

Even before getting on a plane, the prospective exporter can make personal contact with experts on Mexico or Mexican business people here in Canada. Incoming missions and market seminars are continuously being organized by both the Canadian and Mexican sides. Trade missions to Mexico provide another valuable opportunity to gather first-hand information. Finally, there are numerous trade shows held regularly throughout the year in Mexico. Canadian firms can either attend such a show to see what the competition is doing, or exhibit at such a show as part of its promotional activity.

Information on these events can be obtained from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) or one of the other sources listed in Where to Go for More Information, at the end of this publication. In addition, Export *i*, DFAIT's Mexican Knowledge Base, has a catalogue for market publications available with listings of upcoming trade fairs, shows and exhibits.

If there are no missions being organized that suit a firm's needs, it must organize its own trip. In this case, careful preparation is even more critical for success. What is the purpose of the trip:

- to assess the demand for the product or service;
- to evaluate the competition;
- to decide how to market and distribute the product;
- to meet with possible agents, representatives, distributors or local partners;
- to determine what modifications to the product or service may be necessary; or
- to find out what regulatory requirements exist?

Once objectives have been defined, the firm should contact a Canadian trade commissioner or provincial agent general assigned to Mexico. They can be very helpful in providing background information, referrals and introductions.