

Conducting Business in Italy

When you arrive in Italy, it is advisable to contact the trade commissioner to check for any last minute changes in schedules or appointment venues.

It is preferable to make appointments with prospective Italian business contacts. However, some of your new contacts may not follow appointment schedules too rigorously. Be at the appointed place on time, but be prepared for a short delay.

At your meetings, be well-informed about your competition in Italy, pointing out the advantages of your products using local terms and standards (i.e., currency, metric units, etc.). If your potential client cannot make an immediate comparison, valuable time and continuity may be lost. Quote prices in Canadian dollars if you have not had time to convert prices into lira.

Once you have visited all your potential agents/buyers/etc., and have made your presentations and offers in the most professional and complete manner possible, always confirm your quotations by telex upon your return to Canada. Italians (and Western Europeans in general) do not always make immediate decisions, at least by Canadian standards. Patience and persistence must be your strategy. Through direct personal contact and through the trade commissioner, you must persevere. Any lapse in your interest will certainly produce the same on the part of your Italian contact. Bear in mind that your prospective business partner has not seen you before and is interested in determining how serious you are about entering and staying in the Italian market. While this may take several visits, Canadians are often pleasantly surprised to find that business contacts once established in Italy are lost much less often than in many other world markets.

National Regulations

Customs. Definitive information on Italian tariffs is available only from Italian Customs authorities. However, preliminary data on duties, value-added taxes and other market access questions can be obtained from the European Community Trade Policy Division of External Affairs and International Trade Canada.

This information should be confirmed with Italian Customs in advance of shipment.