

- If a translation is necessary, hire a first-class translator who has experience working with commercial and business-oriented materials. The translated materials should be reviewed by someone who is fluent in Spanish and is familiar with the Mexican market.
- Examine the meaning and acceptability of brand names and logos used in Canada. Make sure that no negative or inappropriate connotations are conveyed.
- Make sure that colour and symbols used in promotional material are sensitive to local tastes and consumer preferences. Again, check the final product with someone who is familiar with Mexican culture and preferences.

You may decide to use direct-mail promotion, particularly if you have gained access to a buyer database or business directory that lists potential customers and their addresses. You may also decide to target Mexican distributors or agents. An initial direct-mail promotional package might consist of:

- a covering letter, in Spanish, that introduces the company and line of business, indicates how long it has been in business, and provides other basic facts about the company (it can also be helpful to provide a banking reference);
- product literature, in Spanish, checked for appropriateness and accurate translation; and
- a return sheet or reply card that allows an interested prospective customer to respond quickly to the solicitation and provide basic information on his or her business and need for the product or service.

Once a potential customer (or agent and/or distributor) reacts to the initial letter, respond quickly with a sales follow-up letter, more detailed product information, further information on the company, and price quotations (if requested). This should preferably be in Spanish, even though most professionals in Mexico are reasonably fluent in English.

TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

Trade fairs are an effective way of acquiring familiarity with the Mexican market or promoting a product with prospective Mexican buyers. Most trade shows and exhibitions focus on particular industries. Typical objectives in attending these events include displaying merchandise, making business contacts, checking into the market, learning more about competitors and their products, and making sales. Some trade fairs are geared toward order-taking. Attendees come prepared to buy or, in the case of agents and/or distributors, to negotiate representation agreements. The Canadian exporter should, therefore, be ready to take orders or to discuss the possibility of being represented by a Mexican intermediary.