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JANUARY 1, 1997  
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# THE TRADE POST

*On With  
 the Snow  
 This Is It!*



**HAPPY  
 NEW YEAR!**

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*The Trade Post is a quarterly newsletter for members of the Trade Commissioner Service. Its purpose is to facilitate discussion of matters of common interest and concern among members. Please send your contributions and comments to TBO via E-Mail, or facsimile at (613) 996-8688.*

## An Interview with Kathryn McCallion

BY *Andrée  
 Cooligan*

*Kathryn E. McCallion is the Assistant Deputy Minister-International Business and Communications, and Chief Trade Commissioner. Her last assignment abroad was as High Commissioner in Kingston, Jamaica.*

Min. des Affaires extérieures  
 JAN 6 1997  
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**TP:** *Congratulations on your new role as Canada's Chief Trade Commissioner. How is the view from where you are sitting?*

**KM:** Well, I've been here a few months, so it's still very much a challenge trying to figure out where we are and where we should be going. My role is bigger than just trade. I have to find coherence between the elements of the job package. Team building is something I'm good at, culture has a trade element, communications is everywhere, but the passport office feels somewhat isolated. On the trade side, I inherited a program that had been put in place by my predecessors: The Team Canada concept at home. The challenge is still there, though I see the approach as being somewhat different. My approach is to build on our strengths, and our strength is the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) abroad. It's where we occupy the space, it's where we are the best, and it is what we should be concentrating on.

**TP:** *MINT is proposing new direction for the TCS. How would this new direction affect the TCS inside Canada, and outside Canada?*

**KM:** The Minister has asked me to do a few things. First, to look at the potential, over time, for the international business function to be a special operating agency or an alternate service delivery mechanism. This is a long term process.

Second, in the short term, and more importantly for us who work in the department, is to reinvigorate the TCS. The Minister feels that the profile of the TCS isn't what it used to be. It seems to have faded away in the amalgamation of the country desks. In my view, a really good Trade Commissioner is somebody working abroad. It is not as easy as some may think to transform yourself into a reactive desk officer at home vis-à-vis being a very strong, proactive Trade Commissioner abroad.

The third is to focus on new skills for the Trade Commissioners. We provide training to them, then they should be back out there, for example, seeking investments. Things like market intelligence versus market information. In the world of Internet, telling a company that it's 30 degrees in Mexico city is wasting our time and energy. Telling a company that "you must see Mr. X. He's the

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Trade Post - Le Troc Commercial  
 des délégués commerciaux(TBO)