A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY…96% OF THE WORLD’S CONSUMERS RESIDE OUTSIDE THE U.S. WHERE WILL YOUR NEXT CUSTOMER COME FROM?

96% OF THE WORLD’S CONSUMERS LIVE OUTSIDE OF THE United States and represent two-thirds of the world’s purchasing power. U.S. companies that export enjoy business success with increased sales and profit potential. Exporting also helps businesses weather downturns in the domestic economy by being prepared to respond to foreign competition and global market trends.

Now is an ideal time for U.S. small businesses to start or expand export operations because...

- U.S. businesses have a competitive advantage for producing high-quality, innovative goods and services with sound business practices.
- Advancements in e-commerce and logistics have lowered the costs of doing business overseas.
- Free trade agreements have opened up markets in Australia, Chile, Singapore, Jordan, Israel, Canada, Mexico, and Central America, creating more opportunities for U.S. businesses. (A World of Opportunity/SBA.gov)

EXPORT.GOV

Are you ready to make international sales? EXPORT BASICS helps you assess your export readiness, understand what you need to know and consider before pursuing an international sales strategy, and when you are ready, develop and implement your export strategy.

The subsequent sections of EXPORT BASICS will help you develop and implement your export plan. Each section corresponds to the key components of an effective export plan – posing questions you should answer to complete your plan and provides resources to help you answer those questions.

- Take the Are You Export Ready? online readiness assessment to find out if you are ready to pursue international sales (food and agricultural exporters).
- Read the ITA Blog on HOW THE COMMERCIAL SERVICER HELPS EXPORTERS.
- The U. S. Commercial Service is pleased to offer you 4 ways to learn exporting.
- Need an introduction to exporting? Browse our step-by-step BASIC GUIDE TO EXPORTING.
- Watch the ARE YOU READY? AND GOING BEYOND BORDERS videos to hear a U.S. Commercial Officer talk about issues you should consider before going global, and hear from companies that have worked with the U.S. Commercial Service to make international sales.
- Watch educational videos on the TAKE YOUR BUSINESS GLOBAL website. These videos discuss topics such as getting started, how to connect with your foreign buyer and they highlight some case studies to show you just how easy it is to get started.
• Think export success is out of your reach? Read SUCCESS STORIES ABOUT how companies like yours are succeeding in the international marketplace.
• Learn to sell globally from your e-commerce site with the PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS FOR GLOBAL E-COMMERCE: A GUIDE FOR ONLINE RETAILERS TO MANAGE OPERATIONS, INVENTORY, AND PAYMENT ISSUES manual.

EXPORT UNIVERSITY 101

EXPORT UNIVERSITY 101 is a webinar that presents basic information on exporting including:

• Organizational and product readiness
• Market research
• Guidance for developing your strategy and marketing plan
• Promoting your products in target market
• Complying with US and foreign regulations.

It presents useful methods and strategies to help you export your products successfully abroad.

HELPING U.S. BUSINESS EXPORT – FAQ

Export Basics helps you assess your export readiness, understand what you need to know and consider before pursuing an international sales strategy, and when you are ready, develop and implement your export strategy (export.gov).

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been separated into the following categories:

• Documents and Paperwork
• Foreign Market Information
• Regulations and Standards
• Services
• Trade Problems
• Glossary of terms

WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN MAKING THE DECISION TO BEGIN EXPORTING AND HOW DO I BEGIN?

There are many ways to become involved in exporting, from filling orders for domestic buyers (such as export trading companies that then export the product) to exporting products yourself. However you choose to export, the development of a detailed and thorough strategy is an important part of the planning process. Steps in developing a strategy include:

• Evaluating your product’s export potential
• Determining if you are really willing to make a commitment to international markets and evaluating whether your company is “export-ready”
• Identifying key foreign markets for your products through market research
• Evaluating distribution and promotional options and establishing an overseas distribution system
• Determining export prices, payment terms, methods, and techniques
• Familiarizing yourself with shipping methods, export documentation procedures, export financing, and other requirements for exporting
DEVELOP YOUR EXPORT PLAN

Creating an international business plan, i.e., export plan, is important for defining your company’s present status, internal goals and commitment, but is also required if you plan to seek export financing assistance. Preparing the plan in advance of making export loan requests from your bank can save time and money. Completing and analyzing an international business plan helps you anticipate future goals, assemble facts, identify constraints and create an action statement. It should also set forth specific objectives, an implementation timetable and milestones to gauge success.

