

Meridian Effect grows your business

Merchant does far more than raise capital

Asked how his company has quickly earned a reputation as a leader in bringing capital and other vital services to small and medium-sized enterprises, Keith Turner doesn't hesitate.

"We put the right people together with the right money at the right time," says Turner, President and CEO of Meridian Merchant Capital Canada Ltd. "We call that the Meridian Effect."

Meridian is a European-style merchant banking firm that provides or arranges financing to help a company climb the next rung – or a few rungs – on its ladder to success. Based in Calgary and Vancouver, Meridian is expanding across Canada and the U.S. through the opening of independently owned business development offices.

Since launching four years ago, Meridian has assisted Canadian firms operating in a variety of sectors, including oil and gas, real estate, construction, car rentals and audio-visual. Meridian works primarily with private companies whose annual revenue ranges from \$5 million to \$250 million – but places no restrictions on the sectors in which it will work.

"We don't just raise money," says Turner. "We advise and help a client grow. We help them acquire companies. We help them access capital for growth and we sometimes supply that capital ourselves through our related fund Trinity Capital."

Such service sounds heavily, but Turner, who has more than 30 years of merchant-banking experience, is not an angel investor.

"An investor invests money, an investment broker arranges capital, and a consultant advises. We do all those things and more. We'll also write your busi-



Keith Turner, President and CEO of Meridian Merchant Capital

ness plan for you if you need us to and conduct strategic planning sessions to make sure the company is on track. Raising money for a business is relatively easy, but just having the money doesn't guarantee success. In several of our situations, we put in our own chief financial officer and our own monitoring people."

The Meridian Effect capitalizes on a model first used centuries ago in Europe, where companies that couldn't get money from banks turned to fellow merchants.

"The merchants would often lend money that the banks wouldn't lend," says Turner. "That's why those bankers became known as merchant bankers. They actually were merchants directly involved in the trade."

The same goes for Turner and Meridian's other principals. All are experienced business leaders based in Vancouver and Calgary. "Every one of us in the company has got blood on their T-shirt," says Turner, who owned a media company and has been three times nominated and a Finalist in 2008 for Entrepreneur of the Year in Canada by Ernst and Young.

"Every one of us has either

owned our own businesses, so we know the other perspective – from the perspective of clients – or, we've worked in financial institutions for long periods of time, so we actually know how the banking system works. Or we've worked in investment firms, so we know how the investment system works. So we are not purely brokers of capital."

Turner began his merchant-banking career at age 17 and worked for British and U.S. banks for 22 years, 11 of them in New York City and five in London, England, with a specialty in structuring creative deals. Prior to founding Meridian, he served as senior vice-president of a Vancouver-based investment banking firm. Turner and Randy Lennon started the company four years ago after discovering there was no company in Canada that could meet all of a growing firm's capital needs.

"What I'm doing today in Canada, I was doing 25 years ago in New York City," says Turner. "Merchant banking is only coming to Canada now."

Benefits of working with Meridian? Access to capital, intellectual resources and people. Meridian provides service from Day One to deal-closing day. If

necessary, Meridian will stay on for up to one year after the deal.

"We'll help that company through its transition by, once the deal is closed, not leaving them alone," says Turner. "We stick around."

An example of how Meridian adds value, the company worked with the new owners of Apex AVSI based in Calgary. After successfully executing on a management buy-out of the original company founder, Meridian was engaged by the new owner/management team to bring new equity to the business in order to grow through acquisition. Meridian packaged up the opportunity and presented to a number of private equity groups. In 2006, Meridian successfully negotiated an ownership position for Trinity Capital, that facilitated cash payments to the management team while strengthening the financial position of the company to grow. In 2008, Meridian closed the successful merger of Apex with its largest competitor, Sharp's Audio Visual, allowing for the original management team to now run the largest audio visual firm in Canada.

"That's classic merchant banking," explains Turner. "It's all about financial engineers working with entrepreneurs to build stronger, private Canadian companies."

If your company is seeking capital to grow, make an acquisition, execute a management buy-out, or develop an exit strategy for entrepreneurial founders, contact Meridian Canada at 403-538-2130 or visit www.meridiancanada.com.

Meridian is also seeking motivated individuals who may be interested in opening independently owned business development offices across Canada and the U.S.

For more information on branch network development, contact Randy Lennon at 403-538-2131 or e-mail randy@meridiancanada.com.