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Technology The Theme—But ...

Strategic Alliances Guide, Video Appeal to All

In the last decade, a rapidly changing competitive environment has fostered a great interest in strategic alliances on the part of technology companies. This has led to the view in some circles that competition in technology-based industries has become a team sport.

Corresponding to the growing interest in alliances has been the realization by many firms that alliances are not easy to form or manage. They can pose a severe challenge to the managerial resources of even the most experienced companies.

To assist Canadian firms in their alliance activities, the Investment and Technology Bureau of Foreign Affairs and International Trade recently produced an instructional video and guide. The video is based on interviews with senior executives of leading Canadian technology firms. The guide provides practical advice on developing and managing alliance relationships. While focused on technology companies the material contained in these products is applicable to companies in all sectors.

The following 12 guidelines for a

successful alliance are derived from this material.

Guidelines for Alliance Success

1. Start with clearly defined goals and objectives — the more narrowly focused the better.
2. Evaluate each potential partner carefully in terms of technical and organizational complementarity, personal chemistry and its other alliance relationships.
3. Take the time to understand the business environment in which a potential foreign partner operates.
4. Ensure that there is commitment at both the senior and operating level to the proposed venture.
5. Use the negotiation process to foster understanding, commitment and a problem-solving attitude as a foundation for the venture.
6. Make sure there are measures in place to protect your company secrets both during the negotiations and the implementation of the partnership.
7. Stay flexible. Recognize that circumstances and markets

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NEW BUILDING PRODUCTS COUNCIL PROMOTES EXPORTS INTERNATIONALLY

Exports of Canadian building products are likely to increase following the recent establishment of the Canadian Building Products Export Council (CBPEC).

Comprised of Canadian building products manufacturers, the CBPEC is an export-oriented sectoral council formed as the result of a joint collaboration of Industry Canada (IC) and the Canadian Exporters' Association (CEA).

In addition to increased opportunities in international markets, CBPEC members will benefit from:

- Listing of products in an *Export Directory*, with distribution worldwide;
- Participation in international building product trade missions

and exhibits;

- Information on sources of export financing, foreign product standards, import documentation requirements, and timely information on market and sales opportunities;
- Worldwide distribution of product information to Canadian Trade Commissioners; and
- Information on international developments affecting Canadian building product competitiveness (e.g. GATT and NAFTA) and impacting upon market opportunities.

As well, the CBPEC will initiate a collaborative approach by publishing and distributing annually a full colour *Canadian Building*

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