

Whether or not the order is accepted depends on the terms being proposed and capabilities of the company. If a firm receives an order without first having offered a quotation, it may still wish to send the buyer a quotation, specifying whatever details may remain ambiguous in the order. At a minimum, such a quotation is a confirmation of the terms of the agreement and represents an additional bit of security to both parties.

Once an order is accepted, acknowledgement will usually occur via fax or telex rather than a mailed letter, although follow-up by mail usually occurs after a fax or telex communication. Many organizations still refuse to accept a fax as a legally binding document and will require confirmation by letter. If additional information is needed before responding to a foreign order, a telephone call may be useful. The Canadian exporter should never assume that an order can be modified simply on the basis of a verbal discussion: written confirmation must always be provided.

ROUTING INFORMATION

A complete order processing system automatically sends information about a transaction to everyone in the company who will be directly involved in fulfilling the order. It also provides information that is useful to other departments of the company involved in strategic planning.

The system should transmit information about the transaction to the accounting department for invoicing purposes, and picking, packing and shipping instructions for the warehouse personnel. In addition, the export sales office should inform the marketing department of the order so as to facilitate strategic market planning. It should coordinate the order with the production department for planning and scheduling purposes, or to arrange for special requirements or modifications. And it should inform the financial administration of any implications for the company's cashflow.

SHIPPING

At the same time as this information is being routed to other parts of the company, the export office should begin the process of preparing the documentation required for the shipment as well as arranging for transportation and cargo insurance. Larger firms will have the infrastructure and the experience to make these arrangements on their own. Smaller firms and firms that export infrequently may engage the services of a freight forwarder or an export house. A freight