

What types of networks do you use in Canada and in your own country? What services do you find useful?

Mariangela (Sao Paulo): A strong and very solid partnership is a must for things to happen. This is something that must be built over time. In Canada, we work very closely with Industry Canada (the Environmental Affairs Branch) as well as with some provincial governments. It's a Team Canada concept. In Brazil, we have developed strong links with industrial associations, which are very powerful. We work with them in several states/provinces with very good results. Overall, I think we can say that the environment sector has been very successful in building these partnerships, both in Brazil and in Canada.

Isidro (Madrid): I have been in Canada several times, and have developed good contacts at the provincial level, within the industry and at the Canadian Environment Industry Association. I also meet regularly with environmental representatives and find Strategis, the Canadian Environmental Solutions CD-ROM (CES) and the WIN system very useful and informative. In Spain, I have developed good working relationships with all provincial governments, as well as with industry associations dealing with environmental issues. There are also a couple of good directories that provide information on local companies.

What are the key elements to a successful marketing strategy for penetrating your market? What do Canadian companies that succeed in your market/sector have in common?

Mariangela (Sao Paulo): Find the right partner in Brazil! But it takes a lot of time to do that. This means you have to come to Brazil, you have to know and talk to many companies until you find the right one – this is the most fundamental issue. Brazilians like to have someone to talk to. You cannot do business in Brazil from Canada.

Isidro (Madrid): The key element of success in this market is to have a good local representative and/or a partnership with a local company. But companies have to keep in mind that this is a middle- or long-term approach – we look at companies that want to establish close, long-term working relationships. There are now approximately 16 to 20 companies successfully doing business in Spain.

Would you like to share any best practices that really works?

Mariangela (Sao Paulo): I would say the best practice is the building of partnerships – really dedicating some time and believing that we have to do things together. I think that having this network established improves my work. There's no way that I could put together a program and increase the presence of Canadian companies in the market just by myself, working at my own desk.

Isidro (Madrid): Not really a best practice, but one thing I am very pleased about is the high support we get from our ambassador. We are a small embassy here in Madrid, but we always have the support we need to do our job better. We are also contacted for advice and for particular messages when, for example, our ambassador is meeting with the Spanish minister of the environment and provincial environmental ministers. Working as a team brings best results to everyone.

What was your worst nightmare or the funniest thing that has happened to you

Mariangela (Sao Paulo): The best laughs here are always the ones that happened just 15 minutes ago. We are a very close-knit group here in Sao Paulo. We work hard, but we have fun. And this makes it much more positive to be here.

Isidro (Madrid): My worst nightmare was when a big delegation that I had been working on for weeks was cancelled. It was an important ministerial visit accompanied by a huge business delegation from Canada, with two seminars scheduled for Madrid and Valencia. Five days before the visit, the fish conflict started and the mission was cancelled. But now it's over and the relationship and the business between the two countries is active and doing well.