

To help companies exploit these opportunities, the federal and provincial governments offer a broad range of practical trade support programs and mechanisms focused on the needs of our exporters. Many of you recall Export Marketplace. The stars of Marketplace were our Trade Commissioners, who came back from their posts abroad to meet business people one-on-one. Last March over 140 Trade Commissioners visited 35 cities across Canada and met with over 2,000 companies. Our posts abroad and the companies themselves are following up on the opportunities identified. Results after only six months show that over 25 percent of the companies have made export sales or expect to as a result of this trade initiative.

The global marketplace is large, diverse, and growing. The opportunities are there. But to exploit these opportunities, we need to be aggressive. We need to be alert and above all, we need to be competitive -- in price, in quality, and in the range of products and services we offer.

We must also develop an export state-of-mind. If we can condition ourselves always to think exports and become automatically attuned to export potential, in considering every business venture, we will improve our sales. That's the philosophy of our competition abroad, and it must be ours as well.

It is in this spirit that I'm approaching Export Trade Month. My federal and provincial colleagues as well as numerous businesspeople will be talking to business groups across the country. There will be seminars and workshops, trade shows, incoming and outgoing missions, service club luncheons with export themes and so on. All are intended to foster development of the export state-of-mind.

It would be stating the obvious to say that, to a business, exports mean profits. To the country as a whole, however, exports mean a great deal more. Exports means jobs.

Trade is a cooperative effort. In order to better assist you the businesspeople, governments are getting together and improving the service that we can offer. I am particularly pleased to announce a pilot project involving my Department and the provinces where provincial trade officials will be put in our embassies and consulates around the world. Indeed, British Columbia is the first province to participate in this program and over the next several months B.C. officers will be located in four of our posts. Recognizing the Pacific challenge, the first two officers will be going to Hong Kong and Seoul. This is the first of the federal-provincial cooperative ventures that I would like to see implemented to better assist the international marketing efforts of Canadian business.

I would like to turn for a moment to the Canadian Trade Strategy Canada's Trade Strategy has 3 main objectives:

- to improve Canada's trade competitiveness,
- to strengthen our access to foreign markets,
- to develop more effective international marketing skills