

### ►► *Information is Not Being Communicated*

At the same time, it was clear that the strategic resources available to the posts in the form of commercial intelligence, research findings and summaries and the like, were not making their way through the public sector distribution channels to the people who could make use of that information. Time after time, the Review Team drew a blank when questioning industry representatives on how they utilized documentation that was being provided from Ottawa. In addition, the extensive American research database does not appear to be utilized to the extent that it might.

In fact, there were occasions when industry representatives became aware of the existence of reports and material only when a Review Team member raised the question of how these reports were being utilized; in two instances, particular reports were available at the posts and were provided to the industry reps by the post tourism manager before the interviews concluded. These events reinforce the need for a better distribution system of reports produced by Tourism Canada and the tourism industry, both in Canada and the U.S.

### ►► *There is No Focus*

Whether by nature or by strategic design, the posts attempt to be all things to all people within the limitations of their resources. This, in part, is due to the fact that they are representatives of the Government of Canada and, thus, have difficulty refusing industry requests. However, this puts post staff in a difficult position given the wide ranging needs of the industry which differ depending upon whether or not the industry is Canadian – or American-based and the size of the company, city or association that wants assistance from the post.

Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the activities of the posts are being driven by events and responses rather than by the strategic focus.

### ►► *People Don't Talk to Each Other*

The other factor in this process is the apparently low level of ongoing, interactive communications taking place between the industry and the posts. Both the posts and the industry (especially in Canada) have acknowledged this issue as one in which each part takes direct responsibility. Despite this acknowledgement,

the environment today is one in which the industry communicates very ineffectually with the posts in terms of their needs, their products and their long term plans, and the posts do exactly the same in reverse.

This lack of properly communicated strategic direction and focus creates two problems with respect to the expectations of both the industry and the government. On the one hand, industry demands that the posts provide all sorts of services and programs to meet industry-specific needs which the posts cannot reject on a rationalized basis, apart from budgetary. On the other, the client department (Tourism Canada) cannot see how its strategic direction and operational guidance is being directly implemented to achieve what it is publicly committed to achieve.

Without communications and implementation "signposts" to both direct and make evident the strategy and program direction, there cannot be an effective strategy. The result, therefore, is that posts find themselves in a position where they cannot meet the high level of expectations on both sides of their primary clientele – government and industry.

## PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

In the private sector environment, four priority needs emerged for which post assistance was a fundamental requirement; these are:

- The development of highly qualified leads;
- Timely and high quality commercial intelligence;
- Travel industry education; and
- Support for new product development.

For Canadian-based operators, the first two were clearly the most important and for American-based operators, the latter two were most important. Raising the level of consumer awareness was also a very high priority on the part of American-based operators (particularly in distant markets); this issue is covered elsewhere in this report.