

You will also want to share your company's business objectives in the EC with your Canadian employees at all levels. Their cooperation with EC counterparts will be vital. And your European personnel may need guidance on how to obtain information and help from their Canadian counterparts. Prepare written guidelines for both operations, and include clear directions, names, job functions and phone numbers. Otherwise, simple details such as time zone differences can become major problems. Remember to take the time to keep the lines of communication open.

Careful attention should be paid to fostering mutual trust and joint commitment. Exchange programs have proven a useful tool for short-term efforts involving both companies or for longer-term, cross-cultural training programs. In a joint venture, it is often an excellent idea if the gener-

al manager consults with senior management in both parent companies on major decisions regardless of their expertise in the particular issue at hand. Those consulted are reassured by their on-going involvement and are far more likely to be on side when the actual decision is made. The inclusion of key phrases or special concerns voiced by them can sometimes make all the difference.

Many experienced executives have stressed that there can never be too much communication. Otherwise, a good deal of time and money is wasted as managers go back to the moment when a first misunderstanding arose and try to establish a workable solution. In the meantime, employees sit idle and lose their enthusiasm for the project. Lack of communication also obstructs the interaction from which alliance synergies emerge.

Training for Europe

Entering European markets involves learning a whole new set of skills. Carefully assess the linguistic skills of your employees, their familiarity and openness towards other cultures and their attitudes towards the new business challenge. Your people may also need to develop new skills in marketing, distribution, export and import procedures, and quality and stock control.

Once you have identified what new skills your managers and workers need, you will want to consider how they can be provided:

- in-house training
- new recruitment
- educational institutions
- external training
- staff incentives
- correspondence courses

Some companies have launched efforts to prepare their managers. Honeywell Europe, for example, has an intensive program to teach several hundred managers about European culture, values and ethics. There are many consultants who can help firms customize training programs. Smaller firms that may not be able to afford such services could consider pooling their resources to organize the training they need.

Educational institutions have also developed training programs. The Ontario Centre of International Business at York University offers an enhanced MBA program, the first of its kind in Canada. It requires students to learn one foreign language, study other cultures and spend one work term in another country.

A number of schools across Europe are forming joint programs in order to train future and present business leaders for the new European environment. Two recent examples of such cooperative initiatives at the graduate level are the European Business School (EAP) which has branches in France, Germany and the joint venture between Ashridge Management College (U.K.), CPA (France) and USW (Germany).

In France, the European Business School Program, located at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, offers places to Canadians. Another French institution, CEDEP, is a continuing management education centre linked to INSEAD.

INSEAD: preparing a new generation of Euro-managers

INSEAD, a European business school modeled after the Harvard Business School, has developed a variety of courses for the new generation of Euro-managers. In addition to a normal MBA program, the continuing management education program draws more than 2500 business executives to Fontainebleau each year. Courses there use the case method and are taught by an international faculty in English.

Courses normally run from two to six weeks. They include:

- "Managing Partnerships and Strategic Alliances" (one week),
- "European Marketing Program" (three weeks), and
- "Managerial Skills for International Business" (two weeks).

INSEAD also offers a two week course in "Managing Multinational Enterprise". Topics covered include: the evolution of international competition, strategic options for multinationals, alternative strategies for penetration and disengagement, how to analyze political risks, and the influence of the social context. Cases studied include Michelin, Caterpillar, Komatsu, Heineken, Bok Paints, Triton Chemicals, Procter & Gamble as well as international M&As (Electrolux-Zanussi), partnerships, and alliances.

INSEAD is very much a European school with an international "student" body. In 1990, 17% of the participants in their programs were from the U.K., 14% from France, 11% from Germany, 11% from Scandinavia, 31% from other European countries, 8% from the Americas, 5% from the Pacific Rim and 3% from the rest of the world.