



## Small Business Spotlight: Live Edge Design

“From tree to table” is the core business value of Live Edge Design, a custom art furniture company based in Duncan, BC.

Founder John Lore says his company uses locally sourced reclaimed wood brought down by storms or left behind by forestry and construction companies for Live Edge Design’s creations. The unique characteristic of the company’s pieces is the “live edge” aspect – that is, the edge of the slab of wood is left in its natural state, with the waves and undulations of the bark growth kept intact, giving the furniture a raw, west coast feel.

You can find Live Edge Design’s furniture in bars and restaurants, hotels, coffee shops, offices, hotel lobbies and of course, in people’s homes both in Canada and the U.S. And working with Export Navigator, Lore is hoping to enter the European market.

As someone who is usually a cynic about government programs designed to help business, Lore admits that his business has greatly benefited from the Export Navigator pilot program. “It’s actually one of my favourite government offerings to date,” said Lore. “It’s that advisor that was never really out there before – kind of a cross between that and an exporting cheerleader who knows where you need to look for answers to all those questions. Small businesses are just not going to have that person on staff so it’s been really helpful.”

Lore says even though exporting requires a lot of financial investment on behalf of the business, having an in-person advisor available to help guide a business through the export process is still more valuable than government helping businesses by simply offering them funding or grants.

“Having that service where there’s a person helping you solve the logistical problems is more valuable than offering to write a cheque for a portion of your expenses,” said Lore. “It’s just going to keep things moving. It’s so easy to stall out, not just from a lack of money but from a lack of time to make sure that you’ve thought about all the aspects – language barriers, cultural barriers and shipping barriers.”

In the next three to five years, Lore expects that Live Edge Design will be exporting its furniture to new untapped markets, taking advantage of the popularity of the live edge design as it grows outside North America. He also plans to continue to evolve the company’s design principles to stay ahead of changing trends.

He recommends that any small businesses that are interested in exporting should do a lot of homework and make use of all the services that are available, including federal trade commissioners and Export Navigator’s export advisors.