

3. The Year's Achievements

The Throne Speech of 1997 pointed out that Team Canada trade missions not only generate new opportunities for Canadian business, they also illustrate what can be accomplished when the government and the private sector collaborate. A commitment was made to "...build on that success with a focussed strategy, developed in consultation with industry, to improve our international economic performance by expanding Canada's trade base." Minister Marchi addressed this commitment at the annual meeting of the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters in Quebec City in October 1997.

The Minister focussed on a number of key themes:

- giving the name Team Canada Inc to the IBD service network, made up of federal departments, provinces, municipalities and the private sector
- providing an improved single point of contact to reach Team Canada Inc members via a 1-888 number and via the ExportSource Internet site
- creation of the private sector Team Canada Inc Advisory Board to provide strategic trade policy and trade and investment development advice to ministers
- deployment of more trade commissioners abroad to reach a 70:30 ratio, field to headquarters, by the year 2006
- creation of a unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to champion the special needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in export markets
- development of an integrated IBD Business Plan across the three core departments working in Team Canada Inc

These important initiatives have all been successfully launched. The pages that follow contain a comprehensive description of the full breadth of the government's key IBD initiatives and achievements in 1997-98.

Minister Marchi launched Team Canada Inc to build upon the spirit of partnership that has been key to the success of the Team Canada missions. Team Canada Inc is not an agency or a Crown corporation in the traditional sense. Instead, it will function as a "virtual" network and provide a single point of access to the broad network of federal government IBD service providers. Membership in Team Canada Inc will be expanded in the future to include other levels of government and the private sector.

The new private sector Team Canada Inc Advisory Board was created in January 1998 and held its inaugural meeting one month later. The Board, which reports to the Minister for International Trade, ensures that the government has the benefit of private sector views on international trade policy and international business development issues.