

As a rule, a Canadian fish and seafood exporter should avoid assuming too many obligations vis-à-vis the purchaser. Similarly, offers should include time and quantity limits. The EU may set minimum import prices for some fisheries products.

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Very few French people speak foreign languages, and accordingly it is preferable to communicate with them in French. For purposes of an initial contact we recommend a formal letter of introduction, sent by mail and accompanied by a brochure in French if at all possible. If the brochure is in English, it is essential to enclose a typewritten sheet containing a translated summary of its contents.

In France, the telephone is used differently than in Canada. Calls are screened, so that one does not reach the person one asked for, but often a secretary. It is best not to make initial contacts by telephone. Most firms now have fax equipment, but not all of them are in the habit of using it. French firms should be encouraged to communicate with you by fax.

French businessmen expect to receive replies to their requests, and we encourage Canadian exporters to provide them. This is an inexpensive means of initiating a business contact with a view to a present or a future sale. As a first step, the Canadian exporter might ask the French firm for references and make enquiries of the Embassy regarding the firm's reputation.

As with any type of business activity, it is advisable for Canadian exporters to visit their main customers once a year. Trade fairs and exhibitions are useful occasions for this purpose. We advise foreign visitors to tour a French supermarket and a French specialty store. This is a practical way of obtaining a first-hand look at the goods available and becoming acquainted with the food sector in France. Addresses - for Paris - are available through the Embassy.

Regardless of whether you produce a basic commodity or a processed product, you should definitely consider exhibiting at trade fairs and exhibitions, or at any rate attending them as a visitor. There are three major European events of this type:

- . SIAL (le Salon international de l'alimentation [international food fair]), in Paris in even-numbered years;
- . ANUGA, held in Cologne (Köln), Germany, in odd-numbered years;
- . FERIA ALIMENTARIA, held annually in Barcelona, Spain.

The Canadian government organizes national stands at these fairs, and private firms are invited to share space to exhibit their products.