

SECTOR: Consumer Products and Services

SUB-SECTOR: GIFTWARE/ARTS AND CRAFTS/JEWELLERY

Officer: T. Weinstein

U.S. Market Opportunities: This is a high-growth sector. Most giftware in the U.S. is sold at trade shows to retailers, wholesalers and distributors as opposed to sales calls on retail outlets. There is a developing interest in artwork produced by or representing Canadian aboriginal artists.

Giftware and crafts tend to be exported along geographic lines in a north-south alignment. Important considerations in these sectors are price points and item quality. The nature of the industry makes imported "knock off" souvenir goods easily available at a much cheaper prices than authentic crafts or giftware. Price can be an impediment in marketing upscale pieces.

The U.S. imported jewellery market is split between fine jewellery, mostly supplied by France and Italy, and costume jewellery brought in from East Asia. Much of the gems and gold used in the production of fine jewellery is imported into Canada, processed and exported at high costs. Canadian producers will sell their fine jewellery on style and price.

Canadian Capabilities: The arts/crafts/giftware sector runs the range from unique, hand-made, individually-created collector-quality goods to mass-produced souvenir-type items, as well as clothing, food, home and garden articles. The artists and companies range from major producers to "cottage artisans" who work at home and sell their products in community or regional gift and arts/crafts shows. There are about 200 export-ready suppliers in Canada.

Major drawbacks affecting arts and crafts/giftware sales are the lack of national or strong provincial groups to organize the industry and provide marketing advice, cohesion and the lack of a database or other mechanism to catalogue the producers, their products and their capabilities.

Strategy: The relatively small number of export-ready companies limits our assistance to narrow target markets and specific events. The Bureau will capitalize on the potential for unique Canadian arts and crafts and native/Inuit creations by strengthening our participation in appropriate venues.

- The industry would benefit from educational efforts including the potential to create national/provincial groups noted above. The Bureau will work with other interested parties to accomplish this. Seminars for new to market suppliers and the Bureau will place some priority on this.