

Market Development Key to Success

As you have seen, there are many tangible and intangible benefits from the FTA. The elimination of tariffs over the years is a very important achievement, but the U.S. market is a highly competitive arena. It is also a huge seafood import market and competition for market share among suppliers will remain intense.

Admittedly, Canada has maintained a better than 20% share of U.S. imports, nevertheless, there is a need to become more dynamic, more sophisticated in our marketing approach.

Availability of our traditional products at competitive prices alone does not confer a lasting competitive advantage in a new trading environment. It is true that Canada enjoys significant positional advantages in the U.S. over competitors with the FTA in place, but generally, medium and smaller size companies do not know enough about the final consumer of their products. Continued reliance on existing arrangement should not prevent Canadian processors from getting closer to the users of their products. Developing direct communications with decision makers in the U.S. can go a long way in better understanding markets, consumer trends and the business in general.

In order to compete effectively in a changing environment, Canadian processors must adopt today's marketing principles which starts with a profound understanding of consumer needs. Buyers wish to satisfy demand and will be looking for new products and ideas. When the consumer wants variety, new taste experiences, safe and wholesome products, and convenience, the supplier has to come up with the right product.