

# EXPORT EXPERTS

**F**or first-time exporters, making that corporate decision to export can be a big one.

The closer you come to making that decision, the more nervous you become. That's normal. After all, you're leaving the comfortable, familiar environment of your domestic market to tackle an unfamiliar foreign market. You will do battle against entrenched competitors for customers who don't know your company or your products or services. It certainly can be a lonely feeling.

In reality, you're not alone. Canadians are among the world's leading international traders. Literally thousands of Canadian companies have broadened their horizons and successfully incorporated profitable international sales into their domestic operations. Each of these companies has developed strategies and techniques for selling abroad, and most of them are willing to share their experiences with first-time exporters in areas where they are not in direct competition.

You can also link up to a network of Canadian industry and trade and professional associations. In addition, you can count on assistance from federal and provincial government export trade development programs.

If you feel your time and financial resources for exporting are limited, you may also want to make use of Canadian trading houses. They can undertake exporting on your behalf if the profit margin is wide enough to accommodate this additional cost of sales.

Advice and assistance are readily available to you at every step of the way as you identify your exportable products and services, scout your export markets, design your marketing game plans, organize your banking and financing, and begin your sales campaign.

## Your export team

Once you begin consulting these export-trade professionals, you won't feel so alone. By adding these experts to your company's export team, you'll receive the kind of assistance few companies, regardless of their size or financial strength, could maintain on staff. The initiative to put this team to work when the conditions are favourable rests with you. You are the captain of the team and only you can call the signals.

Many members of Canada's export team provide packages of related services while others concentrate on a single, specific area of export expertise.

### (1) InfoCentre

For all beginners, the InfoCentre is the best starting point. In fact, many veteran exporters in search of specific information or guidance regularly call the InfoCentre, the information centre of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). The InfoCentre acts as your instant guide to all of the export programs and services provided by the federal government.

The InfoCentre provides exporters with the general export overview. It helps you find answers quickly to specific export questions or problems, either by putting you in touch with an expert in DFAIT or by referring you to other sources of help—such as Industry Canada, other federal agencies, provincial governments or private-sector trade associations. Through the InfoCentre you can join the Department's trade information network, WIN Exports, and find out about the best potential markets for your products or services.