

Serving the fine food market

Interview with Josée Chrétien,
Owner of Chez Latina

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Industry	Food & Beverages
Location	Montreal, Canada
Company	Chez Latina
URL	www.chezlatina.com
Products	Food and beverage products such as drinks, canned food, cheese, poultry, sweets, fresh and frozen produce
Description	Chez Latina is a specialty food retailer based in Montréal
E-marketplace	Fine Food Network
URL	www.finefoodnetwork.com
Description	Fine Food Network is a gateway to a B2B commercial platform geared towards coordinating supply and demand on a global scale on the fine foods market
Lessons Learned:	Retailers and other producers in the Fine Food industry shouldn't be shy of investing small dollars on the Internet, the return on investment is rapid and measurable. The investment is small and the returns great. I strongly recommend businesses to use this service.

Chez Latina is a specialty food retailer based in Montréal. They started our business 15 years ago and are located in the very trendy neighbourhood called Mile End in Montréal. Their store provides only selected items coming from all over the world.

How did you decide to get involved in the emarket Finefoodnetwork? Why did you select this emarket?

We got involved because we were always looking for new products, new importers or distributors of specific products. Everytime it was hard work finding exactly where we could source the products. I did a lot of research and often came back empty handed. With Fine Food Network, we are able to find rapidly what we need and we are sure that the entries are pre-qualified ones, existing businesses with track records.

What does the e-market cost?

Relatively cheap for a buyer like us, it's free for the level one service! Only producers have to pay. We bought the full fledge service with the micro-site service and it's only 600 euros a year. It is very affordable.

How does the e-market operate? How are products put up for sale?

Producers can offer their products to us via either their business profile or via the Offer/Demand on the front page. Sometimes it's the importer or distributor who does so. We can also on our side search the data-base to find what we need and than correspond directly with the providers or the distributors. And yes it is quite easy to use.

How does the e-market protect your anonymity as a buyer? Have you ever had doubts about the security side of an e-market?

We don't have to provide sensible corporate data. In addition, if we wanted to we could be anonymous and the Finefoodnetwork people would act as the middle man on our behalf. The FFN is not involved in the transactions at all. We have no doubt that all the private information is kept secured.

Have you cut down on procurement costs?

We have cut in staff time, in time loss, and increased our efficiency. It's a trouble free platform. We know where to go and we don't need to look in different search engines.

Do you have any suggestions for SMEs that are thinking of participating in an e-market? For example: is it only for large companies?

It is certainly not only for big companies, I think it is perfect for small and medium sized companies; at least it suits our needs. We cut in travel costs for the trade shows to name an example so we saved thousands of dollars by doing that. And we do have a showcase at anytime of the day on a good platform.