

Selling Non-Defence Products to the U.S. Federal Government: How EAITC Can Help

*This is the fourth in a series of articles designed to assist Canadian companies interested in pursuing opportunities in the U.S. federal government procurement market. The first article appeared in **CanadExport**, Vol. 8, No. 10, June 1, 1990.*

Commercial presentations can be an effective complement to your federal marketing strategy. Think about holding a briefing at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, or at any of our consulates and trade offices throughout the U.S. Dozens of companies demonstrate their capabilities this way, with excellent results. The Washington Embassy can accommodate more than 170 attendees in its theatre. Interested?

1. Assemble your list of potential customers (the commercial office can help). Do they know about your company? How can you make them aware of what you offer and catch their interest? You want to attract those officials whom you know have a need for what you offer and are curious about how you can make their jobs easier.

Tell the commercial office about your product or service, and the departments or agencies you feel are your best prospects. Have you sold to any of them already? Are any of them willing to be cited as a reference? Could any of them take a small part in your presentation to talk about how your product or service helps their agency accomplish its mission? Can you demonstrate your product? Can your audience try it for themselves? Will you have to rent audio-visual or computer equipment?

2. Are you new to the federal market? You need to learn about how products or services like yours are currently procured. Find out who is buying from your competition today — and why. That's going to effect how you position and present yourself against other market offerings. How are you different — and better?

3. Once you have completed your research as completely as you are able, call the commercial office at the embassy or consulate with which you would like to work. Let them know what you'd like to do, and how a presentation fits into your federal marketing plans. A commercial presentation should build on your efforts to establish your firm in the U.S. government market.

4. Make the initial contact yourself, through direct mail, tele-marketing or personal visits. Find out more about the federal programs and missions your prospects manage, and how you can help them. That information is critical to designing a presentation that addresses their need — to succeed — as well as yours — to sell.

5. Draw up your list of key prospects, and get your presentation ready for them. You'll probably need six weeks lead time, on top of your background presentation. These events are co-operative; the invitations are sent by the Canadian government, but we work with you to develop the plans as well as the audience.

6. Follow up! Let us know how you do, and how else we can help.

The U.S. Trade and Tourism Development Division (UTO) also sponsors participation in trade shows which attract federal government buyers. These shows include the following Washington-based events:

- Communication Networks (ComNet) — January
- Federal Office Systems Exposition (FOSE) — March
- Federal Computer Conference (FCC) — September
- Federal Computer Conference West (FCC West: Anaheim) — May.

Trade missions usually revolve around advertising rather than direct selling. Missions to the U.S. General Services Administration

(GSA) are frequently offered for furniture, information technology, sporting goods, fire fighting and other sectors. Federal agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, also participate in Incoming Buyers Missions to Canada. Call (613) 998-9441 for a schedule of events.

Available from UTO are kit folders, *Your Introduction to US Federal Government Procurement of Non-Defence Products*, as well as an information video.

For further information on selling non-defence products to the U.S. Government, contact Dennis Doermer — (613) 993-6466 or Doreen Conrad — (613) 998-9441 — both of the United States Trade and Tourism Development Division (UTO), External Affairs and International Trade Canada, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa K1A 0G2. Fax: (613) 990-9119.

China Opens Procurement Office in Toronto

One of China's key trade agencies, China National Technical Import Corporation (CNTIC), has opened an office in Toronto.

On November 1, 1990, Mr. Xu Deen, President of CNTIC, officially threw open the doors to this newest addition to the network of CNTIC procurement offices.

Mr. Deen told Canadian companies to expect to do more business with China as, next year, China begins its eighth five-year economic plan which emphasizes the development of the country's energy, transportation and telecommunications sectors.

CNTIC is the Chinese Government's chief foreign procurement arm, importing technology and equipment and negotiating major international contracts.

In the past five years alone,

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