



Fact Sheet for Corporations

Who We Are

WEConnect Canada is a Canadian non-profit organization that is opening doors to new supply chains. Led by corporate members, it certifies firms that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by women and connects them with the growing global demand from corporations and the public sector for diverse and innovative suppliers. An affiliate of WEConnect International, which promotes the leading international certification standard for women-owned businesses to link them to the global supply chain, WEConnect Canada is building on successful models in the U.S. and U.K.

The organization actively partners with corporations, associations, governments, women entrepreneurs and their supporters to accelerate the growth of women-owned businesses in Canada. In addition to certification, WEConnect Canada delivers education and training programs for Canadian women business enterprises to help them bid successfully on procurement contracts.

Our Corporate Members & Supporters

- For a full list of our corporate members, please visit:
http://www.weconnectcanada.org/corp_members.html
- Other supporters include Status of Women Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Foreign Affairs & International Trade Canada.

“It’s really just smart business for us to support the growth of women-owned businesses. It helps to provide innovative products for our customers and increases our competitiveness. We’re proud to be a founding member of WEConnect Canada.” **Tara Spann, Director of Diversity Initiatives, Staples North American Delivery**

“Walmart is proud and honoured to participate as a WEConnect Canada Founding Member. We heartily applaud your commitment to facilitate global collaboration and business connections for women and your creation of a platform to develop business opportunities for women-owned companies and their corporate partners. May WeConnect Canada lead us to greater heights as ingenuity and diligence serve to encourage entrepreneurial women in Canada and around the world.” **Tonia Smith, VP, Global Indirect Sourcing, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.**

The Need: Why WEConnect Was Created

- Women are central to Canada's economic prosperity, creating new businesses and new wealth at accelerating rates. There are more than 821,000 women entrepreneurs in Canada, who annually contribute in excess of \$18 billion to the economy. Their firms represent 47% of SMEs, provide jobs for 1.7 million Canadians – more than the Canadian Business Top 100 companies – and are creating new jobs at four times the rate of the average firm.
- Despite the surging growth of Canadian women entrepreneurs who are starting businesses at twice the rate of men and want to grow, women-owned businesses are seriously under-represented in procurement contracts. WEConnect Canada estimates that they comprise less than 5% of all domestic and international suppliers to corporations and governments. The result: big business misses out on value and innovation, women's businesses don't grow, and national productivity and GDP suffer.
- It is important for Canada to mirror the growth of supplier diversity spreading through multinational corporations in the U.S. and U.K. With the trend towards contract bundling in the US, over 80% of multinational corporations are now requiring supplier diversity efforts from their tier one and tier two suppliers. They advertise this "spend" with diverse populations, and are taking their business practice global, setting new benchmarks for measuring and celebrating diversity in supply chain contracts they award. Women owned businesses are well positioned and ready to work at all points in the supply chain, local, national and international.
- A supplier base that reflects the growing diversity of Canadian businesses in particular and the population in general makes good business sense. Women are involved in 85% of purchasing decisions, but receive a very small fraction of large contract opportunities, despite the innovative and quality products and services they are bringing to the marketplace at an escalating pace.

Why Should You Join? - The Benefits

By joining our international membership organization, you will:

- *Expand your global sourcing options.* You will gain access to the WEConnect Canada database of women suppliers qualified through internationally standardized procedures. Available only to our corporate members, this online database will facilitate your search for historically underutilized companies that bring quality products and services and competitive pricing.
- *Drive value and innovation.* By developing a more inclusive vendor network, you will increase the number of suppliers in the marketplace, drive up quality and innovation and drive down cost.
- *Create a competitive edge.* You will source a dynamic network of growth-oriented women business owners, many with products and services that fill unexploited needs in the marketplace.
- *Stay on the leading edge of diversity practices globally.* Through our events and corporate board, you can tap into the opportunity to network with visionary practitioners in procurement practices, locally, nationally and internationally. You can also access "Best Practices" supplier diversity research conducted by WEConnect Canada and seek assistance in developing or expanding supplier diversity programs and initiatives.

- *Improve your metrics.* Our system will allow you to accurately track women business enterprise expenditures and utilization rates in order to measure and report on diversity in your procurement practices.
- *Reinforce PR efforts.* You will receive high-profile recognition as a supporter of women-owned businesses through inclusion of your logo on the WEConnect Canada website, a listing in our marketing materials, and exposure in our news releases and media outreach.
- *Enhance your brand.* You will be eligible to participate in WEConnect networking, education and training events to demonstrate your commitment to supplier diversity. And utilizing women-owned firms in your supply chain will boost brand appreciation with women consumers, who make or influence 85% of the purchasing decisions in households. You can also use the WEConnect Canada member seal on your supplier diversity marketing materials.
- *Showcase corporate social responsibility.* By seizing the chance to be part of this groundbreaking initiative to directly link women business owners with supply chain opportunities, you will play an integral role in developing best practices in Canada that will be an exemplar for the world. You will achieve recognition for your global leadership in promoting economic growth through women.

Fees

Annual corporate membership fee..... \$10,000

How to Discuss Joining

Contact WEConnect Canada for further information and to discuss opportunities.

Tel: 416-646-6233 or 1-855-831-8169

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