

problem in a commodity market where companies compete on price. This means that the production facilities in Canada must be very flexible to meet the different standards.

Business practices are different in each country. For example, in France a company must wait 90 days to be paid, whereas in the Netherlands and Germany payment is cash on presentation of invoice. Another difference in Europe is the emphasis on contractual relations. The whole spectrum is represented – from Germany, which is very strict on having written contracts, to France where a telephone order is valid. The Netherlands falls in between these two models.

Beware of test delays. Every new product must be tested and approved by each country. Testing and approval can take up to one year for the German market.

The Netherlands is an easy place to recruit bilingual staff. Contrary to other European countries, companies do not have to pay a premium for people with multilingual skills.

The effect of being Canadian is neutral. Although Noranda is known in the timber trade, the Canadian image does not play a positive or negative role.