



rachel rochford

Red Fire Innovations
Building 7, Fernandes Business Centre
Laventille, Trinidad, W.I.
info@redfireartisan.com
www.redfireartisan.com
skype: rarochford
(868) 356 9286

Red Fire Innovations Company Testimonial for 2016 FIT4EUROPE Project.
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ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED.

Good morning.

Red Fire Innovations Limited is a micro-multinational company that is based in Trinidad and Tobago and operating globally with an aim to provide creative exceptional solutions designed to meet the global demand for artisan products. Our main focus, at the moment, is creating, distributing and marketing curated collections of artisan jewellery by Rachel Rochford.

Red Fire Innovations has been in business for the past five years and during that time most of the wholesale and retail sales have been from Trinidad and Tobago. Within the last two years a small percentage of sales have also been from parts of the Caribbean, U.S.A, Canada and the U.K. In September 2015, Red Fire Innovations was able to secure wholesale orders to three boutiques in Martinique and one boutique in Guadeloupe via ModeTT, an exporTT and CreativeTT initiative. The French Caribbean is seen as a good testing ground to gauge the European interest in your brand, so when I was approached by exporTT to apply to be part of the FiT4Europe initiative in October 2015 I thought that it was a perfect timing to continue my trajectory and the international expansion of my brand into the European market.

It is said that forces around you conspire to aid you in your journey once you are positioned and ready to receive the opportunities. In January 2016 one of my Bespoke Bridal Jewellery customers requested that I create and supply her new online company, Luna Wave, with a curated collection of bracelets. This was my first wholesale order for the European market as Luna Wave is based in Denmark. This is how many of the opportunities that I have accepted have occurred in my life. Some may say that it is a fluke or happy coincidence but I view it as preparation and dedication meeting readiness.



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During the various capacity building seminars that were conducted on a monthly basis throughout the year by exporTT, confirmed that my mindset and rationale of approaching the international markets that I was doing naturally and instinctively were in fact on point. The intensive four day program Services Go Global, held at TTCSI, geared specifically for the Creative Industries helped me to create an export plan for my company. Expert guidance from Mr. Vokes, Coach Bengochea and the other consultants that have spoken to us during the capacity building programs all helped to reaffirm that my goals were attainable and my business focused on the right track.

In April 2016 I was contacted by a new British startup online company called Sab Soleil (Sab.So.Ley). I was able to put into practice some of the lessons that I was taught during the capacity building seminars. I delivered my first order of curated collection of artisan jewellery to Sab Soleil in September 2016 and their online shop should be launching within the coming weeks.

Market research seminars helped me to formalize the way that my own research was conducted which aided in focusing on certain trends in the European market but nothing beats actually visiting the country that you wish to penetrate and seeing the trends first hand instead of what the media wish to push on you. Also the tactile experience of talking with boutique owners and showing them your product must not be underestimated. There is only so much that can be done via Skype, email and the internet.

I made an extensive list of my target boutiques in both England and France. During the Trade Mission in September 2016 I was able to make contact with these boutiques and their owners or point persons and discuss the viability of my brand in their various stores. Both U.K. and France have a percentage of their population that into a sustainable and eco-friendly lifestyle and are therefore searching for products to compliment this lifestyle.

As a result of discussions with a few boutique owners I decided to create an ethical line targeted towards the European market, ROCHFORD ETHICAL DESIGN. I would never have fully recognized the need for this line in the EU unless I had visited. In the first instance I am collaborating with Bene Caribe to use off cuts from their batiks that are then encased in plastic from recycled water bottles to make bracelets designed and created by me. These bracelets also promote Bene Caribe and Red Fire Innovations' zero waste policy. I already have one U.K. company interested in this line of ethical jewellery once the prototypes are completed and production has begun.



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You can plan down to the last detail but it is sometimes the unexpected opportunity that is the most beneficial. After visiting one of the boutiques on my list I went down a short alley and found a shop that I had not heard of before, The Permanent Pop Up Shop. The leather bag in the window drew me in and the lady in the shop spoke to me and asked if I was an artist as I, “had that look”. I laughed and said yes and we started chatting about my jewellery and artwork. By the end of the conversation she said that she would love to stock my brand and that she was the owner of the shop. The most amazing thing is that there was no hard sell, no cold call or unreturned emails. Just an unplanned meeting of two people which has turned into a great opportunity that will see a curated collection of Rachel Rochford Chain Link Necklaces in Soho, London at The Permanent Pop Up Shop for the month of December 2016.

Going forward in 2017 I will continue the expansion of my brand into the European Market concentrating on the U.K. as France at the moment does not seem a viable option for my brand. The boutiques that I am interested in are owned by designers and they only retail their own designs. Where as in the U.K the boutique owners are in search of unique products to sell.

It is my hope that exporTT and the Ministry of Trade will continue to provide opportunities like this Fit4Europe project and take the lessons learned during the last year to aid future Trade Missions, at least one a year, geared towards the Creative Industries.

I am thankful to exporTT for this opportunity and assistance given during the Fit4Europe project and I hope to continue working alongside exporTT and the Ministry of Trade as I expand my business internationally.

Thank you!