

COMMERCIAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject: *Honouring commercial confidences*

Rationale: Commercial confidentiality is mostly a judgment call. Respect for trade and investment information is essential to our credibility and our ability to assist Canadian businesses and government.

Guidelines: Some "Dos and "Don'ts" when talking with Canadian companies

Do...

- distinguish between public and privileged information
- be discreet
- follow the "need to know" principle
- confirm/check information
- speak in general terms about Canadian experience
- provide information that has been made public
- provide information about non-Canadian firms
- approve success stories
- know Canadian Access to Information legislation
- use "protected" distribution for sensitive information

Don't...

- mention names of Canadian companies to other Canadian companies
- reveal confidential information to seemingly disinterested parties
- publish data about a firm without their explicit permission
- withhold generally available information
- underestimate ways in which the opposition steals information

Sources: *Memo by John Tennant to TOKYO/All officers, May 10, 1996*

Date: January, 1997