



Step 3: Research your Companies

Each trade commissioner should now have a list of companies which they are responsible for researching, contacting, and following up. At this point we must stress one of the key features and reasons for success of a CAI: **it is owned and executed by the trade commissioners themselves.** Trade commissioners should have the flexibility to determine how they manage the contacts. From this point in the process, the trade commissioners should own the initiative. Although we will present guidelines and examples, we also feel that the trade commissioners themselves are in the best place to tailor this approach to meet their specific needs.

Experience shows that successful contacts are achieved when trade commissioners demonstrate to the contact his/her understanding of the *individual* company and its needs. This means conducting preliminary research on each individual company prior to the contact. The research should identify the following :

- ◆ sufficient understanding of the **product or service** to be able to recognize opportunities in your local market;
- ◆ a broad understanding of the company's **business strategy**, especially with regards to international expansion;
- ◆ any information on their **experience in the local or neighbouring markets**, especially any available information on distributor relationships, alliances or joint ventures.

Before you move on:

- ✓ Has each company to be contacted been researched?
- ✓ Does each trade commissioner have an idea of their companies' products, strategy and experience?

Summary of information provided by the VTC and TRIO

Contact profile (contact name and coordinates)

Company profile

- ◆ contact information
- year established
- number of staff
- primary business activity
- language capabilities in the organization

Industry Sectors

Markets abroad

- ◆ active
- interested in actively pursuing
- market strategy

Products and Services

- ◆ description of company and how products and/or services are used
- description of typical end user of products and/or services
- percentage of Canadian value added and Canadian benefits
- company domestic and export experience; export research conducted

Services received by the company

- ◆ type of services received
- posts who delivered services
- dates of services received

The VTC registration form collects information that becomes a company profile in TRIO. In many cases, this form will have been filled out by your target companies, and in others, a quick search of their website can help you fill in the blanks. The exhibit above provides the main headings of information, and the complete profile is available through TRIO.