

## Market Profiles (28 publications)

Market profiles are comprehensive reports, usually in the 60-page range. They are bound for distribution as printed handbooks if required. The profiles are based on a thorough review of published research reports, combined with in-depth personal interviews with market players and government officials in Mexico. Each one targets a key industrial sector and includes a consistent package of practical business information, including:

- highlights of the unique aspects of the sector;
- a sectoral overview;
- details of the major subsectors;
- a statistical review of Mexico's imports;
- a review of recent market trends and emerging product opportunities;
- profiles of major customers and competitors;
- a summary of the regulatory environment;
- suggested market-entry strategies, including the role of intermediaries;
- sources of assistance in Canada; and
- initial contacts in Mexico.

Companies investigating Mexican opportunities can follow up on these reports by contacting the sources listed and requesting copies of more recent reports. Fully verified contact information is provided.

## Business Guides (9 publications)

Business guides are handbooks covering the broader issue of entering the Mexican market. Each one concentrates on an aspect of the business environment that Canadian companies have found to be an obstacle to market entry.

They include such topics as export documents and regulations, government procurement and export financing.

## Business Tools (11 publications)

Business tool publications provide reference information about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), tariff structures, legal issues, promotion opportunities and Canadian government assistance programs. Also included are a general overview of the Mexican economic and business environments and a variety of export-market access tools.

## Market Research

The market summaries and profiles included in the Export **i** Mexican Knowledge Base provide general market information, but they do not include market intelligence. Market intelligence requires a detailed understanding of a company's products, expertise and strategic plans. (See the Exporter's Checklist, pp. 49-50.)

Canada's Trade Commissioner Service is an important tool for Canadian exporters. Its resources include trade commissioners in Mexico, as well as in DFAIT's Mexico and Inter American Division in Ottawa. The division is responsible for the overall management of the bilateral relationship with Mexico in all its dimensions, including trade and investment promotion. To use these resources effectively, companies should consider them an integral part of their overall trade strategy. This means providing trade commissioners with the information they need to do their jobs effectively. It also means developing an overall market plan before asking for their help, and keeping them informed as the market-entry strategy is implemented.

The first step is to select the target market. Some companies try to tackle too many markets at a time and waste their own resources as well as those of the trade commissioners. Canadian companies that have succeeded in Mexico invariably say that the best approach is to select target markets carefully, matching the company's capabilities to well-defined Mexican needs. This targeting process involves consideration of current Mexican trends. Moving into Mexico will take a year or more, so it is next year's market not last year's that matters. Registering with WIN Exports will facilitate access to information that can help to guide this initial decision. Information about WIN Exports is provided in the "Contacts" section of this document.

The next step is for the company to conduct preliminary market research based on information available from the Export **i** Mexican Knowledge Base. Typically, the company might read the relevant market summary, which is available by fax. If further action is warranted, it might read the market profile for any relevant sectors and possibly some of the business guides.

If the company decides that it wants to pursue an opportunity in Mexico, it should contact a trade commissioner, who will need detailed information about the company and its expectations. (A checklist of the information needed is reproduced at the end of this section.) If possible, promotional literature should also be provided, ideally in Spanish. This material will help the trade commissioner introduce the

company to Mexican contacts. Additional information about the company and its goals in Mexico can help make the trade commissioner's efforts more productive. This might include copies of press releases, price lists and other information that will present the company in its best light. The trade commissioner should also be aware of any existing contacts or agents that the company may have in Mexico.

Communications with the trade commissioner should be by telephone, fax, e-mail or courier. Mail service to Mexico can be slow, and months can pass before two or three two-way communications are completed by that means. In spite of recent improvements, Mexico's phone lines are still unreliable, and faxes are sometimes lost in transmission. This leaves e-mail and courier as the preferred methods of communication. Companies making inquiries should also be aware that complex questions can take time to answer in the Mexican business environment. Trade commissioners do not have ready access to the types of information considered commonplace in Canada. Corporate disclosure and public accountability by government agencies are only vague concepts. Information is often considered proprietary and is jealously hoarded. Thus, personal contacts are a much more important research tool in Mexico than they are in Canada. Even when contacts are established, information may not be easy to get, since Mexican executives are often out of their offices for a large part of the day. For all these reasons, it is best to do as much research as possible before leaving Canada and to allow ample time for information collection.