
Section Thirteen: Advice from Canadian Sources

13.1 Advice from Trade Commissioners

When Attending a Trade Show

Many firms are taking advantage of trade shows, an activity which ranks among the most important of all marketing vehicles, particularly in the United States. A trade show provides sellers with the opportunity to exhibit products or services, to meet with top buyers in the industry, and to investigate the competition. Trade shows are fast-paced - typically a trade show lasts 2-3 days, during which the sales representative attempts to meet as many buyers as possible, while often in the midst of direct competition.

In interviews regarding trade shows, many of our sources have suggested that firms should:

- 1) return each year to maintain visibility;
- 2) not expect to "make a sale" in the first year;
- 3) remain on their feet and in active conversation throughout the duration of the show;
- 4) observe the practices, exhibits, strategies of competing firms; and
- 5) enhance the aggressiveness and confidence of their approach, in line with general American practices.

Appendix B provides a listing of important trade shows related to the environmental sector. Interested firms may wish to contact appropriate industry associations to find out more topical information on other relevant upcoming trade shows.

Generally, these trade shows are offered on an annual basis, usually during the autumn season. External Affairs and International Trade Canada (contacts are presented in Appendix A) are very active in the trade show area, sponsoring Canadian pavilions at dozens of trade shows each year. Department officials could also be contacted by firms in search of more topical information on upcoming shows.

When Using the Trade Commissioner Service

Canadian engineering firms should have reasonable expectations of what can and cannot be conducted by government officials abroad. While these officials attempt to assist all Canadian companies, they concentrate their efforts on small and medium size companies that are "export ready". There are obviously many such companies in Canada, in numerous industry sectors, and