

Use grants to take you to the next level

Elliot Schiller

But first articulate exactly where you want to go.

“If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else,” — Yogi Berra, philosopher

Often in business we think we should be heading in one direction only to have our customers tell us, either directly or with their money, that they want us to head somewhere else. While businesses often experience this, and while it may be for the good, it may not be ideal if you intend to maximize your government grant potential.

There are four types of government funding opportunities available:

- Workforce development
- Diversification
- Innovation
- Capitalization and financing

In some cases, these funds can be “stacked,” a government term to indicate that one grant can be added to another. Likewise, there are many grants such as the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) and the Scientific Research and Experimental Development program (SR&ED) where the funds that you obtain from IRAP reduce the funds available from the SR&ED program.

When clients ask me what grants they are eligible for, I explain that before I can answer that question, I need to understand where their business is headed in order to maximize the various funding opportunities available.

Don’t panic, I’m not asking for a business plan that banks might expect. I’m looking for an understanding of where you’ve been, where you are now, where you hope to go and why you think your hopes are based in reality.

Once you can articulate those concerns, the next question is, what are your boundaries? For example, if where you hope to go will require you to double your workforce, and/or move to a significantly larger facility, do those plans require you to remain in your existing geographic location? Are you able to move your manufacturing plant from an urban to a rural location, or to a different or second province altogether?

Further, if your plans require a significant increase in workforce, do they primarily need to be experienced employees or can you hire younger employees, possibly straight out of school, ready to be trained internally? If so, will you need outside training assistance?

What about technology? Are you able to expand with your existing technology or do you need to enhance or replace functionality? I remember discussing this issue years ago

with the patriarchal owner of a large manufacturer whose company had gone through a major technology upgrade costing what he considered at the start of the project to be an unjustifiable expense. After a few years, as his company was acquiring one competitor after another on the way to becoming the leading North American manufacturer in its category, he confided in me that because of his system’s technology, he was able to painlessly integrate every new facility into his empire with minimal upheaval, maximizing the obvious advantages of a North American-wide organization.

So, what about expansion? Do your plans include exporting to new markets? Is your brand a known entity or do you need marketing dollars to solidify the brand? Do you intend to sell existing products to a new market or will you need to adapt your offerings? We have a Quebec-based client who invested in a marketing campaign that after five years resulted in his company expanding its sales tenfold and increasing its workforce fivefold with multiple grants for innovation, diversification and workforce expansion from both the federal and provincial governments.

Because he knew his business objectives when he began his branding campaign he was able to stack and maximize funding available in order to achieve his goal. He too has now become a major player in his category with support from government funds.

As you see, preparing for and obtaining government funding requires both a time and energy commitment from management. Government funding is available to support your efforts, but, as another popular adage reminds us, “there is no such thing as a free lunch”. In most cases government funds go to those companies that can show an obtainable result that will come from that support. Your competitors are taking advantage of funding opportunities. Shouldn’t you?

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Elliot Schiller is a Director at Toronto’s Teeger Schiller Inc., a firm specializing in government funding and systems selection/implementation. His clients receive over \$5 million annually to support 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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