



PSA Survey Shows Rep's Interest In International Market

As MANA and *Agency Sales* magazine have surveyed association members over the years, one of the most consistent areas of growth appears to be the number of independent representatives involved in international trade. As the world continues to shrink and more and more foreign manufacturers seek entry into the highly desired North American marketplace, more reps seek out contacts overseas.

Results of a membership survey conducted last fall by the Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA), Toronto, Canada, provide a virtual mirror image of what *Agency Sales* has found and reported among its readers.

In an article that appeared in *agentExchange*, that association's monthly e-bulletin "dedicated to independent sales representatives and the manufacturers they represent," it was reported that huge percentages of the association's members are involved in everything from corresponding with international contacts, undertaking international business travel and reviewing international financing/insurance options.

CPSA notes that the survey was undertaken "in order to identify members engaged in international business and to better understand and anticipate their needs." A total of 171 CPSA members engaged in domestic and international trade activities responded

to the survey. Questions that were included in the survey focused primarily on trade programs, resources and training that would be of interest to members and specific market areas that members were interested in.

Among some of the important survey findings were:

- Among survey respondents, 41% identified themselves as presidents of their own agencies. Out of this category, more than 94% maintained that they were interested or active in international business activities.
- Respondents identified international communication strategies (75%) as being important/most important to them under the category of international sales management.
- Respondents identified networking activities (75%) as being important/most important to them under the category of international promotional support.
- Survey participants maintained that customs and

regulations (79%) were important/most important to them under the category of trade services.

- Market intelligence was identified by 86% of respondents as being important/most important to them under the category of international market development.
- Exporting and finding international trade partners (73%) were described as important/most important to them under the category of marketing support services.
- A majority of respondents (54%) were not aware of the export-ready programs and services offered by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs.

International Activities

In addition, survey respondents indicated that they were active in the following areas of trade activities:

- Correspondence with international contacts (86%)
- International business travel (75%)
- Participation/attendance at international trade shows (73%)
- Sales to international customers (68%)
- Preparation of international price lists (36%)
- Review/recommend international financing/insurance options (12%)
- Documentation for international shipments (34%)
- Review/recommend transportation (29%)
- Develop supply chain management strategies (22%)
- Recruit international salespeople (21%)
- Manage international business (53%)

North America Remains Attractive

The majority of survey respondents were primarily interested in North American markets and markets that are closest to them in terms of geography. The top five market areas of interest included:

- Northeastern U.S. (77%)
- Midwestern U.S. (63%)
- Northwestern U.S. (57%)
- Southwestern U.S. (57%)

In summation, agentExchange notes that “the

emerging profile of a CPSA member is largely one where members are interested in trade activities but primarily in North American markets. They are also interested in tools and resources that will help them capture market share through export sales with partner channels.”

Canadian Resource Links

Canadian Business Research

- <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>

Globalization

- Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Export and Import Controls Bureau
<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>
- Canadian Trade Commissioner Service
<http://www.infoexport.gc.ca>
- Directory of Canadian Exporters
<http://www.export.ca>
- The Blue Book of Canadian Business
<http://www.cbr.ca>

News

- Yahoo News Canada
<http://ca.fullcoverage.yahoo.com>
- STEP Global (newsletter of the Saskatchewan Trade & Export Partnership)
<http://www.sasktrade.sk.ca>

Trade Shows

- <http://www.export.ca/events/events.asp>

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