Some Best Practices from Hong Kong

In anticipation of changes in the delivery of services to our clients, we thought that these practices, which are being used in Hong Kong, would be of interest to our readers. Peter MacArthur, Deputy Director, Policy and Strategic Planning Division (TBX), served in Hong Kong from 1994 to 1996 and supplied us with the list.
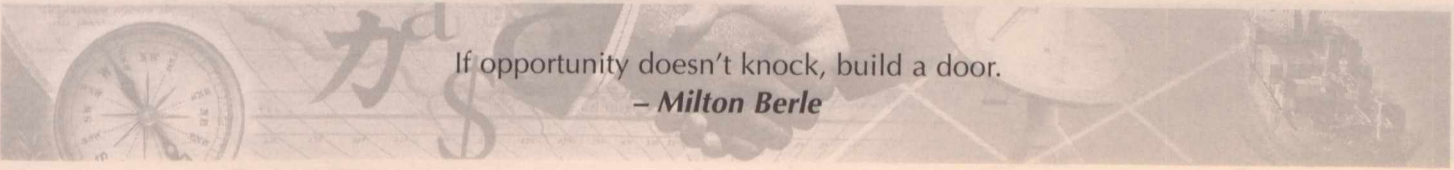
1 **Established the post's own bilingual Internet Web site, which became the Commercial Division's virtual "Information Centre" for trade/investment inquirers, both Canadian and local.** By placing introductory messages and over 20 market information products on-line at **www.canada.org.hk**, which are hot-linked to other Asian/Canadian business sites, Hong Kong provides more accessible, faster service and deflects much of the casual traffic that ties up limited, costly resources at many posts abroad.

2 **Used local WIN Exports to enhance our ability to electronically manage local business card information by permitting e-mail/fax to local contacts.** In addition, the increasing use of WIN Exports as a client-management system allows posts to be more responsive, timely and accurate in servicing Canadian clients while establishing better corporate memory.

3 **Acted as a neutral, strategic convenor to organize Joint Action Groups (JAGs) of local business people who represent Canadian product.** Agents, distributors and representatives of Canadian regional offices meet regularly to co-ordinate strategy and leverage seed money to develop critical mass in local marketing.

4 **Invested PIBD funds in post outreach and networking operations.** The first budget allocation allowed officers to participate in business events such as conferences/seminars aimed at gathering market intelligence and information and meeting influential, knowledgeable local contacts. The second PIBD project was designed to top up our limited travel budgets and get officers away from their desks and into regional markets beyond Hong Kong, where our clients are.

5 **Directed PIBD funds to purchase specialized market information to upgrade the post's commercial library for use by staff and visitors.** This information was shared with other posts in the region. It was complemented by funding of a pilot test of a recommended on-line database, which proved useful to posts prior to the availability of the new SignetCD/WinFrame service.

If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door.
– Milton Berle