

large international projects without being part of a team of companies, each specializing in a certain aspect of the project. They felt that there is a need for information on potential partners in related businesses (i.e. a list of companies and contacts interested in teaming up with others on large bids).

3.3 Delivery Needs

When designing information products and services for business, it is important to understand the features which must be incorporated into delivery mechanisms, as well as the contents. Participants were unanimous in stating that the information must be:

- **Current.** *"I want to know before the Globe and Mail knows." "I want today's information today." "It has to be updated frequently."*
- **Accurate.** *"If it's not accurate, it can be worse than no information at all."*
- **Accessible.** *"It took me two months to find the information I needed...it's got to be much faster if we're going to be competitive in this world." "If it's an electronic system, it's got to be properly designed. I want to dial up the system, enter my password, there will maybe be three things on there to choose from...do you want to know about business leads, trade shows or whatever...and I only have to push one button and I can print out the latest updates."*

The need for timely, accurate information is driven by today's time-sensitive business environment. Most participants stated that they must act very quickly to take advantage of business opportunities. Timeliness is particularly important in the international business environment because of the number of companies competing and the ability of buyers to satisfy their needs quickly. Information which is out of date can lead to inefficient use of time or money.

In some cases, participants felt that the source needs to provide situation-specific information. By implication, the information source would have to be interactive, responding to questions as they are asked.

3.4 Preferred Format

When asked for their preferred format for accessing the information, participants were mixed in their responses.