

5. Consumer Products Sector

A. Opportunities

France is the world's fourth-largest economy, and as such is a major producer of and market for consumer goods. Serving nearly 60 million domestic consumers and more than 60 million tourists each year, the French market offers a choice of consumer goods from all over the world, including cultural products, toys, pearls and precious stones, furniture, apparel, scents and perfumes, sporting goods, recreational products (snowmobiles, personal water craft, boats, trailers and camping equipment) and building materials (hardware supplies).

Canadian exports to France in all these categories together amounted to more than \$80 million in 1995 (a 400% increase in three years), or about 5% of our total exports. The 1995 promotional campaign with the Pineault-Printemps group demonstrated substantial market opportunities.

B. Constraints

The most obvious major constraint is exporters' unfamiliarity with the French market. Canadian companies that have

succeeded are the ones that have taken the trouble to visit "on the ground" and get a feel for the market, meet potential customers and, above all, invest time and effort in marketing campaigns.

French consumers may buy less, but they insist on high-quality, top-of-the-line or luxury products. For everyday goods, the market can generally be satisfied from within Europe, and there is little room for competition from North America. Virtually all of the major success stories for Canadian exporters in recent years have involved high-quality products.

C. Objectives

By the year 2000, Canada should be able to double the value of its exports of consumer goods to France, to \$150 million. This will require promoting sectors in which Canada has developed excellence: toys, cultural products, native handicrafts, sporting goods (especially for winter sports), scents and perfumes, furniture and fashion accessories.

We should also take greater advantage of the tremendous store of goodwill resulting from the close to 465,000 French visitors coming to Canada every year.

Promising Sectors

Cultural products, toys, pearls and precious stones, furniture, apparel, scents and perfumes, sporting goods, recreational products (snowmobiles, personal water craft, boats, trailers and camping equipment) and building materials (hardware supplies).

