

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Many Canadian companies have found that partnerships or strategic alliances with local companies are an effective way of entering the Mexican market. Vertically-integrated companies that want to fill gaps in their product lines are often good prospects.

Mexican importer/distributors may be interested in switching to Canadian products, provided that the necessary marketing support will be provided.

Sales employees, provided to retail stores by the processors, play an important role in promoting sales. The processed meat market is a price-driven market, and products are sold at the "deli" counters. As much as 2 percent of the product is used as point-of-sale samples. Only 20 percent of the market is considered to be brand-loyal.

TRADE SHOWS

Participation in trade shows is a time-proven method of introducing new products and making contacts with potential customers and partners. There are several relevant shows held regularly in Mexico:

- *Expo-Guadalajara*, held annually in Guadalajara, usually in December;
- *Convención Nacional de Empacadores de Carnes Frías y Embutidos y Exposición Internacional de Proveedores*, a national meat packers' convention and suppliers' exposition held annually during February in Monterrey;
- *Exposición y Convención Nacional de Comercio Detallista*, a national Mexican food and consumer product retailers' convention and trade show held annually during March in Guadalajara;
- *Expo-Alimentos*, a food and beverage industry exhibition held annually during September in Monterrey; and
- *Abastur*, the national salon for the hotel and restaurant industries, sponsored by the International Food Service Manufacturer's Association, held in Mexico City during October.