

Six Steps to Begin Exporting

Start at www.export.gov/begin

Small businesses looking to increase sales and profit, reduce dependence on the domestic market and stabilize seasonal fluctuations should consider exporting.

- Nearly 96 percent of consumers live outside the U.S.
- Two-thirds of the world's purchasing power is in foreign countries.

Go where the customers are. There is significant opportunity for small businesses to profit through exporting.

Step 1 Take the Free Export Readiness Self-Assessment

Do you have what it takes to become a successful exporter? Exporting offers great opportunities but requires preparation and planning. Complete the

online questionnaire and receive feedback to help you assess your export readiness, and advice on how to strengthen your export potential.

Step 2 Training and Counseling

You may think exporting is complicated but the key to export success is to start training and get counseling. This is a multi-phase step. Depending on your assessment score, you will be directed to online and local counselors who can help you design a training program that will effectively match

match your specific needs to available training opportunities. Before contacting those counselors, you may find it helpful to take an introductory online training course or watch a few pre-recorded webinars to get your feet wet.

Step 3 Create an Export Business Plan

Creating an export business plan is important for defining your company's present status, internal goals and commitment. You learn how to develop

an export plan by assembling facts, identifying constraints and setting specific goals and objectives as milestones to success.

U.S. EXPORTS
customers ★ profits ★ success

Step 4 Conduct Market Research

Use market research to learn your product's potential in a given market, where the best prospects exist for success, and common business practices. The *Market Research Library* is the U.S.

government's repository of the latest information prepared by commercial and economic experts in U.S. embassies worldwide. *Trade Stats Express* is a powerful tool for identifying target markets.

Step 5 Find Buyers

Federal, state and local governments are continually organizing highly focused export events directly putting U.S. sellers and potential foreign buyers in direct contact.

Opportunities range from meeting foreign buyer delegations at select U.S. trade shows to signing up for a foreign trade mission or trade show overseas.

Step 6 Investigate Financing Your Small Business Exports, Foreign Investment or Projects

Become familiar with the financing, insurance and grant programs to help your company finance its transactions and assist in carrying out your export

operations. These resources help small businesses ensure foreign payment and manage or remove risk from the equation for both the exporter and its bank.

Exporting is an increasingly attractive way to grow your company's customers, profits and success.

- Foreign demand is strong, with forecasts of the world economy growing more than 4 percent and world trade growing more than 6 percent annually in coming years.
- 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.

And U.S. companies that export enjoy greater business success overall. Exporters are:

- Better prepared to respond to foreign competition and global market trends.
- Able to weather downturns in the domestic economy.
- More competitive and less likely to go out of business.
- Able to extend sales potential of existing products and maintain productive capacity by stabilizing seasonal markets.

Six Steps to Begin Exporting was created by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

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