

LES Knowledge = Trade Success

Did you know?

There are 616 LES trade commissioners working around the world.

Ricardo Valdez, a senior LES trade commissioner with the Canadian Embassy in Quito, brings more to the table than just his in-depth knowledge of his native Ecuador. Valdez has travelled across much of Canada, giving him a unique perspective as he plays matchmaker between Canadian companies and local Ecuadorian businesses. He shares with *Our World* his thoughts on being a successful LES trade commissioner, as well as his three golden rules for Canadian businesses wanting to invest in his country. By Noelle Grosse



Ricardo Valdez: understanding the business culture and common business practices in Ecuador is key.

OW: You've worked as a trade commissioner in Ecuador since 1998. What has changed in that time?

When I started here 12 years ago, I was the only commercial officer at the Embassy. Since then, I have participated in the expansion of the trade office, and I now work with a team of four. My sectors (infrastructure, mining, and oil and gas) are diverse and challenging, and I have seen a major increase in investment in these areas.

OW: How do local businesses in the country perceive Canada?

In general, Canadian companies have a good reputation in Ecuador: they follow the rules, they are serious investors, they have the best technology and they respect local culture. While most Ecuadorian clients already have a good perception of Canada, they might not know much about the country. I can help to fill in these information gaps.

OW: What advice do you have for Canadian investors?

As an LES, I am able to offer an excellent understanding of the business culture and common business practices here in Ecuador. I give Canadian clients key information on the local market and its limitations, and precautions and advice on how to succeed. You need to have a plan that is dynamic and adaptable.

OW: Anything more specific?

There are three golden rules that Canadian investors should follow in order to succeed in Ecuador—be positive, be persistent and be patient. Companies that follow these rules have seen success. It gives me great satisfaction when I see that a Canadian client has followed our guidance and succeeded.

Noelle Grosse is the manager of advertising and publishing for Trade Communications Services.