

Aimia Inc.

Canadian companies face many barriers in quest of global footprint

Aimia study shows that one in four businesses considering international expansion don't even know where to start

MONTREAL, June 7, 2016 /CNW Telbec/ - Today, Aimia Inc. (TSX: AIM), a data-driven marketing and loyalty analytics company, launched *100 Global Champions: Supporting International Success for Mid-sized Canadian Companies*, a study that explores the challenges and opportunities facing businesses to expand outside of North America.

The study looked at nearly 350 companies headquartered in Canada that had a minimum of 50 employees, and were either considering global expansion, had already expanded, or were not considering expansion. The research reveals that for those considering, one in four (24 per cent) don't even know where to start.

These companies face additional challenges including not having the insights to identify markets for expansion (46 per cent), and not knowing the steps required to take their business overseas (63 per cent). Furthermore, half (51 per cent) don't know if their company is ready.

Conversely, 90 per cent of those Canadian companies that have expanded globally claim they were successful.

"As a global company with Canadian roots, our goal is to inspire and support the next generation of global leaders – 100 global champions – companies that are the very best in the world at what they do," said Rupert Duchesne, Group Chief Executive. "Through our research, we've seen that global companies have an expanded range of clients, access to new partners, insulate themselves from economic slowdowns in Canada, and cite higher returns on investment."

While global companies report substantive benefits, six out of 10 businesses not currently considering expansion do not see an advantage of going global. Furthermore, three-quarters (74 per cent) of companies in this group have no long-term desire to expand beyond North America, and 80 per cent say their businesses are not well suited to expansion.

What is holding Canadian business back?

The research outlines four major perceived barriers to global expansion: knowledge, talent, resources and risk exposure.

Forty-five per cent of companies considering expansion do not have the right local insights or partners.

Additionally, even with Canada's diverse and well-educated population, more than a third (37 per cent) of Canadian businesses considering expansion report lacking the talent they need to succeed globally.

Other findings from the research include:

- **Support services are underused** – While companies are aware of the 11 Canadian support services listed, including development banks, chambers of commerce, and government agencies, few engage them for support, with service-based companies engaging them less often (13 per cent) than their goods-based counterparts (22 per cent), on average.
- **Personal connections matter** – Nearly a third (30 per cent) of service-based companies and 44 per cent of goods-based companies leverage their personal connections for support in going global.
- **A clear opportunity to build Canada's knowledge economy** – The majority of companies considering global expansion are service-based (60 per cent), yet half (50 per cent) of service-based companies feel they don't have adequate support and resources to make the move outside of Canada.

This research is a first step for Aimia to encourage dialogue among Canadian business leaders and government partners about how to better support Canada's business leaders of tomorrow and encourage a global ambition.

"We're hoping to be just one catalyst in sparking an important conversation regarding the future prosperity of our country," Duchesne

said.

Research Methodology

The full report is available at Aimia.com. The Aimia 100 Global Champions survey was commissioned by Aimia and fielded by Vision Critical and Edelman between February 17 and 25, 2016.

The study surveyed 348 business owners, C-suite executives and senior managers at companies headquartered in Canada with 50 or more employees. Participating business leaders were then classified into one of three groups based on the current state of their organization: not considering global expansion (n=106), considering global expansion (n=123), and global companies (n=119). Businesses surveyed span a variety of industries, including but not limited to, professional services, information technology, hospitality, retail, manufacturing, and transportation.

About Aimia

Aimia Inc. (TSX:AIM) is a data-driven marketing and loyalty analytics company. We provide our clients with the customer insights they need to make smarter business decisions and build relevant, rewarding and long-term one-to-one relationships, evolving the value exchange to the mutual benefit of both our clients and consumers.

With about 3,200 employees across 17 countries, Aimia partners with groups of companies (coalitions) and individual companies to help generate, collect and analyze customer data and build actionable insights.

We do this through our own coalition loyalty programs such as Aeroplan in Canada, Nectar in the UK, and Air Miles Middle East, and through provision of loyalty strategy, program development, implementation and management services underpinned by leading products and technology platforms such as the Aimia Loyalty Platform and Smart Button, and through our analytics and insights business, including Intelligent Shopper Solutions. In other markets, we own stakes in loyalty programs, such as Club Premier in Mexico and Think Big, a partnership with Air Asia and Tune Group. Our clients are diverse, and we have industry-leading expertise in the fast-moving consumer goods, retail, financial services, and travel and airline industries globally to deliver against their unique needs.

For a full list of our partnerships and investments, and more information about Aimia, visit www.aimia.com.

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