

## The Marketing Trip

# Mexico: Look Before You Leave

**M**exico is an exciting and fast-growing market, happily not far from Canada, and as it opens its borders to liberalized trade, Canadian exporters are moving quickly to capture a share of the new opportunities. To compete effectively in this new market, it will be necessary to go there, make contacts, investigate and assess the situation first hand.

But a marketing trip is an expensive endeavour, and to make it cost-effective, it is worth doing a good deal of homework before you pack your bags. Some valuable sources of information are available at home, and for little or no cost. To make best use of your time in Mexico, it is well worth exploring these channels first.

The local library will be able to provide basic, general information, through periodicals or other publications on business, marketing, and industry. Larger libraries may carry the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) reports on specific economies, including Mexico's.

Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) produces a number of excellent publications available through InfoEx. These range from market overviews to sector-specific studies. "Partnering for Success," a good overview and analysis, has recently been updated in a second edition. DFAIT has also recently published "Where to Find...? Sources of Info on the Mexican Market," which includes a wide-ranging and comprehensive list of information sources.

For more specific marketing studies, there are some surprising sources. Major accounting firms and banks have, in many cases, representation in Mexico and often produce their own publications offering analysis of subjects including market size, tax and legal issues, labour relations, financing assistance available. Local branches or offices can advise as to what a specific institution can and will offer.

International Trade Centres (ITCs), located across Canada, are an ideal initial point of reference. The ITCs normally have officers specifically responsible for Mexico and Latin America who can direct your research and provide preliminary information and detailed market research. The ITCs serve as guides to the sometimes confusing sources of government assistance, and can tell you where to find things you may only suspect exist.

The InfoEx Centre is the basic entry

point for DFAIT's trade information network. InfoEx has an automated fax-back system to provide companies with information on Access North America programs and initiatives. The system offers a catalogue from which a company can select documents or details it requires. There is a voice menu to provide the caller with the toll-free InfoEx number (see box below) for additional information.

Bancomext, the export bank of Mexico, has three Canadian offices, in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Bancomext produces an importer/exporter directory of Mexican firms, and holds listings of the industry associations in Mexico to which, by law, every Mexican company must belong. Bancomext also has a library in Mexico, with about half its extensive list of titles available in English. (Sectoral studies are available in Spanish only).

The Conference Board of Canada produces a variety of publications on economic conditions in Mexico, and has an alliance with its Mexican counterpart, which ensures up-to-date and accurate findings.

Industry Canada also publishes a wide range of sectoral studies.

Most provincial governments maintain a ministry responsible for international trade and development, which can assist with market information, introductory publications, contacts and networking.

The U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Mexico offers a fax-back service that encompasses sector-specific and overview documents as part of its Trade Data Bank.

These are only a few of the many sources available, and most of them will suggest further avenues of research as you delve deeper into your material. In order to assess whether you and your firm can enter the Mexican market successfully, it is necessary to start at the beginning, doing the basic homework that will help you get your bearings when you finally get off the plane in Mexico.

**"Some valuable sources of information are available at home..."**

## Access

**Access**, the newsletter of the new Access North America (ANA) program, is published monthly and only in *CanadExport*. Subscribers to *CanadExport* automatically receive **Access**. It examines opportunities for Canadian businesses, introduces some Canadians already operating in the Mexican market, profiles specific sectors, and notifies readers of forthcoming events related to doing business in Mexico.

Your feedback is welcomed; correspondence should be sent to **Access**, BCT, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0G2, or by fax, (613) 992-5791.

For further information on the program, or a copy of a brochure on Access North America, contact InfoEx at 1-800-267-8376 (In Ottawa 944-4000).

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