

of increasing sensitivity, and large potential demand. The most popular products for protection against industrial theft are closed-circuit television systems, metal detectors and electronically-controlled doors, but there are major opportunities for other cost-effective solutions. There is an emerging market for computer software to protect access to sensitive information.

Security Consulting

There are few specialized security consulting companies operating in Mexico. Consulting services are provided mainly by security equipment distributors and public agencies. This suggests opportunities for Canadian security specialists who could form joint ventures with Mexican companies already in the market. The best opportunities will be for companies with knowledge of high-technology solutions.

THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy concerning occupational health and safety is defined and enforced by the *Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS)*, Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare, through its *Dirección General de Seguridad e Higiene*, Safety and Hygiene Division and in accordance to the *Ley Federal del Trabajo*, Federal Labour Law.

The *Dirección General de Seguridad e Higiene* controls the *comisiones de seguridad e higiene*, safety and health commissions, in each company. Any company with more than 20 employees must have such a commission. Each company is responsible for designing and setting up training courses for all employees every year. The commission in each company is responsible for supervising these procedures.

The *Dirección General de Seguridad e Higiene* is also responsible for drafting *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOMs)*, official standards, that specify specific requirements for the work environment. There are six separate *NOMs* governing personal protective equipment and several more concerning other workplace elements such as air quality, noise and vibration.

As of November 1994, Mexican companies that have workers registered in the *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS)*, Mexican Institute for Social Security, are obliged to classify the risks their employees are exposed to according to a published list of criteria. The purpose of this list is to establish the workers' compensation premiums the company will have to pay to the *IMSS*.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The *Secretaría de Gobernación (SG)*, Secretariat of the Interior, through the *Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil*, National Civil Protection System, is responsible for setting safety standards for homes, offices and public buildings. It also organizes emergency reaction programs and public health campaigns. In 1995, it published *Guía Técnica para la Implementación de Programas Internos de Protección Civil*. This is a technical guide to setting up emergency response programs for use by larger organizations.

WEAPONS

The *Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos*, federal firearms and explosives law, regulates the use of weapons. The law does not permit private guard services to carry guns, except by authorization of the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (Sedena)*, Secretariat of Defence. By law, the *Tolete (PR24)*, a baton, is also exclusively reserved for use by police forces. In theory, tear gas is reserved for use by the military. The law does not specifically cover pepper spray and electric-shock guns.

PRODUCT STANDARDS

Many security and safety products are covered by Mexico's *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOMs)*, system of official standards. In these cases, prior to importation a *NOM* certificate must be obtained from the *Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (Secofi)*, Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development. Products must be tested by an accredited Mexican laboratory, although under a phase-out provision, Canadian laboratories will be able to do this in the future.

MARKET ENTRY STRATEGIES

Canadian companies wishing to sell their products in Mexico usually find that establishing a local presence is an essential first step. This is especially important in the safety and security market because prestige is an important purchasing factor. Buyers and distributors who were interviewed for this publication said that Canadian products meet the quality and image requirements to become leaders in the market. As they see it, the main problem is that Canadian companies have too low a profile and have not aggressively promoted their products.

An effective way of establishing a presence in the market is to form strategic alliances or partnerships with Mexican distributors or agents. Distributors compete by offering wider and better product lines to their clients. Free technical assistance, consulting services and training are other important selling features.

TRADE SHOWS

In order to make themselves known, many Canadian companies participate in trade shows and industry conferences. Three annual events are of special interest: