

Although non-traditional cultural values are gradually working their way into the public sector, government officials are more likely than their private sector counterparts to adopt traditional styles. It has always been a status symbol to have a large department, regardless of the work actually accomplished. Even though the practice of over-employment has been severely curtailed by budget cutbacks, most officials are still very status conscious.

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### **The Role of the Mexican Partner**

Overcoming cultural obstacles is one of the principal reasons for forming a partnership with a Mexican firm. Since both parties share mutual goals for the partnership, adapting to differences of style is usually easier than when dealing directly with customers. Sometimes this two-way adaptation takes place naturally without any formal strategy. Thus, the partner can serve as a kind of cultural bridge to the customer. If the partner has adopted some non-traditional values, this process is likely to work more effectively.

The partner is also likely to be the primary link to the Mexican business community. Although the importance of connections in making a sale has diminished, business groups continue to wield considerable influence. They can be particularly important for forming strategic alliances for large projects.

Even though the Mexican partner will be the primary interface with customers and the Mexican business community, the Canadian partner still has a large stake in understanding the cultural environment. The effectiveness with which the Mexican partner presents the product is critical to the success of the venture. Canadian executives must therefore assess the partnership's performance within the context of Mexican culture.