

Evaluation of the International Trade Business Plan

Very few focus group participants were aware of the International Trade Business Plan as a source of information on government plans and activities.

While participants understood the objective of the document as a means of communicating the government's plans in a single source, many felt that this objective was "politically motivated" rather than motivated by the needs of business users. They also felt that the document was best positioned as a "primer" for other government staff.

The information in the document was viewed as "too general" or "too broad" to address business-specific information needs. Most people felt that the activity list and Compendium contained the most useful information, but pointed out that the time-sensitivity of activities lends itself to other means of delivery.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Small business clients said that the government should encourage potential exporters and support those who are active in export markets by delivering information products and services that address their specific needs. This can be done by repackaging existing information or developing new services to address the following perceived gaps:

- **An export intelligence network** that links buyers and suppliers of goods and services, as well as provide competitive information gathered through Canada's embassies around the world.
- **A partner network** that lists Canadian companies interested in joint ventures in international markets.
- **A fax-back service** whereby business clients can request and receive business-specific information by facsimile.