



International companies looking to tap the North American market are beginning to recognize the advantages of looking north to Toronto

The Greater Toronto Area, or GTA, is home to 5 million people and the business centre of Canada's burgeoning financial services industry. It is a safe, culturally advanced and ethnically diverse metropolitan area with links to virtually every corner of the world. It is also an ideal gateway to doing business in the United States.

"We came to Canada, and specifically the GTA, because of the excellent infrastructure and resources available here," said Rahul Petkar, CEO of Polaris Software Lab Ltd.'s Canadian operations. Polaris is an Indian company marketing advanced banking, insurance and financial technology solutions to the financial services industry. "Toronto is a cost effective jurisdiction with a skilled, well educated workforce located in the heart of Canada's financial and high technology centre, and only a short distance from major U.S. clients. U.S. customers feel very comfortable when we tell them that development work will be done in Canada. Locating here was a simple decision for us."

Other firms in the financial sector find that a GTA presence enables them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by North American cross-border business integration. "Canada is the United States' largest trading partner and many of our commercial clients in the U.S. conduct business here," said Jerry Hynes, vice president & principal officer for the Fifth Third Bancorp's Canadian branch. "Toronto is the financial centre of Canada. The human resources we need are here, and companies are used to banking here."

The GTA is an especially attractive location for European companies seeking to establish a North American presence. Air and highway links to major eastern U.S. and Canadian cities are outstanding, with New York, Chicago, Boston, Detroit and other major cities no more than an hour's flight away. Toronto's Pearson International Airport hosts most major international carriers, with frequent direct passenger and air freight flights to most of Europe's major cities.

While English is the predominant language of business, Canada is officially a bilingual (French and English) country, and French schools are readily available in the Toronto area. In the post 9/11 world, it is also easier for companies to bring people from overseas to Canada for temporary work terms.

The GTA is home to a thriving, world-class financial sector, including banking, securities, insurance and other financial services which are closely linked to world financial markets. The area boasts a large pool of skilled, educated and multi-lingual talent with financial industry experience.

Toronto Financial Industry Facts

- Headquarters for all of Canada's top 10 investment dealers
- Third largest financial centre in North America by employment after New York and Chicago
- Headquarters or executive offices of the Top 5 Canadian Banks
- 85% of the 41 foreign banks in Canada are headquartered in Toronto
- Headquarters for 6 of the top 10 life insurance companies in Canada

While the GTA's credentials as a prime business expansion location are impeccable, the area offers another exceptional advantage: The Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, or GTMA. The GTMA is a unique service organization designed to connect investors looking to locate in the GTA with everything they need to set up shop and build business relationships. It offers advice and introduces investors to governments, business services and potential customers. It acts as a partner as the investor makes a location decision, chooses a site, hires staff and makes connections in the marketplace. Impressively, the GTMA provides all of these services for free!

"The GTMA offered a one-stop shop for all of the help and resources we needed," Polaris Software's Rahul Petkar explained. "They put us in contact with experts in accounting, law, immigration, human resources and real estate. They also connected us with potential customers and continue to provide us with networking opportunities. Their overarching view of the marketplace, and their business development advice, are especially valuable."

The GTMA also helped Fifth Third to get its bearings. A series of meetings with the GTMA helped the bank to understand the GTA, identify location possibilities and start building the relationships needed to set up shop.

As the experience of other investors has proven, the GTMA brings companies a rare opportunity for a smooth transition into one of the world's most appealing cities, and a head start in one of the world's largest markets.

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About the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance:

The GTMA is a public-private partnership between the 29 municipalities and regions in the GTA, together with the Provincial and Federal governments, other non-profit organizations and a broad cross section of private sector corporations. The Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA) is the key point of contact for exploring business opportunities in the GTA. With the resources of its public and private sector partners, the GTMA provides essential business information and site selection services to facilitate investment in the Greater Toronto Area. For more information visit: www.greatertoronto.org.

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