

*Guide to Establish Effective Cross-Cultural Communication and Working Relationships in India*, published by The Centre for Intercultural Training, CIDA. (See Part 3 for ordering information.)

- Indian agents are a vital link in India's complex selling processes. Most Canadian companies find an agent invaluable in guiding them through the maze of regulations and red tape. Find one who is well established in the Indian market and is familiar with the processing and packaging aspects of the food industry. These agents maintain close contact with government officials and decision makers in the industry and obtain advance information regarding potential business opportunities and the competition.
- Arranging for pre-clearance of any item you are planning to import is advisable.
- If you want to test market your product, obtain the necessary approvals beforehand since approval of imports for test marketing is linked to intention to invest.
- Take part in prominent Indian trade fairs related to food processing. A large number of end users and decision makers visit these.
- In addition to competitive price, quality and after sales service, end-users prefer the latest user-friendly machinery with an accompanying training package.
- Ensure that all documentation is complete and very precise, especially for the "carnets" used by many exporters to carry samples across borders and/or to ship demonstration models. This is also true for letters of credit and the wording used to describe goods being imported into India.
- The use of inspections services, such as SGS which has offices in both Canada and India, may be a worthwhile investment to facilitate the acceptance of goods in India and to meet the requirements of an irrevocable Letter of Credit.
- Financial terms should be communicated and/or confirmed in writing. Always indicate a money amount in both numbers and words to avoid any misunderstanding.
- Make sure your letterhead clearly conveys your company name, full mailing address (including "Canada"), telephone, telex, fax and e-mail numbers. If branch offices are listed, be sure to indicate where a response should be directed. Always personally and legibly sign your letters. People like to see who they're dealing with.
- Adjust yourself to the Indian pace of doing business. Delays are common and patience and understanding are essential. Plan on several visits before a decision is made.
- Business relationships in India are highly personal. Indians rarely discuss business with potential partners without first establishing close rapport, trust and confidence.