

## A NEW LOOK AT EXPORTING

### Should You Be Afraid To Export?

Some 15 years ago, as an enthusiastic and zealous young trade commissioner, I felt that it was my mission to convince fellow Canadian entrepreneurs to export at any cost.

In the countries where my work took me, I saw only openings and business opportunities. My colleagues were similarly motivated. The market was guided by supply, and a business would have had to be run very poorly in order to fail.

In 1991, the mission of the trade commissioner has expanded to reflect completely different trade conditions. No longer is it a question of pushing businesses to export at any cost; rather, it is one of preparing them to face far more sophisticated markets — guided by an increasingly demanding supply scenario.

Buyers must now have everything “made to measure” — and on their conditions. They can now choose from among a host of suppliers in fierce competition with one another. Quite often, these suppliers must combine their offers of services or products with competitive financing.

Having read that *CanadExport's* objective was to supply Canadians active in international trade with the information they needed to make enlightened decisions, Michael St. Clair, Vice-President of Associated Marketing Consultants, wrote that this

was “helping those who did not need it, as witnessed by the very fact that they were already active on the international markets. *CanadExport* should be there to assist potential exporters.”

Mr. St. Clair was completely right. We needed to redefine what we were attempting to do.

But what does it mean to assist potential exporters in today's world?

No longer must we encourage them to plunge in feet first, but to prepare, to examine, to analyze, to weigh the pros and cons, and to obtain specialized advice from experienced people who know what they are talking about.

If the first commandment of the export-ready entrepreneur is still to find a need and then meet it, then there are many steps involved in reaching this stage. As well, a certain number of legitimate fears must be overcome.

Exporting involves risk. It also brings a great deal of satisfaction.

An entrepreneur is, from the outset, one who has taken risks to develop a business in Canada. This does not mean that he or she is ready to take the risks involved in conquering the international market. Thus it is important to know one's level of tolerance for risk before investing in the exporting adventure.

The possibilities of error and financial loss are many. But if the spirit of enterprise is inciting you to undertake this adventure, having realistically considered the prospects, you are in for one of the most gratifying periods of your life. *CanadExport's* objective still is to help you make the decisions involved in exporting activities.

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