

AVOIDING THE GREAT BLACK HOLE

By Bill Skinner

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Most of us know how hard it is conducting a market study. We start out with great enthusiasm, and slowly sink into despair at the amount of work involved, which we always under-estimate, and at the end we are only too glad to be rid of it.

Then we wonder if anyone will read it, or if the report will end up in the Great Black Hole (we all know where that is). But a market study is not complete without a distribution plan for the report. Remember, exporters have told us in surveys that dissemination of our MI/I is too limited, not that we produce useless information.

Several recent market studies have passed through TPP with the request "please distribute". Following is a checklist on how to avoid "warehouse heaven" for your market reports:

- ① Did you send extra copies of your report to the InfoCentre (SKI) for inventory and for further distribution to callers who may request information on your market (including sub-contract opportunities). SKI should always be on the distribution list for reports.
- ② Do you have a one page summary of the report, preferably on diskette, so it can be translated and loaded on to the InfoCentre's FaxLink system (a faxback information service for exporters)? If so, TPP can also post it as a bulletin on the electronic bulletin board service (BBS) we are developing.
- ③ The one pager can also make for a good article in the biweekly *CanadExport* publication. In cases where a market report has been

publicized in *CanadExport*, others asked for the report who were not readily identified as being members of the "targeted" industry. But they were suppliers to sub-suppliers in the industry. There is a wide "ripple effect" of publicizing your report in *CanadExport* which can lead to sub-contract opportunities in Canada.

- ④ Was the report prepared in electronic format, i.e on a word processor? If it is prepared electronically, it can usually be distributed electronically. If so can you send a copy of the full report on diskette or as an attachment to a SIGNET e-mail message to TRANS (Translation bureau). This allows your geographic desk officer (or the T-branch SEG specialist) to ensure that it is translated and loaded onto the BBS.

- ⑤ The report could also be sent to those industry associations whose members are potential suppliers to the target market. You can do this yourself via a fax message to the association to indicate that the report exists and where it is available — preferably the InfoCentre (SKI) because of their report and caller tracking system which feeds into WIN. Alternatively, the fax message could come from the T-branch Sector Expert Group specialist. A directory of associations in Canada exists in the Library (SKS).

Hopefully these comments will be helpful to you in completing the dissemination of your valuable market reports and other studies.

