

connected to telecommunication networks, a special approval by a state authority is required. Meeting these standards and specifications requires time, patience, and preferably local assistance. The regulations to achieve the approvals have been liberalized and simplified. Also the liberalization and standardization policy of the Single Market of the European Community should open the German market further as the standards will apply in all Member countries. A product approved in one EC country should be accepted automatically in all of the other states without further testing or certification.

Marketing in Germany is not a simple undertaking. In addition to the language differences, the market operates quite differently from North America. Germany is highly decentralized, and the business cultures vary from region to region. Canadian firms should tackle (and succeed in) the U.S. market before coming to Germany. The rough and tumble of the U.S. marketplace will be good experience for Germany; and success in the U.S. is a good selling point in Germany.

Canadian firms are strongly recommended to establish an identifiably German presence either through teaming with an existing German firm or by establishing an independent German subsidiary. Many Canadian software firms have adopted this latter option despite the higher initial costs. By doing so they have clearly indicated their commitment to the German market (a move much appreciated by German customers), and have established an organization that will be dedicated to the company's interests. Teaming with a local organization also can be successful; however, the Canadian company must work closely with the German partner to ensure the products are properly promoted and the German company gives the Canadian company due consideration.

German clients will expect that marketing, contractual, and technical documents all be in the German language. A local presence can ensure that the translations are done properly and in accordance with German laws and business practices.

Germany is very decentralized industrially. There is no single centre of the German computer industry. The states of Bavaria (capital: Munich) and Baden-Wurttemberg (capital: Stuttgart) are both recognized throughout Germany as having concentrations of German and foreign firms in the computer sector. Munich is the home of two major computer trade shows - SYSTEC and SYSTEMS. Canadian firms seeking a location for their German office may wish to choose one of these two cities (Munich has direct air links with Canada), or another city in Germany close to a concentration of their major customers (e.g. Frankfurt's financial centre).

Trade shows are important features of the German computer scene. Canadian companies should choose carefully in which shows they will exhibit, but exhibit they must as the German customers expect foreign firms to show their commitment to the market through such participation.