

Funding help to bring your new product to market

Elliot Schiller

Recently, I attended a seminar presented by Public Works and Governmental Services Canada discussing the federal Built in Canada Innovation Program (BCIP).

BCIP's stated objective is to help Canadian businesses bridge the pre-commercialization gap that many of them face in moving their innovative goods and services from the laboratory to the marketplace. If you have a new product that is at least at the 'ready to be tested in an operational environment' stage, BCIP could be for you.

As many an entrepreneur knows, one of the most challenging hurdles to bringing a product to market is getting the first customer. BCIP tries to award government contracts to entrepreneurs by matching them up with a federal government department that can use their specific innovation, and once approved, the Government becomes your first customer. For example, at the conference, we heard from various entrepreneurial companies who have developed products that range from laboratory microscopes, to inventory management RFID antennas, to software that measures program delivery effectiveness. Each of these companies was paid the price that their product and services will sell for in the marketplace, up to a maximum of \$500,000. The products purchased through BCIP will then be tested by an interested governmental office.

Before you say that you are in the print industry, and ask why would the government would need your innovation, remember, the government is in every conceivable business, from retail at a military base requiring the same inventory management requirements that any wholesale distributor needs to manage inventory, to a repair shop needing high tensile strength 3D printed replacement parts. In other words, the sum total of government departments and agencies is no different in business requirements than your existing customer base.

Assuming your project is awarded BCIP funding, it is then paired up with a government department that either requires that innovative product, or, after learning about what your product can do, recognizes a potential use for that product to fulfill a need, perhaps even one that they were unaware existed before you introduced the solution to them. Let's say you've developed an innovative solution that enables a large format printer to print a traditionally small format job, but with your innovation, prints it 4-up as opposed to the normal 1-up. Your innovation dramatically increases productivity. You've tested it at your facilities, and are now ready to offer this solution to the marketplace. You haven't found a first customer yet, and, there are still some questions with respect to its readiness for the marketplace. In other words, you need a first customer who understands the risks, but is willing to invest in the solution.

If the customer is a branch of the government, BCIP purchases the solution, and that branch tests it. The commitment of the tester is to provide the resources to



Left to right are: Elliot Schiller, Director at Teeger Schiller Inc.; David List, Executive Director, Ontario, NRCC (National research Council of Canada); Peter Banks, Chief Relationship Leader, NRCC; and Neil Kochar, NRCC, IRAP, Industry Technology Advisor. Graphic Arts Magazine would like to thank Elliot for his assistance.

test the product thoroughly enough to produce a written report, including statements of experience with the product (hopefully, very positive), and even recommendation for nice-to-have additions to the product to improve its effectiveness.

In other words, you sell the product and have someone else test it in an operational environment. You get a report that you can use as a marketing tool to attract other potential customers, and in the best of all worlds, the department that worked with you discovers the cost effectiveness of your innovation, wants more of it, and puts out a bid to procure that innovation, providing you with a nice opportunity to sell more of it to a customer who already is familiar and competent with the innovation.

Currently BCIP has a call out for proposals. If you have an innovation that you think is ready for operational testing, and you want to submit a proposal, the url is <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/initiatives-and-programs/build-in-canada-innovation-program-bcip/submit-a-proposal>

Here are three tips to help you succeed

- Make sure that your innovation is well stated
- Articulate the value proposition for your targeted customer
- Submit a proposal that is as professionally developed as your innovation

You only have ONE chance to make a first impression!

If you need assistance, or simply a second set of eyes to evaluate your proposal, my firm is ready to help. Many of the questions have word limits, so, you will need to make your best argument using succinct wording. Good luck!

Elliot Schiller is a Director at Toronto's Teeger Schiller Inc., a company that specializes in obtaining government funding. His clients receive over \$5 million annually to support their ongoing business innovation. E-mail eschiller@teegerschiller.com, visit www.FundingHelp.ca or phone 1-888-816-0222 Ext. 102.



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David Teeger

Director

David Teeger C.A., C.A. (S.A.) graduated as a Chartered Accountant in South Africa, and upon arrival in Canada he obtained his Canadian C.A. designation and joined Richter & Associates, a management consulting firm, where he concentrated his practice on various business sectors including household goods, fashion, automotive parts, public associations, and retail chains. He performed many roles in his 15 years at Richter, including managing the professional services organization in North America and all business operations throughout Europe.

David's professional capabilities include computer audits, feasibility studies, system analyses and assistance in the selection, negotiation and implementation of computerized solutions.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused his practice on consulting to management. His team of professionals has helped businesses select and successfully install a variety of ERP business solutions and add-on systems including business intelligence solutions to give new life to existing computer systems. David's clients not only rely on him to successfully manage the implementation of their new systems, but to manage the change that occurs in their organizations as a result of the use of these new tools.



Elliot Schiller

Director

Elliot Schiller, Ph.D., C.M.C. began his career as a Chemical Engineer working for Grumman Aircraft, in Long Island, New York. He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh with funding from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and, after being awarded a Presidential Fellowship, he went on to perform research and development activities at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Since coming to Canada, he has primarily assisted consumer products and retail organizations in a variety of strategic management initiatives, traveling around the globe on behalf of his clients. In 1987, Elliot joined Richter & Associates, and it is here that he first met David Teeger.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused the SR&ED / Grant Division on obtaining grants and tax incentives for over 100 companies in the small to medium sized business sector. His team has provided services to the discrete / processing manufacturing, material development, textiles, apparel, automotive and computer sciences sectors. Annually, Teeger Schiller Inc. secures more than \$5 million in government funding to assist its clients in having their business initiatives supported by government funding.



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