



ANNEX II: VISITS AND TRADE FAIRS



Visits to potential target markets will help you answer the following questions:

- Is there a real (as opposed to perceived) need or desire for your product?
- Are there financially stable importers who are eager and able to accept your business?
- Is the economic, social, cultural and political environment what you thought it was?
- Is there competition you didn't foresee and can you meet it?
- Will you need to adjust your product, service or marketing strategy to win customers? If so, will the cost of these changes still provide an acceptable return on your investment?
- Are there any new problems to overcome or new opportunities to seize?

ORGANIZING YOUR TIME (DOS AND DON'TS)

DOs

- Leave enough time at the start of your visit to recover from jet lag. Use the time to check in with your Canadian trade commissioner and to familiarize yourself with the country.
- Plan to spend at least three days (or a week if a major market) in each place you visit. You'll learn as much about the country, its people and the market by osmosis as you would in a frantic round of meetings.

- Get the most out of your trip by making sure that it does not coincide with traditional holiday periods. (For example, not much work would be accomplished in Rio de Janeiro during Carnival.)
- Write to your trade commissioner upon returning to Canada and let s/he know how your meetings went, who your agent is (if you appointed one) and what your future plans are. Keeping trade commissioners fully informed helps them in looking out for sales leads and opportunities.

DON'Ts

- Don't start out on a foreign market visit without proper planning and organizing.
- Don't try to squeeze too much into your first trip. Visiting three countries in two weeks is likely all that can be absorbed effectively in a single trip, particularly if it is your first one.
- Don't believe everything you hear about the business practices in different countries — check local customs with your trade commissioner.
- Don't go to your office right away on your first day back. Take it easy — give yourself time to recover from jet lag. Spend the time at home sorting out business cards and making a list of people with whom you should follow-up.