

- Product adaptation necessary to accommodate preferences in taste, quality, colour.
- Special packaging requirements.
- Customary methods of selling.

Distribution Channels

- System of buying. Who is the local importer of your type of product and what is the typical mark-up or commission?
- Normal distribution channels. Are imported goods handled through wholesaler-importers for centralized buying or is the distribution characterized by a cumbersome system involving a series of middlemen?
- Agents or representatives required. The market structure and system of buying will determine whether you need a single, exclusive agency for your product or a number of representatives for different locations.
- Extent of sales promotion support expected by importer/agent and anticipated cost.
- Amount of stock typically carried by importers. Expected frequency and size of shipments.
- Adequacy of carrier services.
- Shipping costs. Are these sufficiently low to allow product to be sold at competitive prices?
- Adequacy and cost of inland transportation to get goods from ports to local markets.
- Possibility of negotiating commodity rates for recurring shipments.

Your market profile should have identified the most promising territory for export of your product as well as the names of potential buyers. However, the best market research includes personal visits. Your first export visit is essentially an exploratory one: to see the marketplace for yourself, to make initial contacts and to develop your market penetration strategy. You will be

able to do this much more successfully if you enter the market with a sound knowledge of how it functions and what its idiosyncrasies are.

Sources of Information

The trade statistics and information required for preparing a market profile are readily available from the Offices of Trade Development of the Department of External Affairs (DEA).

The DEA has a series of booklets called *A Guide for Canadian Exporters*. The booklets are comprehensive and contain geographic, climatic, cultural, economic and market data for specific countries or areas.

Separate booklets have been prepared on selected countries, entitled *Canada's Export Development Plan for . . .*, to assist existing and potential exporters interested in expanding business in that country. Booklets have also been prepared for a variety of commodities and industry sectors.

Updated trade statistics are available through the Statistics Canada publication *Exports by Commodity*. This is a monthly publication that lists trade figures by commodity and country. Statistics Canada will prepare, on request, special tabulations of unpublished data to meet specific needs of users. As well, its library has a comprehensive collection of international trade reports and other trade information from overseas sources.

Comprehensive market information is available from the Trade Commissioner Service of the Department of External Affairs. The focus of these trade offices overseas is Canadian exports and the scope of their services is wide. Some of the assistance available to the exporter through the Trade Commissioner Service is described in the next section of this booklet.

There are numerous other sources of information and assistance available. These include:

Large Experienced Exporters — Be sure to contact particularly those international businesses that export products related to yours, *but not directly competitive*. Ask them about market opportunities and where