

DO YOU KNOW?



Thinking About Exporting? We Can Help!

Many small businesses become exporters not by design or planning, but as a result of responding to opportunity. An unsolicited inquiry may whet their interest. Or a savvy entrepreneur, looking for fresh challenges becomes the CEO who travels abroad in search of international markets. Excess inventory that is obsolete in the domestic market can send a company off shore to find buyers.

Any number of scenarios can create a successful international business as long as they are combined with a generous dose of luck and determination. A reliable strategy, however, to transform a company into a global player and build long-term international success requires that motivation meets preparation.

The first step should be to take stock. Before the plan, the research and certainly the commitment of money, a simple readiness test will reveal whether the necessary foundation exists. Clarifying motivation, suitability and essential ingredients for success will go a long way towards smoothing the path to international trade success. Check any How-to book or manual on essential features for long-term success in exporting and you will find agreement on these basic and necessary ingredients:

- Management commitment
- Strong product/service and industry knowledge
- Adequate financing or cash flow
- Capacity to produce or source for the international market

Together with a readiness assessment, an overlay of attitudinal tests will reveal suitability for going global. If applied to the organization, the management team and the owner, this probing

of the corporate culture and key staff's individual profile will show whether international trade is a good fit. For example, is there interest in learning, willingness to adjust to new cultures, flexibility in altering business styles, some tolerance for risk, and patience to wait for sales and profits in a realistic time frame.

For the next step much help is available and nearly all of it is without cost. Developing a marketing plan, choosing market entry strategies, identifying target markets, competition research, pricing and labeling, product adaptation/certification – for all of these areas the advice from a trade specialist of the Department of Commerce can be tapped by contacting the Export Assistance Center in Portland. Online resources and publications can supplement appointments and businesses [www.sba.gov/or, click on International Trade Resources & Assistance].

Required reading for new-to-export and new businesses:

- Beginning Exporter's Resource Guide (list of resources in Oregon)
- Breaking Into the Trade Game (book)
- Most Frequently Asked Questions (fact sheet)

For export-ready companies, a one-day seminar, called EXPORT STRATEGIES, TOOLS and TECHNIQUES, is recommended. It builds on basic export knowledge with solid instruction and time for interaction and questions. For details on the next seminar, see www.buyusa.gov/oregon, and then click on Events. 

Inga Fisher Williams is the Regional Export Finance Manager for the **U.S. Small Business Administration** in the Export Assistance Center in Portland. She can be reached at 503.326.5498 or inga.fisherwilliams@mail.doc.gov. For the online library of export resources and publications cited above, see www.sba.gov/localresources/district/or/or_itresources.html



Mission Statement:

To initiate, support and facilitate international trade development activities within Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Linn and Benton counties.

WOITC encourages international trade by combining private sector interests with local public sector agencies. We offer education and world-wide connections to internationally oriented businesses.

THE PLACE TO GO FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- Foreign Business Delegations
- Forums and Roundtables
- Resources and Information
- Technical Assistance



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A joint project with Chemeketa Community College and SEDCOR