

4.5.3 National or Umbrella Association

Canadian training firms lack a national or umbrella association, unlike in other OECD countries, where private suppliers are key players in the development of national training strategies. For example, in the United States, private sector trainers have a sizeable market share and public prestige. Their visibility is heightened by large national organisations such as the American Society for Training and Development. The Institute of Personnel and Development plays a similar role in the United Kingdom.

While no national association represents the entire industry sector, there are many associations specifically concerned with human resources development and training. A survey done in the late 1980s by the CCH Publishing House lists more than 60 such organisations in Canada. However, most focus primarily on the professional development of members; few have a strong business development mandate.

4.5.4 Supply Standards

Because there are no certification standards for entry to the education and training sector, training purchasers have no reliable method of identifying credible education and training firms. They have voiced concerns about how to assess the quality of training provided by private sector suppliers. This fact continues to hurt the sector's credibility, both domestically and especially internationally. The suppliers themselves acknowledge that the absence of widely recognised standards for trainers and training programs makes it difficult to ensure consistent service delivery. While establishing a single set of standards or a central accrediting body may be difficult, the industry and profession must develop some measurable indicators to which prospective clients can refer. The industry must attempt to address this matter if Canada is to increase the number of exporters in the training sector.

4.5.5 Partnering/Consortium Mechanisms

A 1992 report on strategic alliances (Prospectus Publications Ltd., *How to Form and Manage Successful Strategic Alliances*, Ottawa : Industry, Science and Technology Canada, December 1992) reports : "More and more firms are realising that they must enter foreign markets if they are to grow and prosper. But many small and medium sized enterprises do not have the skills or resources needed to take advantage of international opportunities. Strategic alliances enable firms to focus on what they do best, while co-operating with other firms to get the job done." In fact, smaller companies need to work with larger firms for partnerships in development and distribution, while