

# Team Canada 1997: Flight to Future Success

**S**aturday, January 20, 1997. Vancouver International Airport. The flight arrives from Bangkok, and out step a group of people you might not expect to see sharing the same plane. The Prime Minister of Canada, provincial premiers, federal ministers, and city mayors; business people from both large and small businesses, from high-tech industries to the arts; heads of universities and colleges and of business organizations and associations; students and young entrepreneurs; and members of the media — they have all travelled together to and from the most successful and comprehensive trade mission in Canadian history: Team Canada 1997.

Team Canada 1997 was a whirlwind tour of South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand, countries that are part of one of the fastest-growing economic regions in the world — Asia Pacific — and that purchased \$20.7 billion of Canadian products and services in the first 11 months of 1996.

In solid signed deals, Team Canada 1997 — the third such mission to Asia — brought home more than \$800 million of business, along with \$1.3 billion in agreements and understandings, and the potential for even more down the road.

The passengers leaving the plane look tired but satisfied. Some have come home with firm

contracts signed. Others have returned with a promise of future success. Still others have the satisfaction of having played an important intermediary role. As a team, they have helped pave the way to a brighter future for all Canadians, whether in growth for Canadian companies, doors opened to new export markets, jobs at home, or a boost to the national economy.

More than 500 people took part in the mission. They came from all parts of Canada and all sectors of the economy, offering everything from Internet technology to Newfoundland wine, from New Brunswick stuffed lobsters to television communications systems, from churches to log cabins, from water distillation equipment to education programs, from space satellites to Canadian wheat.

Together they represented a microcosm of the diversity of the Canadian economy.

## A united front

The advantage of being part of a mission to export such a diverse array of products and services might not be obvious at first, but as Aylmer, Quebec, art dealer Carol Ann Gingras discovered, being part of the delegation put her in a better position to open doors that were once shut to her. "People are interested in Team Canada," she says. "With it, they aren't just looking at a little art company on its own. It's a whole package." She maintains she made more headway in 12 days than on a previous three-month trip to Japan.

To Trevor Hewison, director of Shuttle Craft Canada of Saskatoon,  
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## CanadExport

ISSN 0823-3330

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Circulation: 40,000

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CanadExport is published twice monthly, in both English and French, by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), Communication Strategies and Planning Division (BCF)

CanadExport is available in Canada to interested exporters and business-oriented people. For subscription send your business card. For address changes and cancellations, please send your mailing label. Allow four to six weeks.

Mail to: CanadExport (BCFE), Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa K1A 0G2.