

ABSTRACT

INTERNATIONALIZING THE MARKETING CURRICULUM: THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

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Internationalization of the curriculum has become a watchword for the AACSB and many American business schools. Yet AACSB schools have only made modest progress in this area, especially in preparing faculty for teaching with an international perspective (AACSB Newsline, 1987). Ironically, a first step towards internationalization may not be so difficult as it appears and does not have to involve an understanding of Asian or European languages, culture, or business methods. A much easier, though less exotic, case is Canada. While exhibiting similar cultural characteristics and business practices, Canada provides a very different market than the United States with its own political/legal system, cultural diversity, and a partial language barrier. Moreover, it is not commonly appreciated that Canada, not Japan, is America's largest trading partner. Recent developments towards a free or enhanced trade agreement between Canada and the United States emphasize the need for a greater understanding of North American trade patterns and marketing practices.

Canada, with a population of only 25 million, has the seventh largest economy in the western world. Significantly, Canada buys twice as many goods as America's next largest trading partner, Japan, and over three times that of the third partner, Mexico. Approximately 20% of America's world exports go to Canada. On the import side, Canada is still America's major trading partner. However, imports from Japan are at approximately the same level. As a result, Japan's trade surplus with the United States is much larger--a major reason Japanese trade attracts so much more attention than Canadian.

The trade picture between Canada and the United States is more complete when the services sector is considered. In this sector (travel, shipping, business services, government transactions, investment income, transfers), the United States runs a consistent surplus with Canada (approximately \$9 billion in 1985).

Internationalization of the curriculum goes beyond an appreciation for a single foreign market. Nevertheless, much can be gained by a more intensive understanding of major trading partners. Some advantages of studying trading patterns and marketing in Canada are:

a) Accessibility/proximity. While it is difficult for North Americans to visit extensively in Europe or Asia, let alone understand business practices, Canada is close and accessible.

b) Similar yet different. The Canadian market is similar to the American market but also presents many differences that demonstrate the increased complexity of international marketing.

c) World's largest bilateral trade relationship.

d) Trends in world marketing towards freer trade. The Canadian/American trade relationship focuses on issues of freer trade with elimination of tariffs, reduced non-tariff barriers, government procurement, and the growing need for multilateral rules on trade in services. An enhanced trade relationship between Canada and the United States may be a model for future GATT negotiations especially concerning non-tariff barriers and services. This provides a mutual basis for curriculum development, student and faculty exchanges, etc. An enhanced relationship between Canadian and American schools is less dramatic but perhaps a more achievable first step towards internationalization.