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Information Communications Technology

HOW DO YOU FIND GOOD LOCAL CONTACTS?

Fernanda (São Paulo): The major ICT trade shows and events are excellent opportunities to approach middle-to-top-level executives for a chat that might lead to a future meeting. Also, nurturing current partnerships, calling on their knowledge about existing distribution channels, as well as new players in the market has proven to be effective. Some of the local associations are extremely active and great organizations to work through to address new contacts.

George (Athens): A number of sources are helpful in finding good local contacts: trade fairs and exhibitions, specialized conferences, the media for sector reviews, specialized magazines and, of course, the “chain reaction effect” (the contact of a contact). In certain cases, a direct approach to the organization involved is also useful and constructive.

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR LOCAL CONTACTS?

Fernanda (São Paulo): Participating in and promoting activities on a regular basis is crucial to a good relationship with local contacts. Following up after a conversation and e-mailing a “thank-you note” after a visit are simple gestures that make a difference. Also, whenever I feel it’s appropriate, I let them know about news that I think might be of interest to them.

George (Athens): Maintaining a good contact is usually a more demanding task, compared to finding a new one. I have found the following to be of service in my daily work: sporadic calls, social occasions (in our case, for example, name days, Christmas and Easter) and embassy events or receptions. I believe that the essential issue is to inspire and establish a relationship of trust and confidence as a reliable partner and interlocutor.

HOW DO YOU KEEP INFORMED ABOUT YOUR CLIENTS IN CANADA?

Fernanda (São Paulo): The new “Export Alert - ICT” prepared by the Market Support Division (TCM), provides concise and relevant information on many Canadian exporters. Another excellent source is Citrix’ Virtual Library, especially Dow Jones Interactive, which I use most often for general information on Canadian companies.

George (Athens): My sources include material from TCM and Industry Canada, newsletters from companies (or, even better, briefings by visiting officials) and personal searches on the Internet.

WHAT TOOLS ARE MOST VALUABLE TO YOU AND WHY?

Fernanda (São Paulo): I have to say the Web is definitively the most valuable one, for its readiness and speed. In addition to the electronic news I receive daily, I rely on my Web folders for reference. I have several bookmarked sites that contain links to magazines, associations, government, legislation and statistics.

George (Athens): The ones I use most frequently are the Internet for research, HORIZONS for support and updates, WIN Exports (both Mission and On-Line) and, last but not least, our dear old e-mail—it’s easy, versatile and fast.