

THE FIRST DIY MISSION TO JAPAN (20-29 September 1985)

The objectives of the first DIY mission were to undertake an initial overview of the Japanese market and to identify possible market niches for Canadian DIY products. The six Canadian mission members were marketers of the following DIY products: wallcoverings, parquet flooring, tongue and groove plank natural wood paneling, a consumer line of silicone products, garden hand tools convertible to upright, parts and fittings for built-in central vacuum systems, and cutting tools.

The Canadian Embassy in Japan arranged the mission's programme. It began with an introduction to Japan's DIY market and industry presented by the Japan DIY Association. This briefing took place at the 8th Japan DIY Show in Tokyo. Coincidentally, this was also the first year this show would go international. The Japan DIY Association identified their main objective as building Japanese consumer awareness of the Japanese consumer's ability to repair or remodel home interiors by their own efforts. To this end the Association gears the first day of the Japan DIY Show to trade. The next two days were devoted to consumer end-users: educational tools are used to achieve the Association's main objective of informing and instructing the consumer.

The Association continued its briefing by pointing out that because of increasing labour costs, the Japanese attitude towards "do-it-yourself" activities was changing. A growing push towards the Beaver Lumber/Home Hardware type store in Japan was also evident (see Appendix F which was the Association's handout on the DIY industry in Japan).

This briefing was followed by a tour of the Japan DIY Show and then of the nearby Harumi Exhibition Home Centre. This Centre exhibits and displays a variety of housing-related products ranging from building materials and components to housing fixtures and interior goods. It includes thirteen model homes, each designed and furnished by leading pre-fab house manufacturers. Information services such as consultation on housing and financing, and catalogue delivery, are also provided. Coupled with seminars and meetings, the Japanese consumer is thus provided with the latest housing information.

Mission members then visited a Tokyu Hands Store (see Appendix G: Article from March 1987 Trade Scope).