

Canada's competitiveness will also depend on improvements in its domestic market. A market in which our consumers demand the best. A market in which our suppliers can provide the best. A market in which neither consumer nor suppliers are hamstrung by outmoded intellectual property laws or regulations that no longer serve a public policy purpose. A market that is not fragmented by internal barriers to trade. What more can be done to help create an efficient domestic market for your companies?

And finally, the fifth area where Canada can improve its ability to compete is in opening opportunities for trade. Despite the proximity to the enormous markets in the U.S. and the Pacific Rim, many Canadian firms find it difficult to establish a presence abroad. For example, fully two-thirds of Canada's 40,000 manufacturing companies do not export -- even to our closest trading partner, the United States. A notable exception is the information technology industry. Since this industry has grown up at the same time as globalization, many IT companies have developed the know-how to prosper in a global marketplace. They have established on-the-ground marketing and distribution networks. They have a clear understanding of the markets they serve.

How can more software firms learn from the experience of these companies? How can better market intelligence and cultural awareness be obtained about specific markets? How can business make better use of existing global marketing channels? Are there other innovative marketing techniques you can employ?

These, then, are five areas which we in Canada must improve to enhance our ability to compete in the global marketplace. Each of these five -- learning, science and technology, investment, domestic markets and trade -- is important. None is revolutionary. Many other countries are facing similar challenges.

What is revolutionary is the change in attitude required to build a more productive and prosperous Canada. And that is why the Government of Canada will soon launch the Prosperity Initiative: to provide a forum in which Canadians can plan together and work together to prepare for the challenge of the global economy. We want and need Canadians to participate in the Prosperity Initiative on many different levels.

Later today I will meet with the Board of Directors of the newly reconstituted Information Technology Association of Canada. I look forward to a thorough and informative discussion of the specific concerns of your industry. But your individual companies can contribute as well. Support the points that the Directors will make today. Make sure that your companies become involved in the Prosperity Initiative.