and the OFEX representatives in the US looked out for us, introducing us to buyers and telling us which companies were good to work with and which ones to avoid. They made it simpler for us." The company started selling its products to Trader Joe's, which was an early marketer of organic food. "They can really push volume and are a trendsetter; other supermarkets look to them for the up-and-coming trends." Getting on Trader Joe's shelves snowballed into other opportunities: "Once we worked for Trader Joe's we gained legitimacy and then the supermarkets woke up to organics."

Attending OFEX's Street Smart also helped pave the way for Crofters exporting success to the US. The company has attended several Street Smart events. "They brought in key decision makers from major supermarkets, such as Topco, a supermarket cooperative near Chicago, and we had an undisturbed opportunity to present to them," says Latka. The result: Crofters got its private label products into Topco and then a year later into a leading US natural food chain. "OFEX really helped us make the baby steps into exporting through the trade shows and then through Street Smart, helped us connect with the bigger players."





UNCONFIRMED RETAILERS, DISTRIBUTORS AND BROKERS:



Wegman's Food Market Inc.
www.wegmans.com
Areas of Operation: MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA
Total Units: 71
Attended Street Smart in 2000 and 2002.

Representatives:
• TBA



Wakefern Food Corporation
(ShopRite Supermarkets Inc.)
www.wakefern.com
Areas of Operation: NJ, NY Total Units: 29
Attended Street Smart in 2004 and 2005.

Representatives:
• TBA



Wal-Mart Supercenters
www.wal-mart.com
Areas of Operation: National
Total Units: 2,195
Invited based on the success of the Club Marketing (brokers for Wal-Mart) and Wal-Mart Mexico incoming mission in 2006.

Representatives:
Invited Include:
• VP of Frozen Food (Sam's Club)
• VP of Dry Grocery (Wal-Mart)
• VP of Frozen Food (Wal-Mart)



Heinen's Fine Food
www.heinens.com
Areas of Operation: OH
Total Units: 17

Representatives:
• TBA

Ontario Food Exports...

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Seminars

PROFIT Plus - U.S. Agri-Food Border Forum, November 7, 2007

In partnership with the Canadian Consulate Buffalo, OFEX will be presenting this one-day forum to examine current border issues and discuss business strategies. Speakers from a variety of US border agencies including FDA, CBP, CBP Agriculture USDA-FSIS, will provide border updates as well as answer questions. For more details on the event including how you can provide input into the day's program, turn to page 5. Contact your client account officer.

Ontario Food Exports®

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VIDEO trade missions connect Ontario suppliers with Asian buyers

Technological innovation is helping Ontario companies penetrate the Asian market

Video-conferencing is giving Ontario suppliers a chance to show their products to Asian buyers without having to spend time and money traveling overseas. "We're inviting Ontario companies to take part in these video trade missions," says Amos Tin, OFEX's geographic specialist for Asia. "Email and phone correspondence is one thing but face-to-face meetings are very important for doing business and this gives both sides a chance to see who they're talking to."

In one recent video trade mission, Ontario suppliers were connected with Hong Kong health food chains and the school system, which were looking for health snacks after Hong Kong banned junk food in its schools. "We go through a selection process to match buyers with the right Ontario suppliers," explains Tin. "We recommended a list of Ontario companies to Hong Kong and the buyers had a chance to check out those companies' web sites and products. The

advantage for both sides is they don't have to worry about the credibility and financial background of the companies invited to the event because we've carefully selected them to ensure they're reputable. Matching buyers with suppliers is what makes these events such a success."

For the video trade mission with Hong Kong, the original list of 30 companies was eventually narrowed down to six Ontario suppliers. Then OFEX sector officers met with those suppliers to help them develop their PowerPoint presentations for the video conferencing mission. "It takes a lot of advanced planning," says Tin. "We need the suppliers to send samples of their products to the buyers well in advance so they can taste them during

the presentation. And suppliers need to develop a very attractive presentation; if they're not well-prepared the 15-minute time allotment can fly by. We don't want to waste anyone's time."

The lucrative Asian market

Ontario agri-food exports to Asia totaled \$789 million in 2006. Of those food products, those that provide health benefits are finding a receptive market in Asia.

"Everyone wants to live longer and they're looking for products with health attributes," says Tin. "The idea that food has medicinal properties is popular in Asia." The Asian consumer is looking for products that don't just taste good but also have these benefits, such as cranberries and blueberries which contain antioxidants.

Food safety is also a major concern in Asia. China has been one of the major food suppliers and now that other Asian markets are worried about the safety of food products from China, they are looking for products outside of Asia. "They have more confidence in other markets," says Tin. "If a Canadian label says zero trans fat, then it is, but if a label on a Chinese product says zero trans fat, it may not be. That gives Ontario suppliers an advantage."

Upcoming video trade missions

OFEX will be taking part in at least one or two video trade missions with Asia annually. The next mission, scheduled for September 2007, will focus on health foods for Taiwan. OFEX will be working with their contacts in Taiwan to select buyers and Ontario suppliers. For more information, see OFEX Trade Events on page 5 or contact Amos Tin.

Market Tip

Hong Kong is the biggest Asian market for Ontario exporters; more than \$248 million worth of Ontario agri-food products were exported to Hong Kong in 2006. Japan is the second largest Asian market and China ranks third.

