

AFTER-SALES SERVICE

If the product requires sophisticated after-sales service or specialized training, then it can only be sold in markets where these can be provided. How easy would it be to develop a service network in Mexico? What kind of training would be required? How much would it cost to provide instructional materials in Spanish?

DOES THE PRODUCT "TRAVEL" WELL?

Cultural differences can determine whether or not a product "travels" well. When Ganong entered the Mexican market with its boxed chocolates, it took care to reformulate the product to meet Mexican tastes. Chocolate consumption in Mexico is as significant as it is in Canada and the United States, but Mexican preferences are for something slightly different. As Mexico opens up, its consumers are developing a taste for imported goods, but it is still a distinct market. Market research ultimately must identify and resolve potential end-user responses to the proposed product or service.

CREDIT IN MEXICO

In Canada, the purchase of products such as cars or appliances is usually financed. Such items will be difficult to sell in countries where such financing is either hard to obtain or unavailable. The availability of consumer financing in Mexico should be investigated as well as the way in which Mexicans use their credit cards. For example, would they use them for significant purchases such as appliances or computers? What other forms of consumer credit are available and relevant to the company's products?

MISSIONS, VISITS AND TRADE SHOWS

There is no substitute for first-hand observation of a potential market. In the words of one specialist, "don't try to do business in Mexico until you've seen the country." A trip to Mexico, however, will only be useful once the firm has done all the research it can at home. With today's global networks, tools such as the Internet can be used to gather a tremendous amount of information from the home office. This should be done early, so that a visit to Mexico can be properly planned and the best use made of it.