

way for you, provided you have kept them informed of your activities in that market. Specifically, the trade commissioner can:

- Intercede on your behalf when problems of duties, taxes or foreign exchange arise.
- Advise you in settling trade disputes.
- Advise you on recovery of overdue accounts.
- Maintain contact with your agent and provide him with support and encouragement.

Generally, the Trade Commissioner Service can be your eyes and ears in the local marketplace. However, in your own interest, you should make sure that the assistance you seek can reasonably be provided by the Service.

### **What the Trade Commissioner (Service) Cannot Do**

- Sell your product. He can research the market for you, introduce you to buyers, recommend agents and set up appointments. From that point on, it is up to the exporter to sell.
- Be present at all your negotiations when you are closing a deal. But he can recommend the legal and technical experts to help you.
- Serve as your translator or interpretation service. But he will suggest names of good translators and interpreters you could use.
- Act as your agent. Do not expect the trade commissioner to spend three days a week marketing your product. He won't.
- Train or police your agents. He can maintain a liaison with them and encourage them but it is up to you to ensure your agents are trained and are working well.
- Be your debt collector. He can advise you on recovery of overdue accounts but cannot do the collection for you.

- Act as your travel agent. Travel and accommodation should be arranged through a commercial travel agent well in advance of your trip.

The extent to which the Trade Commissioner Service can assist a novice exporter depends greatly on the amount of information the trade office has about the exporting firm and its products and the ongoing contact that is maintained with the post. As well, it is important for the export firm to keep the trade office informed of its activities in that territory, plans for future development, advance notice of proposed exhibits or sales visits to the country and any other product or company information that could have a bearing on export sales. You should ask also that the trade office keep you informed of the conditions and needs of their territory and their assessment of future requirements as they relate to your product.

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**Bon Voyage!**