



Mississauga MP Tony Abbott as the Federal Minister of State for Small Business hopes to expand the understanding of the many services his portfolio offers to greater numbers of small businessmen in Canada.

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Minister to expand business portfolio

Tony Abbott is now established as the Federal Minister of State for Small Business and he has come to several revelations which will have much to do with his hopes of expanding the scope and image of his portfolio.

He notes that Japan can look to more than 60 per cent of all its exports as the product of small business enterprises.

Here in Canada, better than half the work force is involved with small business ventures.

Abbott says he is now certain that his Ministry should go on the offensive to encourage small business to become better acquainted with the many programs which are available.

"It was noted by Dunn and Bradstreet in a recent report that 80 per cent of all small businesses fail through a lack of proper management.

"They may have the expertise to produce the product but in many cases they are just not businessmen.

"This is an area where we have resources available and we want small business to know about it," he said.

An example of such a program is Counselling Assistance to Small Enterprises (CASE). Using Mississauga as an example, Abbott said there are numbers of small businesses setting up every week which can apply directly to his Ministry for help in improving methods of doing business.

Any small business in Mississauga, or Canada for that matter, has access to this counselling service which has full federal backing, Abbott said.

Once a small businessman has had discussion with his business advisors and not received satisfactory guidance, he can go to one of the 80 offices of the Federal Business Developments Bank and apply for CASE help. There is an office of the FBDB in the Valhalla Executive Centre, 302 The East Mall in Etobicoke.

Providing that the prior discussion with business advisor or advisors has taken place and the firm has less than 75 full-time employees, a CASE worker will be assigned. A CASE worker is a retired businessman selected because of his knowledge and experience in the field in which the applicant is involved.

After signing a counselling services agreement, the worker will visit the firm and analyze problems and opportunities. A confidential report on findings and recommendations will be sent to the employer. This service is available whether the company is just starting up or has been in business for years. All that is required, Abbott said, is the business be small and have the desire to request help.

Cost for the service is \$20 per day for a seven-hour day for each counsellor assigned. If the employer does not agree with his first report, he is free to apply again to CASE for a second worker, Abbott said.