

Tips and Best Practices

By *Andrée Cooligan*

**He
first
practices
what he
preaches
then
preaches
according
to his
practice.**

(Confucius)

I hear you ask "how do I respond to all these letters and faxes?", "How do I say NO and not offend people?", "Where do I start in my new assignment?". As more Canadian companies look abroad for sales markets, the role of the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) becomes increasingly burdened. We are under a growing amount of stress to meet trade program goals, while our clients bombard us with letters, faxes, e-mails, visits, and telephone calls. To manage, many posts have come up with unique solutions to deal with this constant influx of work.

This subject is not a new one. In fact, the Department has been grappling with it for years. Many of you participated in the TCS session held with MINT in 1992, where it was agreed we should review current procedures and recommend best practices to improve the TCS. A best practices working group, chaired by Doug Campbell, met several times to review procedures, culminating in a best practices session at the Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) in 1993. One of the many recommendations tabled was to create a newsletter in which to share our ideas. As a result, The Trade Post newsletter was developed and we plan to use it to publish your tricks of the trade.

In the last four months, I pulled together the elements of a Handover Log (as recommended by the Auditor General

this past November) and Commercial Confidentiality. To ensure I was on the right track, I contacted a group of Trade Commissioners for their valued input. The following two pages contain their suggestions. A big Thank You goes out to Susan Harper (Buenos Aires), John Treleaven (PCO), John Tennant (Tokyo), Gary Scott (Chicago), Brian Casey (RENI), Ken Lewis (Bangkok), Linda Brazeau (TBO), and Marie-Lucie Morin (Moscow) for taking the time to help me.

My challenge:

To make your life easier!

It is my challenge to gather practices being used today, and share them with you tomorrow. I value the time you take to review the elements of Handover Log and Commercial Confidentiality on the following pages. Let me know your reaction to these two pieces. Do you already follow these guidelines? Do they inspire you or create more work for you? Do you find them useful? What would you delete or add to them?

If you're still with me, please send me the details of practices you currently use, i.e. systems you have set up, unique ways of doing things (professional practices only). I will give credit to all who submit, and you can look forward to seeing some treasures in the near future. Feel free to call, fax or e-mail me at 996-1732, 996-8688 (fax).

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