

Equipment Services

The concept of retaining professional advisors to plan equipment purchases, maintenance and utilization is new to Mexico. Imaginative packaging will therefore be necessary to sell this approach. There is also a recent trend towards contracting out services that are dependent on expensive equipment, such as magnetic imaging. Both areas provide interesting opportunities for Canadian companies.

Equipment repair is handled first by original equipment warranties and then by in-house maintenance departments at each institution. However, complex problems are often referred to manufacturers, and there is an opportunity for specialized repair services.

Sellers of sophisticated equipment are usually required to provide training as part of the sale. There is a potential market for more comprehensive training that focuses on the effective use of the overall equipment infrastructure.

Waste Management

Nearly all hospital solid wastes in Mexico end up in municipal landfill sites. The hazards involved have been recognized by the relevant authorities. But the creation of proper waste management systems will require the imposition of more detailed standards combined with the development of an appropriate infrastructure.

A few Mexican companies are capable of supplying technologically-advanced equipment, but there are several constraints. Air pollution standards sometimes interfere with the use of incineration equipment. Some hospitals are reluctant to use special containers for sharp instruments because there have been cases of *pepenadores*, garbage pickers, hauling them away from municipal garbage dumps.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the management of medical waste will gradually become an important priority. The most successful products

and services will be those that meet the price, quality, installation and after-sales service requirements of Mexican customers.

Training Services for Health Care Professionals

The increasing availability of computers in Mexico is opening a market for training doctors to access information and to streamline their medical practices. Teleconferencing and interactive training provide good opportunities for international medical training and distance education. There are also excellent prospects for the provision of training for nurses, paramedics and first aid instructors.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

All hospital construction projects, whether public or private, require approval from the *Secretaría de Salud (SS)*, Secretariat of Health. This approval is based on a combination of medical and architectural criteria. It is also contingent on prior approval from the relevant state or the *Departamento del Distrito Federal (DDF)*, Department of the Federal District, health authorities.

The planning and construction process involves three steps. First, the need for a particular hospital is identified and a feasibility study prepared. This may involve the participation of consultants. Second, the project proposal is approved by the General Coordination of Construction, Maintenance and Equipment division of SS. And finally, detailed specifications are developed and approved.

If the project is public, tenders will be issued. If it is private, the specifications will be handed over to the project developer.

MARKET ENTRY STRATEGIES

Canadian companies that have entered the Mexican market have usually done so by first participating in congresses, conferences or trade

shows to make contact with potential customers and partners. Most companies have found that a permanent local presence is essential, because Mexicans like to do business with people they know. Partnering is an effective way to achieve this, whether it is through an agent, a representative, a joint venture or some other form of strategic alliance.

Purchasing Practices

Most purchases within the *población abierta*, open system, and the *población derechohabiente*, premium-based system are made pursuant to a public tender process and governed by the federal *Ley de Adquisiciones*, Purchasing Act. This is the legislation controlling all federal government procurement of goods and services, including purchases within the National Health Care System. The legislation requires that all purchases, except for limited discretionary budgets, must be acquired through a public tender process.

Purchases within the private system are made according to the purchasing practices of each hospital. Each one must be approached individually in order to promote the use of a given service.

Tender Notification

Calls for tenders are published in the *Diario Oficial*, the National Gazette, and in at least two national daily newspapers. The notification provides the bid reference number along with details of the good or service to be purchased, the cost of the bid documents and where and when they can be obtained. It is therefore necessary to establish a mechanism for scanning the appropriate publications on a daily basis. A special newspaper for the publication of public tender notices is planned for 1995.

Buying Cycles Within the National Health Care System

The annual buying cycle within the National Health Care System

