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This building of closer ties among the participating companies, associations, institutions, politicians and government officials was one of the most profitable offshoots of the mission.

Building relations abroad

Arriving in the three countries as a genuine "team," the delegates were in a much better position to build relations with their Asian counterparts — and building relations is crucial to the success of a trade mission, or any attempt to penetrate a new market.

"You've got to develop these relations," says Hugh O'Donnell, Managing Director, Geomatics, of SHL Systemhouse in Ottawa. "Then the opportunities will come. There's nothing that replaces face-to-face meetings."

Business delegates were given many opportunities for these face-to-face meetings — whether in large business forums, in small networking meetings or at receptions.

One of those who played an intermediary role at these kinds of meetings, introducing business people to each other, was Kitchener Mayor Richard Christy. Christy understands the full impact of such relations in this

market, pointing out that "while Canadians like to sign contracts and get on with it," Asian business people like to develop personal relationships based on trust and loyalty.

Canadians the real winners

The real beneficiaries of Team Canada 1997 are the Canadians at home. As Peter Capkum, Chairman of the Board of Val d'Or's Quebeco (1996) Homes Inc., explains, "When we sell houses on the foreign market, we have to buy windows, carpet, hardwood, cupboards [on the Canadian market]. It creates jobs directly and indirectly."

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Richard Christy, Kitchener Mayor

production, company President Walter Froese was planning to hire 30 to 40 employees almost immediately upon his return from the mission.

For Quality Log Homes Ltd. of Abbotsford, B.C., production will quadruple as a result of a \$6.37-million contract it won to build log cabins in the Philippines. To keep up with

SPAR Aerospace Ltd. will also be expanding, as a result of its \$155-million contract with Thailand's National Research Council; 40 to 50 "highly skilled jobs" will be created at the company's Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue plant.

Opening doors to the future

The \$2.1 billion in new business and the jobs being created are solid evidence of the success of Team Canada 1997. But the mission's success has another side, one that extends far beyond the landing of the plane at Vancouver International Airport.

Relationships are key, as mission participants discovered. But relationships take time to develop, points out Jean-Marie Toulouse, Director of the École des hautes études commerciales de Montréal. "Attention placed on instant contract signings often misses the point. What's more important is what happens in the long term once you have made those important introductions."

GTA Consultants Inc. President Gilles Thériault agrees that the key to developing international business is patience. "It takes several years to

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