

Respect for Risk-taking

The shift in emphasis towards market intelligence and information-driven activities will be best accomplished in an environment which encourages the assumption of calculated risks and group learning from review of both positive and negative experiences. The staff believe that this would be more likely to occur if management was more tolerant of initiatives that, with benefit of hindsight, turn out to be mistakes.

Team Problem Solving

The project team held a series of discussions with the staff of the Commercial and Economic Section at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City and with at the consulates in Monterrey and Guadalajara. In the process they identified a long list of factors that were seen to be interfering with productivity and motivation among the staff. They included several categories of problems:

- **Customer Problems.** There is a general lack of understanding about who the organization's clients are, and which requests for service should receive priority. Clients are often unprepared and have unrealistic expectations about the services they will receive.
- **Team Canada Problems.** The staff believe that there are too many companies arriving in Mexico that are not export-ready. At the same time, the staff are generally not adequately prepared with information about the capabilities and structure of Canadian industries.
- **Management and Administration Problems.** Many workshop participants expressed the view that administrative inefficiencies make them less effective in their work. Most of the specific complaints concern duplication of effort or the failure to clearly define responsibilities.
- **Data Access Problems.** Virtually every member of the staff reported some problem with obtaining information on Mexican companies and contacts. There was a general view that a better contact management system was needed to support more sharing of information among the staff.
- **Other Problems.** Some staff said that their work was hampered by the difficulties of working in three languages and distractions from trade promotion work caused by requests for immigration information or assistance. In some cases distractions are caused by the lack of an efficient filtering system for incoming calls and visitors.

The staff suggested dozens of potential solutions to individual problems. The project team did not evaluate these suggestions individually. Instead it considered the underlying problems as factors in the design of the new business model. The project team believes that effective teamwork, supported by a customer service orientation, leadership, and information sharing will effectively solve these kinds of problems as they occur.