

a valuable source of competitive information, both because of their knowledge of the business and because of their exposure to international customers, competitors, technologies and government initiatives.

- **Local government representatives** (e.g. ISC, Trade Centre Representatives), are valued as contacts for information government programs and activities, and as a point of referral for specific information from experts in other areas of government.

Personal contacts are well positioned to meet the information and delivery needs of users because they offer up-to-date information that responds to specific needs in an accessible manner.

**Hard copy sources.** Business people mentioned a number of publications as sources of information:

- Several people mentioned that they receive *Canada Export*, External Affairs and International Trade's newsletter for exporters. Most found the information on major contracts and opportunities to be useful, but felt that the time sensitivity of such information may not lend itself to this format. *"They listed some Hungarian contacts who were interested in forming relationships and buying stuff and we contacted one or two and they said 'That was a couple of years ago. We've already formed our relationships.'"* One participant also mentioned that the information is too broad to be of any use to his business.
- A couple of participants receive newsletters on business opportunities from the U.S. Department of Commerce.
- Business people obtain information on government programs through "handouts" (e.g. brochures, booklets). In general, they felt that this information is not as time sensitive (as sales leads) and, therefore, is suited to a hard copy format.

In general, participants felt that these hard copy sources lacked both the specificity and the currency to satisfy their need for sales and competitive information. They were viewed as suitable for information which is of "general interest" or which is not time-sensitive (e.g. government policies, plans and programs).