

- *"You have to be careful when you're choosing a distributor. It doesn't cost much for them to get listed and some are just fishing."*

Competitive intelligence. Participants expressed a need for information on the activities of competitors in foreign markets. For large tenders, they were also interested in information on the position of competitors in the bidding process (e.g. Are they a favoured supplier? Are they receiving high level political support from their home government?).

Business environment. Information on the customs and practices of doing business in target geographic markets was viewed as essential to most exporters. This information is particularly important when first entering a new market.

- *"My needs are: How is business conducted in that country? What are the pitfalls? What are the things you need to know if you've never been into that area? What are the cultural differences?"*

On an ongoing basis, businesses also need to monitor the environment for changes which may impact on them.

"Nice to Have" Information

Participants expressed an interest in other information which, while not integral to making sales, played an important role in supporting business decisions. This information includes:

Government programs and activities. Participants were most interested in information on programs related to export risk (e.g. insurance services through Export Development Corporation). While there was interest in government export policies and plans as general interest information, clients felt that the information should be "tactical" in nature (i.e. the actions or steps the government is taking).

Necessary Steps to Take When Exporting. Small business participants also felt that companies which are new to exporting must know the steps to take in order to enter an export market (e.g. legal obligations/regulations, steps to take to avoid potential pitfalls).

Market data. People expressed a need for data which can be used to describe and quantify foreign markets, such as demographic information and demand for products and services.

Partnership opportunities. Participants mentioned that they cannot bid on some