

There was also a perception that, despite previous statements by the federal government that Canada had taken the initiative to enter into the FTA with the United States, the United States had "out smarted" Canadians by having their own game plan all along - - and that Canadians did not. As such, current initiatives by the United States to enter into a new trade relationship with Mexico and its involvement in European liberalization and economic revitalization were viewed as part of a previously determined U.S. master plan -- with Canada as part of that plan. Respondents generally felt this way since there was no apparent evidence to suggest otherwise -- i.e., the FTA was passed, and after a year and a half there had been no "next step" for Canada whereas clearly the U.S. was putting some series of related deals together.

Further, respondents generally did not view the FTA as a component of a predetermined and broader, strategic effort to have Canada embark into international trade.

Finally, while respondents generally held reservations about the future of the FTA and its possible effects on the Canadian economy, their region and themselves personally, this was offset by a belief that international trade with other countries did not pose the same potential degree of cultural or economic threat as under the FTA. In fact, respondents believed quite optimistically that by broadening international trade Canadians would be strengthened and have more options in terms of flexibility, etc. to offset any FTA consequences.