
III. Market Entry

Customs Requirements and Regulations

Japan's import quotas, over the past two decades, have largely disappeared and those that remain are concentrated primarily in the agricultural sector. Tariffs are, in general, low, although there are significant exceptions. Tariff calculation is on a C.I.F. basis. Customs procedures, although simplified in recent years, are still found by many exporters to be lengthy. The Japanese authorities claim that efforts are being made to further improve procedures. Customs brokers can provide more detailed information. As well, the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, or the Japan Trade Development Division (PNJ) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) can be of assistance in these matters.

Japan has extensive regulations covering health and sanitary requirements for imports of plant, animal and food products and enforces them strictly. Lengthy quarantine periods are required for some products. Exporters should consult closely with their agents or the importer regarding such regulations. Labelling and market requirements are not particularly onerous, although certain products (e.g. food, drugs) are subject to special regulations. In many cases, labels specific to the Japanese market can be attached after the item has cleared customs, but before sale.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce can issue, for a fee, a "Carnet" which will permit the temporary importation of commercial samples or professional equipment without payment of duties or posting of bonds. All goods listed on the carnet must be re-exported. Further information regarding the Carnet System can be obtained from Canadian Chamber of Commerce offices in major cities.

Intellectual Property - Patents and Trademarks

Japan is a party to the Berne, Paris and Universal Copyright Conventions and the Patent Cooperation Treaty. While on paper the Canadian and Japanese patent systems are similar and growing closer, as indicated by Canada's adoption of a first-to-file system and full disclosure of patent application information 18 months after filing, in practice they are strikingly different. For example, as in Canada, Japanese patent law requires public disclosure of all patent applications within 18 months of filing. However, in Canada, this information is available only in the