

Trade shows are becoming a less important tool for promoting medical equipment and supplies in the Mexican market. The most significant trade show for medical products, *Expo-Hospital* has been cancelled for 1995.

Canadian suppliers may still consider attending medical trade shows in the southern U.S. These events are well attended by Mexican purchasing entities, especially those who have established relationships with medical equipment manufacturers in that country.

## BEING COMPETITIVE

Canadian companies that have successfully developed a market for their products and services in the Mexican market have reached common conclusions about the factors that lead to success:

- **Time.** Personal relationships are an essential part of doing business in Mexico. Potential exporters must be prepared to invest a great deal of time to building personal trust with potential customers and representatives. Obtaining approval for health care products is also a time-consuming and expensive procedure.
- **Price, Product Potential and Availability.** The *Sistema Nacional de Salud*, National Health Care System, is particularly price sensitive and it will often prefer to buy simpler, less sophisticated goods in comparison to more technologically-advanced and more expensive equipment. The supplier must understand the product's market potential and price it appropriately. It must also demonstrate its ability to deliver the product on schedule.
- **Language and Culture.** Canadian companies must be able to communicate in Spanish with representatives, distributors and clients. Companies should have a Spanish-speaking employee dedicated to the company's Mexican efforts, but some hire consultants for this purpose.
- **Service.** Purchasers are increasingly requiring that successful bidders provide high levels of service. It is not unusual for the client to require that all repairs be made within hours of receiving notice of an equipment failure. A domestic presence, at least through an agent or distributor, is an important competitive advantage.
- **Financing.** Canadian health care service companies should be prepared to offer an attractive financing package. The costs of domestic financing in Mexico are high and innovative financing techniques are very attractive to buyers.
- **Niche Marketing.** Look for the products and services where the Mexican health care system is under pressure to provide better quality, lower cost and increased efficiency. Progressive thinking about the best means of delivering health care in the future will be key to a successful bid.
- **Adapt to Mexican Needs.** A successful introduction of Canadian health care services will take the best of Canadian management techniques and adapt them to the Mexican environment, with full recognition of Mexican ways of doing things.

