

which should appear on the import documentation.

Standards

Product standards, *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOMs)*, are an important consideration for companies exporting medical equipment to Mexico. Standards are established by the *Dirección General de Normas (DGN)*, Bureau of Standards, which falls within the purview of the *Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (SECOFI)*, Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development. The Mexican buyer or agent will know if the product requires a certificate, stating that it meets an established *NOM*.

If a product is subject to a standard, the exporter must ensure that its equipment meets the standard and a certificate of compliance must be presented when the product enters Mexico. Inquiries should be forwarded to the address for the *DGN*, provided in the section on Additional Contacts in Mexico.

MARKET ENTRY STRATEGIES

Canadian companies that have entered the Mexican market have usually done so by first participating in congresses, conferences or trade shows to make contact with potential customers and partners. Most companies have found that a permanent local presence is essential, because Mexicans like to do business with people they know. Partnering is an effective way to achieve this, whether it is through an agent, a representative, a joint venture or some other form of strategic alliance.

Purchasing Practices

Most purchases within the open and premium-based systems are governed by the federal *Ley de Adquisiciones*, Purchasing Act. This is the legislation controlling all federal government procurement of goods and services,

including purchases within the National Health Care System. The legislation requires that all purchases, except for limited discretionary budgets, must be acquired through a public tender process.

Purchases within the private system are made according to the purchasing practices of each hospital. Each one must be approached individually to promote the use of a given service.

Tender Notification

Calls for tenders are published in the *Diario Oficial*, the National Gazette, and in at least two national daily newspapers. The notification provides the bid reference number along with details of the good or service to be purchased, the cost of the bid documents and where and when they can be obtained. It is therefore necessary to establish a mechanism for scanning the appropriate publications on a daily basis. A special newspaper for the publication of public tender notices is planned for 1995.

Buying Cycles Within the National Health Care System

The annual buying cycle within the National Health Care System commences when purchasing priorities are established by each entity in May and June. These priorities become the basis for the budget submission in August to the *Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (SHCP)*, Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit. The budget is finalized and returned to the purchasing entities to be allocated internally by the end of November. Tenders are then announced in January and February.

Conferences and Trade Shows

Medical conferences and congresses are held throughout the year in Mexico. The *Agenda de Eventos Médicos*, Medical Events Agenda,

provides a list of upcoming events in the medical field for the next six months. It is published in January and July of each year in the medical magazine, *Atención Médica*.

Trade shows are no longer as popular as they once were. The most important of these, *Expo-Hospital*, has been canceled for 1995. A solo Canadian medical trade show is in the planning stages and will be scheduled for Mexico City at the new Canadian Business Centre in 1995.

WHERE TO GET HELP

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND SERVICES IN CANADA

The **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** is the Canadian federal government department most directly responsible for trade development. The **InfoCentre** is the first contact point for advice on how to start exporting; it provides information on export-related programs and services; helps find fast answers to export problems; acts as the entry point to DFAIT's trade information network; and can provide interested companies with copies of specialized export publications.

InfoCentre

Tel.: 1-800-267-8376 or
(613) 944-4000
Fax: (613) 996-9709
FaxLink: (613) 944-4500

The **Commercial Division of the Embassy of Canada in Mexico City** promotes trade with Mexico. There are several trade commissioners at the Embassy and there is a satellite office in Monterrey. Trade commissioners can provide a range of services including introducing Canadian companies to potential customers in Mexico, advising on marketing channels, assisting those wishing to participate in trade fairs, helping identify suitable Mexican

