Interviews with industry observers in Mexico revealed that only a few of the largest firms are using the following technologies:

- computer automated manufacturing (CAM) and automated workstations;
- computerized cutters;
- programmable sewing machines, fusing and finishing equipment;
- warehouse automation;
- shop floor data collection;
- fabric testing; and
- manufacturing process-control systems.

Technologies that have been implemented on a broader scale include the following:

- **Computer automated design (CAD):** According to the *Cámara Nacional de la Industria del Vestido (CNIV)*, National Chamber of the Apparel Industry, there were more than 200 companies using CAD systems in 1993. About 40 percent use the Lectra system and the rest use the Gerber Accumark system. Industry observers say that the number of systems in use grew by an additional 40 percent in 1994.

- **Electronic data interchange (EDI) linkages with retailers:** As the retailing environment becomes more competitive, there is increased pressure on manufacturers to implement EDI to keep inventories at optimal levels in the stores. Larger chains such as *Aurrera* of the *Grupo Cifra* and *Sears de México* have been at the forefront in pushing for these changes. The Government of Mexico, the retailers association and the industry associations are all developing a national Quick Response (QR) program. Nonetheless, this technology is still in its infancy in Mexico.

- **Bar coding:** This is an essential step towards improved inventory management and implemention of QR and EDI. Until recently, the apparel classification process (SKU number) has traditionally been used only to identify style. Retailers are now requiring that goods be identified by style, size and colour.

- **Computerized management and accounting systems:** Many firms have personal computers (PCs) which are used for billing, bookkeeping and other administrative functions.