

**Other Considerations.** As a German buyer's impressions of the product and its supplier are often of equal importance, the visiting Canadian exporter should be prepared to demonstrate the following attributes:

### **Awareness of Local Customs**

Punctuality, politeness and a degree of formality are more highly significant to German businesspersons than to their North American counterparts. Lack of adherence to these established norms may jeopardize the outcome of an important initial meeting.

### **Competence**

It is not enough to carry samples and an ex-factory price list. A thorough knowledge of your product including delivery periods, shipping costs, service requirements, extent of distributor support and performance characteristics, is essential. A list of references is also useful. It is important that the Canadian exporter have evidence of past export success or at least an established Canadian market. While German buyers will normally convert prices to deutschmarks (DM) and add in relevant duties and taxes, some knowledge of these factors is desirable.

### **Flexibility**

Germany is a buyer's market with practices which are sometimes quite different from Canadian norms. Proposals for modified packaging, credit terms, correspondence in German, or for other deviations from your usual business practices should be evaluated in accordance with the expected benefits, rather than being immediately rejected as too demanding.

### **Realism**

The German market is too competitive to be a short-term moneymaker. The pay-off comes through long-term involvement, and all facets of your export program (promotional support, profit objectives, product modifications, etc.) should be formulated with this sort of time frame in mind. Most German businesspersons will not risk their reputation by becoming overly dependent on an unproven supplier. It is the norm for sales to start off slowly, but increase as a company's track record is established.

### **National Regulations**

In general, regulations in Germany are quite manageable. But it is part of an exporter's preparation and an obligation of the importer to meet any regulatory standards concerning contents, labelling, sizing and quality.