

In this edition of people@post we are focussing our attention on:

Romeo Calderon @ San Salvador Tanweer Islam @ Dhaka

The only trade officer@post

YOU COVER ALL SECTORS. HOW DO YOU MANAGE?

Tanweer (Dhaka): Trying to be a “Jack of all trades” in Bangladesh is challenging, but rarely frustrating. Common sense, an occasional wry sense of humour and good contacts usually see me through. The adage — it’s not what you know, but who you know that counts — holds true out here. When it’s required, I tap into my contact resources for relevant information to satiate the inquisitive minds of Canadian exporters.

Romeo (San Salvador): I manage by doing a mixture of prioritization and time management. Some sectors are more active than others and therefore require more time and attention. So, I usually divide my week in blocks of activities: researching, answering requests, writing documents, visiting potential clients, and so forth.

AS THE ONLY TRADE OFFICER AT YOUR POST, WHO DO YOU TURN TO WHEN YOU NEED HELP?

Tanweer (Dhaka): I’ll turn to anybody who’s willing to help. Coming in early and going home late also seems to work wonders for me. As well, the Post Support Unit has been an invaluable source of advice and support on many issues. Their standard letters have made my job more manageable.

Romeo (San Salvador): I work very closely with my colleagues from the Embassy in Guatemala. When possible, we try to organize activities together to avoid duplication. We have developed a very good working relationship and I feel comfortable turning to them when I need extra help.

NOT HAVING OTHER TRADE OFFICERS TO SHARE WITH, HOW DO YOU STAY MOTIVATED?

Tanweer (Dhaka): Isn’t being the sole commercial officer, motivation enough? Seriously, I don’t feel I’m alone here. Aside from the full support of the High Commission, the South Asia geographic division and CIDA, MITNET and e-mail have made other trade officers just a phone call or a few clicks away. I keep in touch with my regional colleagues on a regular basis, calling on their knowledge, advice and support. We share information, piggyback and keep each other going.

Romeo (San Salvador): I find the work itself is motivating. Besides, one of the advantages of working in a small micro mission is that you share a lot with your co-workers. I am also glad to say that both the local chargé d’affaires and the commercial counsellor in Guatemala are always willing to lend an ear when I need to release some steam.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE SECTOR AND WHY?

Tanweer (Dhaka): I don’t think I have the luxury of choosing one, but given the option, it would be information technology and high tech. Aside from the tremendous potential of this sector, I’ve been interested in high tech all my life.

Romeo (San Salvador): I would have to say environment. Firstly, because it is one of the most active sectors, and secondly, because the ecological situation in El Salvador is so critical. As such, I feel that I am not only supporting Canadian companies, but helping to improve local conditions.