

**move quickly and boldly...choose and articulate an overall strategy quickly, but put it in place only as it becomes necessary" [1, p. 833].**

For those software developers who are interested in the specific factors that have enabled small and medium-sized Canadian manufacturing companies to be successful in penetrating the U.S. marketplace, the guidelines set forth by Hardy are noteworthy [5, pp. 67-73]. Hardy's findings indicate, for example, that successful Canadian exporters are producing specialty or niche products that pertain to narrowly defined products and/or narrowly defined applications; they are emphasizing product quality over price competitiveness; they are cognizant of the fact that the U.S. consists of a myriad of diverse regional markets, each with its own set of norms, business culture, and distributor networks; they make extensive use of regional trade shows in the U.S. to develop their market contacts and to identify new channels of distribution; they realize that in most U.S. markets the use of a manufacturer's rep or agent is the mainstay of effective sales and distribution strategy; and they are likely to be better received by U.S. dealers if they sell their products FOB U.S. destination and assume most of the problems associated with getting the products through U.S. Customs [5, pp. 67-71].

The importance of formulating proper business strategy in the software development industry becomes readily apparent when one realizes, for example, that most of the computer software industry in Canada consists of small and medium-sized "entrepreneurial" companies, many of which are not experienced exporters; **the United States represents the most significant single market for Canadian software suppliers (a \$25 billion market, with an expected 20 percent annual growth rate for the next 5 years);** the U.S. computer software market is technologically very advanced, but well-dispersed across the country, so that many regional markets exist; **that Canadian computer companies are in fact leaders in several computer-product areas, including systems integration and geographical information systems; and that the computer service sector is the fastest-growing segment of Canada's information technology industry.** In short, the possibilities for success are enormous, but to take advantage of these opportunities, software developers must make decisions within a marketplace that is increasingly complex and uncertain. To undertake this task successfully, it is crucial that a well thought-out business plan be in place. The remainder of this Guide, therefore, is designed to assist the software developer in penetrating the U.S. marketplace and coping with such a rapidly changing environment.