



that was easy.™



rien de plus simple.™

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Female Entrepreneurs a Driving Force in Canadian Business Landscape**

### ***Women Entrepreneurs of Canada partners with STAPLES Business Depot to help female entrepreneurs 'think big'***

**OCTOBER 16, 2007 (TORONTO, ON)** – Canada has one of the highest rates of female entrepreneurship in the world, with over 850,000 women running their own business. This statistic is expected to reach one million by 2010. Women-owned businesses contribute more than \$18 billion to the Canadian economy.

As part of STAPLES Business Depot's commitment to supporting small business, the office supply giant announced today that it has joined forces with Women Entrepreneurs of Canada (WEC) to fund and provide valuable research to women entrepreneurs. Together, this partnership will help women 'think big' about the prospects and growth potential of their businesses.

As a signature sponsor of the organization, STAPLES Business Depot plans to help develop and expand the 'Think Big' program with Women Entrepreneurs of Canada through research, outreach, promotion of in-store seminars and education programs such as BizLaunch, and a rich media campaign which includes the creation of Think Big! The Growth Toolkit online magazine.

"Women entrepreneurs are thinking big and making a big impact in every industry across the country," says Lori Ross, Vice President of Marketing, STAPLES Business Depot. "They are creating jobs, improving our economic efficiency and productivity, and developing innovative products. Investing in women-owned businesses that 'Think Big' is an investment in our overall economic success."

According to quantitative and qualitative research compiled by both parties to date, female entrepreneurship is growing at a rapid pace in Canada. Women entrepreneurs are looking for more challenging work, a positive work environment, a greater purpose and work-life balance. This growing niche of women need access to a network of similar minded colleagues where they can obtain new and current information, tools for growth and support.

"Studies show that although an overwhelming proportion (73 per cent) of women entrepreneurs are one-person operations, the number of women who are small business owners with employees rose an impressive 40 per cent over the past 15 years," says Ruth Bastedo, President of Women Entrepreneurs of Canada. "STAPLES' support encourages this significant trend."

Women Entrepreneurs of Canada is a national forum of self-employed women. STAPLES Business Depot is Canada's leader in office supplies and equipment. Together, this partnership is tapping into a huge market to provide women entrepreneurs with support and easy solutions to Think Big! about their company's potential growth and expansion.

-more-

**ABOUT WEC**

Since 1982, WEC initiatives – from research to trade missions, conferences, documentaries, educational materials and networking events – have shifted traditional thinking about women-owned businesses on the local, national and international level. This year, WEC has launched a new public education, research and policy platform that encourages women business owners to Think Big! about growth and expansion – from start-up stages and onwards. Today, the WEC community spans 50,000+ in the women's business community throughout Canada.

**community@work**

Through its new corporate giving program – community@work – STAPLES Business Depot is proud to partner with local community leaders to identify and support programs and initiatives focusing on three core areas: environment, education and entrepreneurship. For more information, please visit [www.staplesinthecommunity.ca](http://www.staplesinthecommunity.ca).

**STAPLES Business Depot**

Founded in Toronto in 1991, The Business Depot Ltd. is Canada's largest supplier of office supplies, business machines, office furniture and business services for the small business and home office customer. The company is an everyday low price retailer, operating stores in every province across Canada under the banners STAPLES<sup>®</sup> Business Depot<sup>™</sup> and Bureau en Gros<sup>MC</sup>. The company employs over 13,500 associates serving customers through more than 280 office superstores, catalogue, and e-commerce. STAPLES<sup>®</sup> Business Depot<sup>™</sup>/Bureau en Gros<sup>MC</sup> is committed to making shopping easy by offering customers three ways to shop: online, by catalogue and in-store. More information is available at [www.staples.ca](http://www.staples.ca).

-30-

**For more information, please contact:**

Anne Adamson  
Veritas Communications  
416.955.4583 / 416.819.6016  
[adamson@veritascanada.com](mailto:adamson@veritascanada.com)

Alessandra Saccal  
STAPLES Business Depot  
905.737.1147 x 2363 / 416.570.9978  
[alessandra.saccal@staples.ca](mailto:alessandra.saccal@staples.ca)