

an interview with



Duane McMullen, Senior Trade Commissioner, and Pierre Pettigrew, Minister for International Trade

Duane McMullen

What has the New Approach meant for you and your staff?

We love the New Approach. It has given us clarity and defined our bottom line. We now know who are clients are, and who our clients are not.

The New Approach allows us to better serve Canadian clients, who are ready and committed to our market. It has given us a framework to positively allocate our time, to help clients who are ready to be helped, and to refocus those who are not. It has also focussed our work and clarified our role with the client.

Now, instead of wasting time on lost causes, the New Approach lets us do triage. We can say to the client - maybe you're not ready yet. If you want to be in the China market, here's what you need to do. The client may realize they're not interested in China after all, which means we've helped the client make a market selection decision and saved our officer time. This straightforward approach forces clients to realize what they need to do to succeed - and they do it. Now, the client may decide to stick with their original strategy, focussing on, say, Latin America. As a result, our other colleagues have gained a more committed and focused client.

Do you have any best practices to share?

One of my colleagues in Shanghai came up with this best practice. In the old days, we used to promote events with glossy, colour materials, which we would mail to people and then hope for the best. Now we promote by selective email. We create a separate page on our Web site for a particular event and send a scintillating message to interested clients only. A hotlink gives the client direct access to the Web site and we track the hits to measure our exact pick-up ratio. To count as a hit, the client has to download a certain amount of data.

Any other best practices?

The Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) provides excellent training facilities and courses in Ottawa, but we've found that with a little effort, they will fund local training courses as well. You can arrange similar courses offered by CFSI, such as project management, leadership, and negotiations. We've also created our own courses internally and have conducted sessions on a range of topics such as core services using the Horizons Web site for material.

Duane McMullen is the Senior Trade Commissioner for Shanghai. He was recently awarded the 1999 Minister for International Trade Award for Trade Service. A graduate of Queens University Engineering Department, Mr. McMullen was first posted to Korea and then Ottawa's Personnel Division before going on to Shanghai.