the same way we do...they have a different perspective."

➤ Large businesses are more inclined to have the necessary resources and the network (e.g. foreign subsidiaries) to gather information. *"We have a broad network around the world of our own resources that we can rely on."*

On the other hand, small business people indicated that gathering information on foreign markets can be a significant challenge. The following comments reflect some of the hurdles faced by small business people:

➤ *"Large businesses can do the calling a lot easier than us because they have the departments that look after that sort of thing...whereas the small guys have two or three owners and they're all busy."*

➤ *"We're a small company and, when decisions are made, we move very quickly. But it's getting tougher and tougher (to gather information) now that we're getting into countries where they don't speak English. Sometimes they get frustrated and hang up. I don't get what I want and I have to speak to a lot of people."*

Unlike large businesses, small businesses do not have ready access to international networks of people and resources.

Role in the Organization

Senior executives, as well as small business owners, were sensitive to the amount of time required to access the information. Typically, business people in all of the group discussions mentioned that they "pick up the phone" when they want information, rather than spend time searching through documents or other sources.

Business Sector and Nature of Business Transactions

Information needs tend to be business-specific rather than generic to broad sectors. In particular, many small businesses occupy narrow market niches. Accordingly, broad, sectoral information is of general interest, but does not usually facilitate business development.

There is also a distinction between those companies engaged in manufacturing activities and those which offer commercial services. Participants from commercial service companies (e.g. consultants, engineers) tend to bid on "one-off" projects, and require project-specific information. The following comments demonstrate this: