

Visiting Mexico

Personal visits to Mexico are essential for a company to finalize its market entry strategy. Several trips are usually required. Before embarking on a move into Mexico, Canadian companies should be sure that they are prepared for the major investment of time and money that is required. Mexican business is conducted on a relatively formal basis and developing personal relationships can take time. Companies that have succeeded in Mexico almost always comment that the venture took longer and cost more than they expected. This kind of long-term commitment requires the full support of senior management. It also takes patience and perseverance to develop business relationships in Mexico's relatively formal business environment.

Canadians visiting Mexico are well-received, but some of them have ruined a good first impression by failing to follow up. This can cause serious harm to Canada's reputation in Mexico, and it can also hamper the progress of more serious exporters. Moreover, the failure to follow good business etiquette can reflect badly on the trade commissioner who arranged the contact, and can impair his or her ability to use personal contacts in the future. As the company proceeds with its Mexican market entry strategy, it should keep the trade commissioner informed of its progress.

Understanding the Mexican business culture and learning to operate in that environment is an important success factor for prospective exporters. When visiting Mexico, company representatives should be on time for appointments, and formally cancel any that they cannot keep. A follow-up letter to the Mexican contact is always appropriate, and a copy to the trade commissioner will help to promote a team relationship. Further information about the cultural aspects of doing business in Mexico is included in the Export *i* Mexican Knowledge Base.