

Trade from BACK PAGE

The idea behind the trade mission is to match executives from small- and medium-sized corporations with their counterparts in the rapidly privatizing states.

Previously, the approach to getting North American businesses involved in the emerging countries of the former Soviet Union was to hold large seminars, Pyatenko said.

"Having someone talk at you is a waste of time. In order to succeed, there is a formula to follow — friendship, then trust, then the deal," he said. "You can't circumvent this."

Trade mission participants will deal directly with his or her potential partners. "We want to accelerate friendship through personal bridges."

Interpreters and essential business needs, including document preparation, consulting, and analysis by representatives from the law firm and accounting firm will be available as needed.

"As a result of the March mission, two participants are already involved in extensive negotiations," Pyatenko said. Eight participants were involved in the first trade mission; sponsors are limiting the

■ 'Having someone talk at you is a waste of time. In order to succeed, there is a formula to follow — friendship, then trust, then the deal. You can't circumvent this. We want to accelerate friendship through personal bridges.'

Eugene W. Pyatenko
Miller Canfield Paddock Stone

number to 30 for the second trip.

Don Wilson of Deloitte Touche, Detroit, said opportunities exist in almost every business sector. Insurance, banking, transportation, communications, manufacturing, commercial and infrastructure.

Quite naturally, Wilson said he expects most participants from this area will be from manufacturing and auto-related fields.

Wilson said not every participant will develop a partnership on the first visit; that's not what the trade mission is about. "It's about establishing contacts."

"I don't expect some tool and die company in Warren to go over there, spend \$10 million and set up a plant," he said. Starting a business in a country with different customs, people and laws is not easy.

Wilson said he envisions true partnerships between North American and the former Soviet Union. Both sides bring something to the relationship.

"They bring a skilled workforce, desire, a consumer base, and raw materials; we bring management skills, marketing know-how, technology, engineering."

"I think if we wait too long, it's going to be a missed opportunity," Wilson continued. "As a general rule, the Western investor is being short-sighted."

Pyatenko said many reasons are given for not going, not the least of which is the question over the convertibility of funds, the political instability of the region, and the inadequate infrastructure. Pyatenko contends that is exactly why now is

the time to go.

"It's our investment that will act as the stabilizing force," Pyatenko said.

If North American businesses don't act quickly, however, the new businesses will go elsewhere.

"I'm afraid we've lost our frontier spirit," he said. "We want everything to be handed to us on a silver platter."

Such sentiment was readily apparent in a conversation he recently had with a local businessman. Pyatenko said he told the businessman forming a business partnership in the former Soviet Union is like picking apples off a tree.

"He said, 'Why pick the apples off the tree when we can pick them off the ground?' We're going to Mexico," Pyatenko said.

"We can't wait for the dust to settle; if we do, the train will have already left the station," Pyatenko said.

To inquire about the trade mission, call Eugene W. Pyatenko at the law offices of Miller, Canfield Paddock and Stone in Detroit at 963-6420, or Don Wilson of Deloitte Touche, Detroit, at 396-3000.

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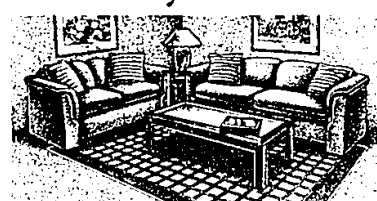
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Agreement from BACK PAGE

Management opportunities

But while most agree the pact will lead to layoffs, those with college degrees stand to fare better than those with high school diplomas. There's no shortage of Mexican workers who would work for \$5 a day, but trained management personnel are scarce. Bilingual skills will also be at a premium.

The agreement would lead to other benefits as well. Elaine

Accevedo, director of government affairs for the Florist Transworld Delivery Association (FTDA), which is headquartered in Southfield, said florist members would likely hold the costs on flowers rather than drop prices.

"We may see a sizable impact on the flow of imported flowers into this country, but at this point I don't know how big an impact it will be," Accevedo said. "We would

also likely expand our presence in Mexico."

Meanwhile, with an emerging middle class, many predict the call for consumer items like cosmetics and prepared food will increase as the standard of living rises.

"U.S. goods have a cachet about them in Mexico, and are viewed there as higher in quality than items from Japan or Germany,"

Victor said. "The middle class is also growing, which should provide plenty of opportunities for U.S. firms who do their homework."

"My advice to companies researching a move into Mexico is to hire a consulting firm with knowledge of the country. Even though Mexico is our neighbor, they have different laws and regulations, and it would be risky to venture out on your own."

MARKETPLACE

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