

NOV 7 2002

# Opening *the* DOORS

**T**eam Canada trade missions are the most visible and high-profile displays of government and business working together to put Canada's name on the world trading map. For Canadian companies, they mean new markets and increased sales. For Canada, they mean more jobs.

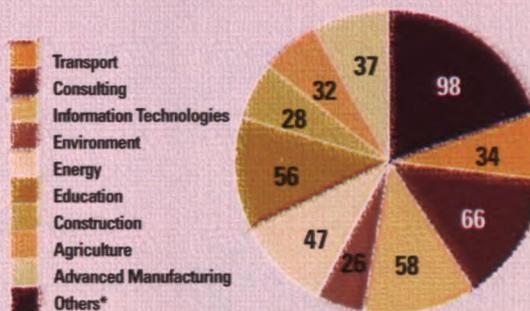
Latin America is an enticing and largely untapped market for small and medium-sized Canadian businesses. Gilles Thériault, chairman of UNIC Marketing Group in Shediac, is convinced that the Americas are going to be the next big trading area in 20-25 years.

"Since the early 1980s, we've seen most of the trade, and a lot of investment, go to Asia," says Thériault. "So now we're looking at Latin America, which is a huge potential market for Canadian companies in mining, forestry, fisheries, agri-food, and especially, technology."

Significant economic reforms, privatization and deregulation taking place in Latin America offer Canadian companies a wealth of new opportunities. Canada already benefits from free trade agreements with Mexico and Chile and stands to gain greater access to other Latin American markets as talks progress to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

The four countries visited on this Team Canada trade mission represent \$3.3 billion in Canadian exports and \$20 billion in investments. Over the last seven years, they have ranked among the 10 fastest-growing importers in the world. Argentina is at the top of the list with a 34% increase in imports, followed by Brazil in sixth place, Chile ninth and Mexico tenth.

Companies per sector on Team Canada 1998



\*includes: culture, tourism, natural resources, municipal, legal, health, government and finance.

But old myths die hard. "Too often, we're still seen as only hewers of wood and drawers of water," says Susan Harper, senior Canadian trade commissioner in Argentina. And with some notable exceptions, primary-resource producers still tend to dominate the ranks of Canadian big business.

"When you look at the small business sector, however," Harper adds, "which is larger, growing faster, and creating more jobs than the big companies, that's where you see Canada's entrepreneurial spirit at its best. That's the story we have to tell the world, that we're a top-notch producer of value-added goods and an exporter of manufactured products outside of our traditional market strengths."

## Small *is* BIG

**A** remarkable 80% of the 532 business men and women that made up this year's delegation were from small or medium-sized companies — companies with fewer than 500 employees — compared with only 20% on the first Team Canada mission to China in 1994.

This made for a different, more hectic atmosphere than that of previous missions. It meant a much wider range of products and services to promote and a far greater number of contract signings and ceremonies to co-ordinate.

For International Trade Minister Sergio Marchi, the mission perfectly illustrates the government's trade strategy. "It's the smaller companies that can really benefit from these missions," says Marchi.



CINAR Films Inc. of Montréal is representative of the diverse array of small and medium-sized companies that participated in Team Canada 1998. CINAR, which produces entertainment and educational programs, signed a \$2.2-million contract in Mexico.

"We work with the big companies too, but they normally don't need the government's help as much as the smaller ones do. It's the little company that benefits the most from the advantages that political leaders can provide."

Donald Berggren of Scarborough-based BERG Chilling Systems Inc. agrees. "When you're part of Team Canada, potential customers look at you as a big player. And if you're seen as a big player, then you are one. It just gives us the opportunity to prove that we can deliver." That opportunity is right around the corner for Berggren and his 81 employees: while on the mission he signed three memoranda of understanding and one agency agreement valued at about \$1.58 million, as well as a contract in Mexico worth \$42,000.

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