

## A Meeting of the Minds - Trade Systems Advisory Group

Imagine more than 40 representatives from posts, headquarters and Team Canada Inc brainstorming for 3 days straight on the information age, the Trade Commissioner Service, and our information systems. Factor in that this group heard from experts in the area of customer service and electronic business; saw leading edge electronic service delivery products; and had in hand the opinions, views and ideas of over 40 posts on the future of information systems in our organization. The goal? A considered, representative, client- and post-oriented strategy for e-business in the Trade Commissioner Service. Too good to be true? Think again...

A mix of trade commissioners, commercial officers and commercial assistants - 2/3 of whom were from posts and 1/3 from Canada — met from March 27 to 29 in Ottawa. They examined the “E-business Strategy” drafted on the basis of the WIN Fast Forward Consultation process. The discussions held were very thought-provoking. The challenge that faces the Trade Commissioner Service as a whole is, what are the information tools that will help us to offer value in a fast changing world where information is cheap and readily available?

To see what the Trade Systems Advisory Group had to say, go to “Trade Systems Advisory Group Proceedings” on the Tools of the Trade Web site.

## A Vision for the Future - A Strategy for E-business in the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service

We live in a fast paced, ever-changing world where information is abundant. Technology has revolutionized virtually every aspect of our lives, and nowhere is this more evident than in the way we do business. Increasingly, goods, services and information transactions occur on-line. Businesses that ignore this trend fall behind and eventually disappear. The clients of the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service are not exempt, and so, neither are we.

Our clients' needs are changing as a result of the information age. They need a more sophisticated set of eyes and ears in the local market, one that collects intelligence not readily available via the Internet. Our clients are looking to do more and more business with us electronically. To meet these challenges and to

ensure that we are proactive, we need a plan for incorporating e-business into our work.

The development of this plan began with the WIN Fast Forward consultations, and continued with the meeting of the Trade Systems Advisory Group. The E-business Strategy combines the input of posts with best practices in industry. It sets out, in plain language, the information tools that the Trade Commissioner Service needs in order to continue to add value for its clients.

To see the future of the Trade Commissioner Service, and to understand how we are going to get there, go to **E-business Strategy** on the Tools of the Trade Web site. Because... the future is now.