

**Small Business Administration**  
**Interview with Nabeel A. Rahman Al-Mahmood of Bahrain**

Ron Johnson: For U.S. small businesses looking to expand, exporting offers many advantages like increased sales and profit, lower cost for transportation and communications. Also, the stabilization of seasonal markets and sales fluctuations are a few of the reasons to consider exporting. Add to the fact that 97 percent of the world's customers live outside the U.S. borders, so it might be a good time to consider if exporting is a good fit for your business. Hi, I'm Ron Johnson with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Your Small Business Resource.

U.S. businesses looking to export to a country with a growing economy may want to consider Bahrain. Bahrain is a small island country in the Persian Gulf. Although Arabic is the official language, English is widely spoken and used in business. By the way in 2009, U.S. exports to Bahrain totaled \$669 million and with me today to discuss exporting to Bahrain is Nabeel Al-Mahmood who is the senior manager for Legal Affairs and Member Services at the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Welcome, Nabeel.

Nabeel A. Rahman Al-Mahmood: Thank you Ron. I'm glad to be here.

Ron Johnson: Nabeel can you tell us about your country that would encourage U.S. small businesses to export there.

Nabeel A. Rahman Al-Mahmood: Well, Bahrain is a group of islands that is centrally located in the Arabian Gulf with the total size of 730 sq. km. As a matter of fact, Bahrain is a kingdom with a constitutional monarchy. Our king had launched a reform project in the year 2000 and the main three pillars for the reform project are the economy reform, labor reform and education reform. Bahrain is actually linked to Saudi Arabia with a causeway for I would say 25 kilometer in length and there is another causeway which will link Bahrain to Qatar. It's underway actually and that will enlarge the size of the market. Bahrain is small itself but the linkage with the other GCC countries will make the market large and that would encourage the USA countries to export to Bahrain.

Ron Johnson: What are the marketing opportunities for exporting to your country and what types of U.S. products or services are in demand?

Nabeel A. Rahman Al-Mahmood: Well, there are a lot. I would say Bahrain, we do very well in the aluminum so far and petrochemicals as we have the upstream industries in addition to the steel. However, what we are focusing on now is the food processing, knowledge-base industries, services, even engineering, precision engineering, all the kind of sectors, in addition to the health sector, education as well.

Ron Johnson: Are there particular business customs in Bahrain that U.S. companies should be aware of when considering exporting?

Nabeel A. Rahman Al-Mahmood: Well, you know, it's normal procedures that they should be aware of. Particularly, with having the FTA with the States, I think all the process is so easy and direct.

Ron Johnson: And finally, Nabeel, can you explain how the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry can assist US companies interested in learning more about exporting to your country?

Nabeel A. Rahman Al-Mahmood: Oh, yeah. Basically, we can put them in touch with their counterparts in Bahrain and even to other GCC countries through the federation of chambers. We can receive delegations, we can arrange for exhibitions locally or even in the States. We can hold matchmaking sessions and B2B sessions as well, exchange information and link it to our databases with the U.S. agencies for example to cater for both sides, U.S. companies and Bahrain companies.

Ron Johnson: Excellent. Well, I'd like to thank Nabeel Al-Mahmood for joining us today. If you would like to know more about exporting opportunities go to [www.sba.gov/international](http://www.sba.gov/international) and [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov). So until next time, this is Ron Johnson with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Your Small Business Resource.

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