Check out this section on the export.gov website to learn how to:

- Conduct an “audit” of your company to determine how exporting will impact your operations.
- Understand the key components of an effective, actionable export plan.
- Have a clear idea of the information you need to collect and where you might find that information (Export Basics).

Before writing your international sales plan, you should understand exactly what exporting will mean for your company; specifically, you should consider the management issues for exporting, approaches to exporting, distribution channels and other international trade considerations that will impact your business. Just as no two companies are alike, there is no one-size-fits-all export plan; however, your export plan should be an extension of your overall business plan, if not infused completely into your business plan.

Checkup: Do you have immediate business issues you must resolve before moving forward with an international sales strategy? Are you familiar with the key components of an effective export plan? Are you prepared to begin developing your plan using the guidance provided in OUTLINE FOR AN EXPORT PLAN? You can speak with a trade specialist by calling 800-USA-TRADE.

Next? Identify Your Market: Tune in to export webinars; enroll in online basic exporting classes; listen to research webcasts and learn about How to Sell at International Trade Shows.

GET LOGISTICAL SUPPORT:

Now that you have set a strategy for the market(s) to which you plan to sell, how are you going to get your products/services to those market(s)? It is important to update your export plan with the documentation requirements for getting your product from point A to point B; understand what you need to know about labeling; and identify your method of shipment.

Resources: Documents required for shipping will vary depending on the country to which you are exporting. Packaging and labeling requirements also vary depending on the country to which you are exporting. There are a variety of options for shipping your product including FedEx, UPS, DHL, and freight forwarders to ship your product.

WHAT IS A FREIGHT FORWARDER, WHAT SERVICES DO THEY PROVIDE AND HOW CAN I FIND ONE?

A freight forwarder **IS A PERSON WHO IS HIRED TO MOVE SHIPMENTS BETWEEN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC LOCATIONS, OR A PORTION OF THE WAY.** Freight forwarders handle many of the formalities involved in exporting and importing shipments. For more information, go to export.gov and find additional information about a freight forwarder.
**TRADE INFORMATION CENTER: GET MORE ANSWERS TO YOUR EXPORT QUESTIONS**

The Trade Information Center is staffed by export professionals capable of advising you on all aspects of the export process. Contact us if you need assistance with export documentation, U.S. and foreign market regulations, trade complaints, market research and more. **SEND US A QUICK E-MAIL WITH YOUR QUESTION OR DESCRIBING YOUR ISSUE.**

(1-800-872-8723) Use the links below to access:
- Country Specific Tariff/Duty and Tax Information
- HS/Schedule B Information (the commodity classification for your product)
- Videos on the Export Process
- The Basic Guide to Exporting (Revised Edition)
- Export Documentation
- How to Write an Export Plan
- Country Information for Selecting Target Markets
- Market Research

**Make a note of it:** Among the newer online resources is a series of Webinars; currently 25 of these one-hour seminars are available for downloading by U.S. companies that have registered on the site. The Webinars focus on topics such as export planning, navigating regulations, and obtaining market-specific profiles. ITA maintains the federal government’s export Web portal at www.export.gov and the Web site offers a wide variety of resources to help exporters, including listings of upcoming trade events, links to local offices, and videos on trade topics. Another resource for export assistance is the network of more than 100 U.S. Export Assistance Centers. The U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service also has commercial officers and counselors at more than 75 overseas locations, usually working from a U.S. embassy or consulate. Links to those offices can also be found on www.export.gov.

**Rural Offices Help Exporters Compete:** Many of the U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs) are small offices that serve a wide territory mainly made up of rural communities. The specialists at these offices must be flexible, resourceful, and willing to accommodate the needs of a diverse clientele. According to a rural office Director, the USEACs play a greater role in rural areas. This is a resource to businesses because staff connects companies to resources that are perceived as distant, through this network. Often, small rural companies are less familiar and less trusting of trade, thus requiring support from a Commercial Service contact. The staff tries to sell the idea of exporting to companies and they are the face of the federal government to a lot of companies.... Taken in part from http://trade.gov/publications/ita-newsletter

