

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN MARKINGS



One of the most significant non-tariff barriers facing Canadian Printers wishing to export to the United States has always been the requirement by the U.S. Government that the words “Printed In Canada” appear on all printed material entering that country. This discouraged potential U.S. customers, largely because of their sensitivity to “Buy American” campaigns.

During the NAFTA negotiations, the Canadian Printing Industries Association lobbied hard to address this trade irritant and successfully convinced our trade negotiators to tackle this barrier head on. As a result of this action, the NAFTA Agreement was signed containing two clauses which essentially eliminate the need for exported printed materials, not intended for resale, to be individually marked at all.

Under Annex 311 of NAFTA, a good is exempt from marking if it “is in a container that is marked in a manner that will reasonably indicate the good’s origin to the ultimate purchaser.” The agreement goes on to state that “ultimate purchaser means the last person in the territory of an importing party (A NAFTA country) that purchases the good in the form for which it was imported; such person need not be the last person that will use the good.”

In lay terms, NAFTA allows printers to ship their products to other NAFTA countries without markings, so long as the goods are not for resale, i.e. advertising flyers, circulars, direct mail material and catalogues and brochures that are given away for free.

It is important to remember however, that while individual items need not be marked, the outermost shipping container, the invoice and other shipping documents must be marked “Printed in Canada.”

Notwithstanding this NAFTA rule, it is recommended that printing firms or their customs brokers provide samples or mock-ups of the product and shipping containers to U.S. Customs officials at the border crossing to be used. This extra step will ensure smooth passage and avoid the possibility of it being returned.