

### Gathering Market Information

There are two main obstacles to the expansion of Canadian trade with Mexico: a lack of awareness of Mexican opportunities and a lack of familiarity with the Mexican business culture and practices. The Trade Commissioner Service works with Team Canada to provide information in both these areas. This is accomplished mainly through the *Export i Mexico* series of publications. It includes handbooks on market profiles, business guides and business tools that cover many aspects of marketing, financing and logistical issues in Mexico. In addition, the Department develops practical training tools which are provided to Team Canada and some business organizations. This has already begun to give trade-promotion staff in Mexico the time to devote more attention to value-added research.

Market information for priority sectors is typically obtained from published sources. This means reading newspapers and using the *Diario Oficial*, which is the Mexican equivalent to the *Gazette* in Canada. There is often an interaction between market information and intelligence, since information from published sources may be validated with personal contacts. This kind of activity constitutes value-added market research, as emphasized in the *Trade Action Plan for Mexico*.

The main responsibility for the production and dissemination of market information to Team Canada and the Canadian business community lies with LMR and T-Branch divisions. The Trade and Economic Program in Mexico contributes to its production by providing information mainly at the request of LMR or T-Branch. In the future, these divisions will need to clarify who the information is to be disseminated to and by what means.

### Sharing Networking Information

Information obtained from networking activities will be most effective if it is shared within the team. This kind of market intelligence is often "soft" information, which is not always easily maintained in a structured database. But the team should revise the Department's existing Client Tracking System or develop another information retrieval system such as Lotus Notes®, to ensure that once collected, this information is readily available to team members. The Trade and Economic Program needs to assess the possibilities of alternative database tools, and to decide which one to use. If the Client Tracking System is acceptable, it should be the first choice as it will provide access for DFAIT members in Canada. In addition, the database structure is already developed, thus saving time and energy for the trade officers. If it does not provide all the information needed, the Trade and Economic Program should design a tool to meet the shortfalls.