**BUSINESS WITHOUT BORDERS: Tools to sell your B2B offering around the World**

Finding markets for your products or services means more than a quick Google Search. Even as web-based marketing tools make it easier to reach potential customers around the globe, it’s important not to be blinkered by Google-colored glasses. While the Internet behemoth offers a slew of free tools ranging from YouTube to its Global Market Finder service, the service should be a first step, not the last, in an international marketing campaign. “Google isn’t necessarily No. 1 in every market. If you look at Russia, it’s Yandex. If you look at China, it’s Baidu. It’s about understanding which areas you’re in and which media are most prominent in that space,” states Amanda Steeves, vice-president of marketing for Toronto-based research, management consulting and B2B marketing consulting firm The Mezzanine Group.
That’s an important factor in search-engine optimization (SEO), where companies load their sites with popular words and phrases in order to boost their unpaid ranking in search-engine results. While simple translations can provide basic equivalents, they often don’t reflect nuances built into the algorithms of local search engine – the local culture itself. For example, says Steeves, a direct translation of “retractable roof” wouldn’t do much for SEO in Russia – the phrase isn’t used there. “For that initiative...reach out to local contacts and identify key words that were more relevant to that market. You have to use the right terminology.”

In North America, for example, construction projects built to more environmental friendly standards usually seek LEED certification, but other countries and regions have their own green certification systems; potential customers wouldn’t automatically understand the concept of LEED.

Garret Wasny, a web consultant and author of *How to Conquer the World*, isn’t a big fan of SEO, especially as the web becomes more personalized and localized, and as search engines constantly change their algorithms to prevent companies from gaming the system; he would rather see companies focus on strong, frequently updated website content that speaks directly to the markets they are targeting. That includes case studies with international examples and lots of references to target markets, if not country-specific websites. And, he would rather see a rudimentary translation than no translation at all. Wasny continues, “I’m sure there are some translation purists who would freak out, but a lot of companies are taking baby steps into the global market and something like *Google Translate* is a simple tool that can help companies, no matter where they are on the export continuum.”

As a Mezzanine Group blog entry points out, video is an increasingly cheap and easy way to communicate idea across cultural and linguistic barriers. A video of a company leader talking about a company’s mission, for example, puts a face to a name, while a video of how a product works can communicate with images rather than words. Videos can be distributed on the company’s website, on a DVD and, of course, on Google’s *YouTube.com*, which provides a way to subtitle videos. “There is instant credibility in a video,” says Wasny. “You could write a 200 page white paper and not have the effect of a 30-second video. Images are just so compelling and they show you are a real person.”

Just because video has become easy to do doesn’t mean there aren’t pitfalls. “You really have to consider the region,” says Tania Floretti, The Mezzanine Group’s marketing director. “If you are entering the Middle Eastern market, for example, you have to consider the types of people you’re putting in your videos, what they are wearing, and what they might be drinking. The rule is to stick to the product. And, you should always check it with people in that specific market before you launch it.”

The number of web-based services aimed at lead-nurturing has also grown exponentially. Steeves cites *Eloqua, Marketo, Silverpop, LeadLander and Pardot* as ways to keep on top of who has downloaded a white paper, who is looking for pricing information and who wants an occasional e-blast newsletter. (Speaking of videos that explain products, Pardot has a good one.) Buying journeys can differ from country to country, says Steeves. “If you take North America, for example, there is more of an aptitude for electronic communications. In other parts of the world, there is more emphasis on face-to-face or a telephone call as a touch point.”

While lead-nurturing services vary greatly in cost, Wasny points again back to *Google*. Its *Alerts* are free, allowing users to get updates when websites, blogs and news sources use specified keywords – for example, offering an early warning that a company is starting on a new project for which they will need a supplier. So is *Google’s Global Market Finder*, which allows you to search for common searches in specified international markets in order to buy search ads against them.
“All these little value-added steps will drastically improve your profile over time,” says Wasny. "While tough web-based tools can save time and automate many processes, they are not a substitute for on-the-ground contact. "No matter what market you are entering, you are going to need some kind of local support….and that may mean setting up your own office with local staff or working with a partner," says Steeves. “And remember to check out Business without Border's own Global Opportunity Tool. It should be your first stop in determining which countries are most disposed to buying your product or service. The tool lets you explore different international markets based on data from your own industry and covers 55 countries of which U.S. companies are most likely to trade with or expand into. It provides users with data on as many as 385 products or services. Using the Global opportunity tool is completely free for Business without Borders members."  

Information taken in part from: http://www.businesswithoutborders.com/industries/importexport.)

**OBTAIN LOCAL ADVISEMENT AND CONSULTATION BY CONTACTING THE FOLLOWING:**

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