

Networking

Networking generates personal contacts that may lead to future business operations. This type of activity is essential for generating prospective clients. Although following up on these leads can often be time consuming and may not prosper, one good contact may open several U.S. doors for a Canadian printer. Thus, networking is an excellent route for generating information regarding potential U.S. customers and joint venture partners.

1. Trade Shows

Brian Auty uses this prospecting method extensively. Mr. Auty examines the printed promotional material trade magazines for calendars of events and upcoming trade shows. In addition, he looks for trade shows or potential networking events in geographically focused printing trade magazines, trade magazines of customers in his printed promotional material niche, and newsletters from the Printing Industry Association (PIA), the CPIA, and other associations. At a typical U.S. trade show, Mr. Auty can generate 1,000 to 1,500 marketing leads. He follows these leads by placing them on a mailing list for Auty marketing materials and his firm regularly issues newsletters describing new products or industry developments. While at the shows, Mr. Auty regularly explores the background of a prospect and, if warranted, he will later make a personal call on the key decision makers of that company.

2. Associations

Associations sponsor numerous networking events such as seminars and conferences (see Section 7). For example, the PIA recently sponsored a seminar in Mexico entitled, "How to Sell Printing in Canada." Any person attending this meeting would be a prime candidate for a U.S.-to-Canada joint venture. Even if a Canadian firm was not actively seeking a joint venture, it might find the possibility interesting. However, Mr. Auty was the only Canadian printer present at the event. He believes that Canadian firms are not exploiting association opportunities and cites that he is one of only three CPIA printers who are also members of the PIA, that attend U.S. meetings.

3. Suppliers

U.S. suppliers are also valuable contacts. When Mr. Auty informed his U.S. supplier