

DFAIT is also a partner with the Forum for International Trade and Training (FITT), which includes a two-day Mexico seminar. Information about FITT is provided in the contacts section of this document.

Trade Promotion Events

Successful Canadian companies are familiar with the use of trade fairs as a means of expanding business. In the past, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has sponsored numerous events in Mexico. As Canada's trade promotion efforts in Mexico have matured, this role is evolving towards facilitation rather than sponsorship.

Canadian information booths at some trade fairs will continue to provide a focal point for the participation of Canadian companies who chose not to enter as exhibitors in their own right. The information booths also provide a base for trade commissioners to gather market intelligence and identify matchmaking opportunities. But, in the future, incoming trade missions for potential Mexican buyers will be the key activity in the Action Plan.

Specific trade promotion activities are planned annually during the Canadian International Business Strategy (CIBS) consultation process. A copy of the CIBS is available through the InfoCentre: tel.: 1-800-267-8367 or (613) 944-4000; fax: (613) 996-9709. The Mexico Division, Latin America and Caribbean Branch, maintains an up-to-date listing of all of its trade promotion events in or from Mexico: tel.: (613) 996-5547; fax: (613) 996-6142; Internet: <http://www.dfait-maeci.go.ca>

Experience has shown that while Canada enjoys a very positive general reputation among Mexicans, there is a lack of understanding of the sophistication of specific Canadian technologies and capabilities. The result is that good impressions made by visiting Canadians in Mexico are often not followed by immediate orders. Too often, Mexican buyers prefer more familiar brands from the United States. This gap can be filled by bringing Mexican customers to Canada, where they can see first hand Canada's products and services. Incoming missions will feature tours of Canadian plants and technical facilities, as well as visits to Canadian trade shows. This approach ensures that scarce resources are allocated to sectors where Canada has the best sales prospects.

CHANGING THE APPROACH TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

The components of the Trade Action Plan described in the previous sections are not isolated endeavors. They are part of a new approach, designed to ensure a close match between the needs of Canadian exporters and the capabilities of Team Canada. Ensuring that every inquiry from a Canadian business person is dealt with expeditiously and effectively is a key element of our overall plan. Assisting companies to access the system in the most efficient way possible is the principal method for making this happen.