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THE TRADE POST



Canada's
International
Business

Strategy rolled off the presses and onto the Net on February 29.

Jennifer Rosebrugh of TOC gives **Trade Post** readers the full story on page 3.

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Monthly Trade Directors'					

The Trade Post is a quarterly newsletter for members of the Trade Commissioner Service. Its purpose is to facilitate discussion of matters of common interest and concern among members. Please send your contributions and comments to Maria Bernard (TOO) via E-Mail, telex, or facsimile at (613) 996-8688.

TRAINING — PATHWAYS AND PITFALLS

By Linda Brazeau

From the start last November, we realized that the largest training initiative (*Trade Post* – Vol. 2, No. 3, July 1995) ever in the Department for over 500 trade staff at posts abroad would have its challenges! Despite delays due to events beyond our control, we never lost the momentum of "just in time" training — getting it out to all trade officers at posts as quickly as possible. The training team forged ahead with an alternate delivery plan. Your patience and flexibility in responding a second time to the call for training is appreciated.

The outcomes of the skills training will become more evident with time and as the long term impacts on service/quality levels, performance, and client satisfaction are known. In the short term, participants have acknowledged substantial professional development gains, appreciated the benefits of sharing ideas and issues with colleagues in open and frank discussions, and provided valuable feedback on how to improve the way we serve the client.

"Skills are like tax deductions; we use them or lose them."

The following comments are highlights drawn from training evaluations collected as of this date. There were many ideas, constructive approaches and suggestions presented — too numerous to list here - but they have been circulated to senior

management in Ottawa for further discussion and follow up.

Africa & Middle East

The second phase of the Department's client focused training was launched in Lisbon for our Africa-Middle East colleagues. From participants' feedback it was obvious this initiative was highly valued, appreciated and "long overdue".

To people at posts, the array of government sources of information is often confusing. There is a consensus that work needs to be done on streamlining and improving the service in Canada before posts can feel comfortable referring their clients back home for assistance.

As well, without some of the new technologies and while facing constraints in doing business in risky environments, the Africa and Middle East region deals with more challenges than most in providing the kind of service the client expects. The comraderie and bringing together of ideas, best practices and the opportunity for open and informal discussions from trade staff from the same region, as a result, received very high marks.

The training program will wrap-up in Cairo and virtually all of our colleagues will have had the opportunity to participate.

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