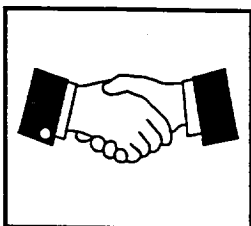


These concepts have led to a strong respect for government in Singapore. Government is seen as part of the solution, not the problem. *Singaporeans almost never criticize their government, and will expect the same of visitors.*



REPRESENTATION

Singapore, an expanding market in its own right, is a springboard for trade with other South East Asian countries, and in particular, the other members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Singapore's central location in the region, its excellent regional and international transportation and communication links, and its role as an entrepot into ASEAN, make it an ideal offshore export base or regional headquarters site.

Canadian companies considering southeast Asia as a long-term possibility should carefully choose a trading method suitable for regional as well as domestic marketing. Companies should investigate the effectiveness that a potential agent or distributor has in neighbouring countries. There is increasing sensitivity, especially in Malaysia and Indonesia, of foreign companies using Singapore agents to sell to them.

Exports can be handled through an established trading firm with branches in Singapore and throughout Singapore's marketing area. If substantial volume is involved, you may consider opening a branch office. The majority of Canadian exporters employ a Singapore agent, often a requirement to sell to Singapore Government departments, agencies, and corporations.

The strength of your company and its products can depend on the competence, credibility, and image of the local representation. *The key to securing sustained business in local and regional markets is ensuring that the chosen representative is familiar with the business practices and end users in the target market.* It is often necessary to rely on the agent to arrange appointments as well as process documents through official channels.

Business development requires positive initial contacts, the establishment of credentials, and patience. Frequent visits to Singapore allow a contact to be assured that the seller does want his business. The agent should be supported by product knowledge, technical support, and updated information and material.

The selection of an agent should be approached with some caution. The law for contracts and agencies in Singapore is similar to the British system. Agreements are governed by the common law of contracts. It may be best to appoint a representative for a one-year trial period, then confirm the appointment if performance is satisfactory.