

These agencies have worked directly with many thousands of Canadian companies to help them evaluate opportunities and, in many cases, enter Mexican markets. But the available resources have been severely stressed. The Canadian Embassy in Mexico City received in excess of 6,000 enquiries from Canadian companies in 1995.

Team Canada has a major job ahead of it. The number of Canadian companies exporting to Mexico is expected to double over the next few years. The needs of Canadian exporters have become more sophisticated and more diverse. Some companies are experienced exporters with very specific needs for assistance in expanding their Mexican base. Others are small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with excellent products and services but little export experience, which must be exposed to Mexican opportunities, culture and practices. Team Canada's challenge is to use the limited resources available to provide both types of exporter with the support they need and expect.

THE GOAL

The ultimate goal of the Trade Action Plan is to accelerate the entry of Canadian exporters into the Mexican market, and to help them take maximum advantage of opportunities throughout Mexico. This means understanding the needs and expectations of current and prospective Canadian exporters, large and small. It means collecting and disseminating advanced market information and intelligence focussed on emerging opportunities, market dynamics and access issues. It means representing the interests of Canadian companies in Mexico, both collectively and individually. And it means developing the human and technical resources to present Canada's substantial capabilities, in their best possible light, to potential Mexican buyers.

THE PLAN

Our Trade Action Plan for Mexico responds to these challenges and goals with practical measures to help exporters succeed. The essence of the Plan is to provide integrated information about Mexican markets in Canada so that businesses can prepare their export strategies at home. They will then be equipped to take full advantage of the knowledge and skills of the trade commissioners in Mexico. Four main principles underlie the Plan's design and describe a new approach to carrying out the trade commissioner's mandate.

Principles

- A clear distinction between market information and market intelligence. The former can be packaged and disseminated in Canada on a sectoral basis. The latter requires on-the-ground support in Mexico and a detailed knowledge of each company's unique capabilities.