

# Periphlex

**Regular meetings between Canadians and European dealers help them work together.**

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*Canadian operations*   Periphlex manufactures anti-radiation and anti-glare computer screens.

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*Dutch activities*       There is no direct investment by Periphlex in the Netherlands. The Periphlex operation in the Netherlands is an independent distributor. Periphlex considers the market in Europe too marginal to invest in. It is a relatively small company (about 50 employees) and needs to concentrate on its home market in North America. Periphlex and its present distributor in the Netherlands met at the Hanover trade fair where Periphlex was exhibiting. This agent works for Periphlex throughout the Benelux. It also has other activities developing software for the retail industry.

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*Lessons to be drawn*   **Government approval is important.** Anti-radiation screens are quite common in the United States, where awareness of the health hazards of radiation caused by computer screens is much stronger than in Europe. The market in Europe is not yet ready and governments have even been an obstacle, despite some medically supported claims. The only other similar product is made by Polaroid and is much more expensive. The European market is slowly developing and Sweden was the first country to introduce compulsory use of low-radiation screens. In the meantime, this distributor is doing a lot of lobbying and simply must wait until the market develops.

**The relationship with the Canadian firm is distant.** For this product the distributor does not need technical help from the manufacturer because it is a simple peripheral that clips on to existing monitors. The only contact between the Dutch distributor and the Canadian manufacturer is ordering the goods. The distributor wanted more contact, even just to inquire how things are going. Since the initial deal, no other contact has been initiated by the Canadians. The distributors know that it would be too expensive for Periphlex to organize regular meetings of dealers, but they would appreciate a regular newsletter to keep in touch.

**The company needs to be flexible about country differences.** The product is the same for all European countries. The only adaptation needed was for some French Bull monitors, which have a curved screen. In this case, Periphlex in Canada responded willingly to the changes suggested by its dealers.

**Language diversity causes a problem for a small operation.** Documentation needs to be translated into a number of languages to serve a market that overall might not be that large. Because of the diversity of languages, it is also difficult to adequately monitor the quality of translations.