
Want a government grant?

Document your work

Elliot Schiller

One of the largest disconnects between small entrepreneurial businesses and all levels of government is over the issue of project documentation as the work progresses.

It is our experience that when it comes to providing government funding support for various innovative projects, government representatives more often than not, expect a higher level of documentation than almost all small businesses seem to maintain. As a consequence, when explained the documentation expectation of the government, many small businesses feel that the effort to comply with governmental rules and regulations isn't worth the amount of funding that they could receive.

This is illogical, unproductive and potentially extremely costly thinking. Today, with a host of simple documentation methods including email communications, smartphone picture taking (stills and videos) with date/time stamping, dictation software, and many inexpensive apps, it is no longer overly time-consuming to document work in progress, and, the Court of Canada agrees. As far back as 1992 in *NORTHWEST HYDRAULIC CONSULTANTS LTD. v. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN*, the Court stated that "it seems self-evident that a detailed record of the hypotheses, tests and results be kept, and that it be kept as the work progresses". Then, in 2012, in the case of *AIRMAX TECHNOLOGIES v. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN*, the Court more strongly stated that documentation was an integral part to performing innovative projects. While the government lost the *Airmax* case, it has used that ruling to support its expectation that government supported projects require documentation "as the work progresses".

When small businesses think of documentation, they think of massive notebooks with voluminous words putting up road blocks against timely completion of important projects with already tight deadlines. This is *not* what is required. On the contrary, the Courts have continuously stated, including as recently as March, 2015 in *R&D PRO-INNOVATIONS INC. v. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN*, that while innovation requires work to be carried out utilizing systematic investigation, it has always accepted a myriad of small businesses' methods of project documentation, as opposed to a government prescribed methodology.

While the Court has avoided prescribing an all-encompassing methodology of documentation, in April, 2015, in *HIGHWEB & PAGE GROUP INC. v. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN*, the Court did state that the onus lies with small business to show documentary evidence that more likely than not, that the



work undertaken was performed in a systematic manner. In the *Highweb* case, for example, the government ruled that the business was unable to present any documentary evidence supporting the systematic investigative process which was the basis of the claim, and thus, the Court denied the claim.

There are two important reasons why you should consider documenting the work done on the shop floor. First, is the "hit by a bus" scenario. While it is true that statistically speaking, your shop floor manager will show up for work tomorrow, there is always a worst case scenario where if the work done by your team is not documented, but exists only in the memory of your staff, it is vulnerable to loss along with your employees should a catastrophic event occur (i.e. employee resigns with minimal notice, or a family crisis prevents the employee from continuing the project). Second, a government grant to subsidize projects such as process improvement or new or improved product development goes straight to your bottom line. If your business operates on a 15% profit margin, then a \$75,000 grant from the government is the equivalent of a \$500,000 gross sale. Further, your cost of sales is negligible. You can even contract a company such as Teeger Schiller Inc., (see details below) to handle the "administrivia" including the task of confirming or even documenting the work in progress, and we have state of the art software to simplify the task.

The benefit of a government grant can be something that is very good for your business with respect to improving your competitiveness, your product quality, your margins, your product offerings, and thus, the overall worth of your business.

As my firm knows from personal experience, It is very likely that your competitors are taking advantage of every potential form of business support and subsidy that the government has to offer, shouldn't you?



Elliot Schiller is a Director at Toronto's Teeger Schiller Inc., a company that specializes in obtaining government funding. His clients receive over \$5 Million annually to support their ongoing business Innovation. E-mail eschiller@teegerschiller.com, visit www.FundingHelp.ca or phone 1-888-816-0222 Ext. 102.

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David Teeger

Director

David Teeger C.A., C.A. (S.A.) graduated as a Chartered Accountant in South Africa, and upon arrival in Canada he obtained his Canadian C.A. designation and joined Richter & Associates, a management consulting firm, where he concentrated his practice on various business sectors including household goods, fashion, automotive parts, public associations, and retail chains. He performed many roles in his 15 years at Richter, including managing the professional services organization in North America and all business operations throughout Europe.

David's professional capabilities include computer audits, feasibility studies, system analyses and assistance in the selection, negotiation and implementation of computerized solutions.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused his practice on consulting to management. His team of professionals has helped businesses select and successfully install a variety of ERP business solutions and add-on systems including business intelligence solutions to give new life to existing computer systems. David's clients not only rely on him to successfully manage the implementation of their new systems, but to manage the change that occurs in their organizations as a result of the use of these new tools.



Elliot Schiller

Director

Elliot Schiller, Ph.D., C.M.C. began his career as a Chemical Engineer working for Grumman Aircraft, in Long Island, New York. He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh with funding from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, and, after being awarded a Presidential Fellowship, he went on to perform research and development activities at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Since coming to Canada, he has primarily assisted consumer products and retail organizations in a variety of strategic management initiatives, traveling around the globe on behalf of his clients. In 1987, Elliot joined Richter & Associates, and it is here that he first met David Teeger.

As a founding partner of Teeger Schiller Inc., he has focused the SR&ED / Grant Division on obtaining grants and tax incentives for over 100 companies in the small to medium sized business sector. His team has provided services to the discrete / processing manufacturing, material development, textiles, apparel, automotive and computer sciences sectors. Annually, Teeger Schiller Inc. secures more than \$5 million in government funding to assist its clients in having their business initiatives supported by government funding.



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