



S u c c e s s S t o r i e s

By reducing barriers to trade and investment throughout the continent, the NAFTA has stimulated enhanced efficiencies in the Canadian economy and expanded opportunities for Canadian firms. While the impact as captured in statistical measures may seem dry, the reality is that this translates directly into more and better jobs for Canadians, more choice and better prices for Canadian consumers, and enriched lives through a flourishing of people-to-people exchanges across North America.

For example, Denis Coderre, the President of a Quebec-based transportation firm, SGT 2000, affirms that "by easing restrictions and reducing tariffs, the Agreement has facilitated transportation of all kinds of products. For us, it has meant a boost in volume and more jobs." The competitiveness of Canadian companies, coupled with the NAFTA's comprehensive trade and investment rules, has allowed Canadian firms to vie for contracts and opportunities across North America. The President of Testori Americas Corporation, a P.E.I. firm which exports 80% of its aircraft and related components, mainly to the U.S., maintains that the NAFTA has "made a level playing field of North America, where contracts are won or lost strictly on the basis of efficiency and cost effectiveness."

The NAFTA has been particularly helpful to Canadian firms that were reluctant or unable to enter Mexico due to the high tariff walls and restrictive investment rules that existed before the implementation of the Agreement. Arie van der Lee, Vice-President of Alberta-based Alternative Fuel Systems Inc., believes that "the Mexicans really want to deal with Canadian companies, but prior to the NAFTA, there were trade obstacles, most of which have been removed over the past five years."

The NAFTA has also stimulated the sharing of technology and new forms of strategic partnerships based on a more stable and predictable business environment. Bob Richards, from Genesis Organic Incorporated in Newfoundland, claims that "the NAFTA has paved the way for significant technology transfer opportunities in the environment among potential North American joint venture partners." Mark Zenuk, of the Commodity Marketing Group at the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, similarly points out that "the NAFTA is a critical element in enabling improved trade relations and more strategic long-term business planning between Canada and our North American trading partners."

The temporary entry provisions of the NAFTA have facilitated the movement of business people across North America and enhanced productive interactions between Canadians and their U.S. and Mexican colleagues. Gordon Maynard, from McCrea and Associates in Vancouver, maintains that "there's no question that the provisions of [the] NAFTA accommodate business necessities without undue bureaucracy." Brownstein and Brownstein, a law firm in Montreal, views the NAFTA as "a real boon in facilitating the flow of personnel" into the U.S. and Mexico.

Many academics in Canada also agree that the NAFTA has played a significant role in making Canadian companies more efficient and in preparing them for the challenges of the global economy in the new millennium. Professor John Kirton from the Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto asserts that "[the] NAFTA has forced us to rationalize, to get our cost structure down and to learn how to market and produce for countries that are very different from ours." Professor Steven Globberman from Simon Fraser University in B.C. maintains that the economic integration of Canadian industries with those of the United States and