

Headquarters to Help Posts

An overview of the Info Centre Installation project

The purpose of the Performance Measurement Initiative (PMI) is to renew the Trade Commissioner Service, to enhance its performance, and to provide time for the more "noble" tasks. But what does one do with the unending round of incoming mail and ringing telephones? Delegate that kind of work to others? And why not — under some circumstances.

Over the coming months, we plan to install three Info Centre models in posts that represent different mission sizes. The ultimate goal is to have five successfully tested models of trade information request-management systems, or Info Centres, which other missions can replicate. In short, five efficient, PMI-aligned ways of managing the flow of information, leading to more results, fewer resources, minimal time spent on less-productive requests from clients not ready to export, and more time for value-added tasks.

The installation of an Info Centre has enabled officers in Buenos Aires to spend their time on something other than answering mail (see Vol. 4,

October 1997). As well, an Info Centre was installed in Santiago with very positive results, even in the short term, such as:

- Content of electronic Info Centre available to desk officer in Ottawa, who can now more effectively screen requests from Canada with the same quality of information as provided from the post;
- Increase of 35 to 60 percent in the rate of requests processed directly by Info Centre personnel at a time when the total volume of requests increased by nearly 70 percent;
- Increased quality in content and form of replies. Response time reduced to four days maximum (usually one or two days).

In the upcoming issues of *TCS International*, we will share the results of our project and the possibilities it opens up for better management of your time.

A PAFSO Announcement

It's that time of year again when The Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO) is seeking nominations for the Canadian Foreign Service Officer Awards. The awards were instituted in 1990 by PAFSO as a means of providing peer recognition of exceptional achievement by career foreign service officers.

To nominate someone for an award, send a signed letter or facsimile to PAFSO, answering as fully as possible the following questions:

1. Who are you nominating? Renomination of candidates from previous years will be accepted, but only on the basis of a fresh submission.

2. How has this person displayed his or her exceptional achievement? Please give detailed, concrete examples.
3. Are there other people who could provide supporting testimony? Please provide names, addresses, phone and fax numbers of individuals who could be contacted.

All nominations must be received at the PAFSO office by April 30, 1998, either by fax (613) 241-5911 or by mail to 47 Clarence Street, Suite 412, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9K1. Winners will be announced at a dinner hosted by PAFSO at the National Arts Centre, in Ottawa on June 11.