

Business Cooperation Network (BCNet)

YOUR BRIDGE TO THE WORLD

By: Timothy E. Reid
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What is BCNet?

The Business Cooperation Network (BCNet) was launched in Canada in January 1994. It is a proven and innovative way to help companies find strategic alliances in 36 countries around the world.

BCNet was started by the European Community in 1988 and has not become a standard tool of the partnership process. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce acts as National Contact Point to Promote BCNet in this country.

BCNet helps companies find the right international partners for a broad range of strategic alliances. These include technology transfer, cooperative R&D, sales or service representation, co-marketing, co-manufacture, and joint ventures.

There are more than 600 BCNet business advisors located in 36 countries, linked through personal contacts and supported by a central BCNet computer, which contains 10,000 to 13,000 vetted corporate profiles.

How Does It Work?

The way BCNet works is much more interactive than, for instance, bulletin board matching systems. First, a Canadian BCNet advisor works closely with a client to prepare a Cooperation Profile, setting out what the client wants, and where he wants to do it. The Cooperation Profile is forwarded to the National Contact Point, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Every day, CCC sends all new or revised Cooperation Profiles to BCNet in Brussels, Belgium, where a computer seeks potential partners.

When a match is made, the Canadian advisor will follow up by exchanging more detailed information with the foreign advisor serving the foreign company. If this confidential exchange of information yields a promising opportunity, the companies can enter into direct contact. Some advisors

may offer BCNet as one of a range of services which includes detailed follow up, others may leave the two companies alone at this point to conduct negotiations themselves.

BCNet identifies possible partners quickly and in complete confidence. Last year, 17,000 partnership offers were entered and 15,931 matches resulted, a match rate of 94%. BCNet includes all types of businesses in the manufacturing and service sectors.

How to Register in Canada

In Canada, BCNet is a private sector initiative led by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. A pilot project began in January, 1994 with the assistance of the Federal Government and four provinces: Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. Eventually BCNet will operate across Canada.

Business advisors will come from both the public and private sectors, with private sector advisors becoming more numerous as the program becomes better known. Typical advisors will come from consulting firms, banks, economic development and foreign trade organizations, and law offices dealing in investment and strategic alliances.

Just as in Europe, there will be a great variety of advisors, but all will be required to sign the strict code of ethics which ensures that company information remains confidential. A fee is charged business advisors to join BCNet and there is also a fee for companies that use the program.

Further information is available from:

BCNet National Contact Point,
Canadian Chamber of Commerce,
Tel: (613) 238-4000
Fax: (613) 238-7643



Tim Reid is President of the 170,000 member Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Canada's largest and most representative national business association.

As full-time President, Mr. Reid is the

Canadian Chamber's principal spokesman and policy advocate interpreting the association's positions to the federal government, international organizations, the news media and the general public, and directing the operations of the National Chamber.

He is the business co-chair of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre. He also serves as the Chair of the Steering Committee, Forum for International Trade Training (FITT), and is a member of the federal government's International Trade Advisory Committee.

Prior to assuming the Chamber Presidency in 1989, Mr. Reid was Professor of Business Management at Ryerson and a former Dean of the Faculty, and was a part-time Commissioner of the Ontario Securities Commission.

A Rhodes Scholar, he holds degrees in Economics and Political Science from the Universities of Toronto, Yale and Oxford. He also completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard. Active in college athletics, he also played professional football for the Hamilton Tiger Cats of the CFL in 1962. In 1993 he was inducted to the University of Toronto's Sports Hall of Fame.

Countries Participating in BCNet

Europe—Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

North America—Canada, Mexico
South America—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay

Africa—Morocco, Tunisia

Middle East—Cyprus, Israel, Turkey

Asia/Pacific—Australia, Philippines