



► Distribution

Important market facts

- In 1984 this sector represented 25 per cent of companies in France, 11.8 per cent of the working population and 11 per cent of gross added values (\$85.5 billion).
- In 1985 favourable commercial circumstances led to an upward trend in business services, increased sales volume, greater employment and renewed investments.
- Distribution comprises two kinds of trade: wholesale trade (including the food sector, the non-food sector and the inter-industrial sector); and retail trade (more than 600 000 companies with a total turnover of \$257.3 billion were included in 1985).
- Many retail outlets such as department stores, chain stores and supermarkets are similar to those found in Canada.
- France has more than 500 purchasing co-operatives and each has its own operating policies. This has made it difficult to penetrate the distribution sector specializing in food products.

Markets trends

- France has adopted modern concepts such as the 'hyper-marchés' (self-service stores that sell mainly food products and have product display areas exceeding 2 500 m²).
- Few foreign distribution groups are established in France. Their involvement is limited to department stores, chain stores, the mail-order business, large specialty stores and a few specialized shops.

Canadian imports

- There are no Canadian companies in France in this sector. However, at least one large Canadian distribution group has recently established co-operative relations with a French counterpart.

Recommendations to Canadian exporters

- There are many opportunities for Canadian exporters to co-operate both technically and commercially with French groups. Such partnerships are mutually advantageous because they can benefit from each other's experience and buying power without having to maintain costly infrastructures. It also allows them to develop a profitable flow of business.

Additional information

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Useful addresses

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Other information

The Commercial and Economic Division of the Canadian Embassy in Paris has published a report on the sector entitled *Le commerce français au 1er janvier 1986*. This report and *Carte d'identité des centrales d'achat françaises*, another document on French purchasing co-operatives, are available on request.