

## **Making the Government Work for You**

Now that you have had an opportunity to examine some of the complex factors involved in an exporting and marketing plan, you may choose to look for advice or assistance. Advice and assistance are available to your company at little or no cost. This chapter gives a brief overview of assistance available through federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as in the private sector. Other chapters in this guide will provide more information on the specialized services of these organizations and how to use them.

You may feel overwhelmed at first by the number of sources of advice available. Although it is not necessary to use all of these resources, it is valuable to know at least a little about each of them. Each organization contacted can contribute different perspectives based on different experience and skills.

## **Assistance Sources**

### **The Trade Information Center, U.S. Department of Commerce**

The Trade Information Center (TIC) is an excellent source for export assistance. The TIC operates the toll free 1-800-USA-TRADE (1-800-872-8723) number for the Department of Commerce and is a comprehensive resource for information on federal export assistance programs. TIC staff can provide your company with information on 1) locating and using government programs, 2) the export process, 3) sources of general market information, and 4) basic export counseling. TIC trade specialists also answer technical questions on how to access reports and statistics from the computerized National Trade Data Bank (NTDB). You may also request a free copy of the Export Programs Guide: A Business Guide to Federal Export Assistance, which describes the programs of the 20 federal agencies involved in exporting. A special line is available for those who are deaf or hearing impaired using a TDD machine, 1-800-TDD-TRADE (1-800-833-8723). The TIC also has an e-mail address: [tic@ita.doc.gov](mailto:tic@ita.doc.gov) and an internet homepage: <http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/tic>.

### **Export Assistance Centers, U.S. Department of Commerce**

The U.S. and Commercial Service (the Commercial Service) of the Department of Commerce has developed and maintains a network of international trade specialists in the United States to help American companies export their products and conduct business abroad. Trade specialists operate offices known as Export Assistance Centers (EACs) located in almost 100 cities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico that assist small and medium-sized companies. EACs are known as "one-stop shops" because they combine the trade and marketing expertise and resources of the Commercial Service along with the finance expertise and resources of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank). Thus they provide companies with a wide array of services in one location (for a detailed list of these offices, please see <http://www.doc.gov>). EACs also maximize resources by working closely with state and local government as well as private partners to offer companies a full range of expertise in international trade, marketing and finance.

Trade specialists will counsel your company on the steps involved in exporting, help you assess the export potential of your products, identify markets, and locate potential overseas partners.

Each EAC can offer information about:

- Services to locate and evaluate overseas buyers and representatives;
- International trade opportunities abroad;;
- Foreign markets for U.S. products and services;
- Foreign economic statistics;
- Export documentation requirements;
- U.S. export licensing and foreign nation import requirements;
- Export trade financing options;
- International trade exhibitions, and;
- Export seminars and conferences.

## **Overseas Posts, U.S. Department of Commerce**

Much of the information about trends and actual trade leads in foreign countries is gathered on site by the commercial officers of the Commercial Service. Commercial Service officers are working in 67 countries (with 127 offices) and have a personal understanding of local market conditions and business practices. The Commercial Service officers overseas provide a range of services to help companies sell abroad:

background information on foreign companies, agency-finding services, market research, business counseling, assistance in making appointments with key buyers and government officials, and representations on behalf of companies adversely affected by trade barriers. (Some of the more important services are described fully in [Chapter 8](#)).

You can access these services by contacting your nearest EAC. EACs can also provide assistance with business travel before departure by arranging advance appointments with embassy personnel, market briefings, and other assistance in cities to be visited.

The Commercial Service overseas posts also cooperate with the trade and economic development agencies of all 50 states. Your state probably has its own representatives overseas, who can help coordinate export promotion efforts with the Department of Commerce.

### **Trade Development, U.S. Department of Commerce**

Trade Development's industry and international trade specialists work directly with individual firms and manufacturing and service associations to identify trade opportunities and obstacles by product or service, industry sector, and market. Trade Development analysts participate in trade policy development and negotiations, identify market barriers, and provide advocacy on behalf of U.S. companies. Trade Development's statistical data and analyses are useful in export development. TD staff also develop export marketing programs and obtain industry advice on trade matters. To assist U.S. businesses in their export efforts, TD's industry and international experts conduct executive trade missions, trade fairs, product literature centers, marketing seminars, and business counseling. Experts are organized into six major industry sectors:

- Technology and Aerospace Industries
- Basic Industries
- Textiles, Apparel, and Consumer Goods Industries
- Service Industries and Finance
- Environmental Technologies Exports
- Tourism Industries

For further information, contact Trade Development, Room 3832, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20230.

### **The Advocacy Center, U.S. Department of Commerce**

For a U.S. company bidding for a foreign government procurement contract, exporting today can mean more than just selling a good product at a competitive price. It can also mean dealing with foreign governments and complex rules. If you feel the bidding process is not open and transparent, or may be tilted in favor of your foreign competition, then you need to contact the Advocacy Center. The Advocacy Center coordinates the actions of 19 U.S. Government agencies involved in international trade, to level the playing field overseas for U.S. exporters and ensure that sales of U.S. products and services have the best possible chance abroad. Advocacy assistance can include a visit to a key foreign official by a high-ranking U.S. Government official, direct support from U.S. officials stationed overseas, letters to foreign decision makers, and coordinated action by the U.S. Government agencies to businesses of all types and sizes. For more information, call 202-482-3896, fax 202-482-3508; Internet home page: <http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/advocacy>.

**Trade Compliance Center,  
U.S. Department of Commerce**

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Compliance Center (TCC) is an integral part of the U.S. Government's efforts to ensure foreign compliance with trade agreements. Located with the Market Access and Compliance (MAC) unit, the TCC systematically monitors, investigates, and evaluates foreign compliance with multilateral, bilateral, and other international trade agreements and standards of conduct to ensure that U.S. firms and workers receive all the benefits to which they are entitled and are of the opportunities created by market opening initiatives.

The TCC has created the "TCC On-Line," an interactive Internet database service. TCC On-Line provides a "one-stop shop" for American exporters facing market access and agreements-compliance problems. The fully-searchable database contains the texts of over 200 bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade and related agreements, along with detailed market access information for over 90 major U.S. markets. The TCC On-Line service enables U.S. ex-porters to file market access and agreements complaints on-line. Once received, complaints will be addressed by the combined resources of the TCC and the International Trade Administration's country and industry specialists, officers of the Foreign Commercial Service, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

The TCC supports U.S. businesses by investigating allegations of noncompliance with trade agreements. Once a country is determined to be in noncompliance with an agreement or standard of conduct, the economic impact to the economy of the U.S. is assessed and strategies for ensuring foreign compliance are developed. On-line access to the full text of trade agreements as well as timely economic and commercial information on market access barriers, is provided by the Trade Compliance Center at <http://www.trade.gov/>. The TCC can be reached by phone at 202-482-1191 or by mail at the U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 3415, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20230.

**Bureau of Export Administration,  
U.S. Department of Commerce**

The Bureau of Export Administration (BXA) is responsible for control of exports for reasons of national security, foreign policy, and short supply (see [Chapter 8](#)). Assistance in complying with export controls can be obtained directly from your local BXA district office or from the Exporter Counseling Division within the Bureau of Export Administration's Office of Export Licensing in Washington, DC; telephone: 202-482-4811. BXA also has two field offices that specialize in counseling on export controls and regulations: the Western Regional Office (714-660-0144) and the Santa Clara Office (408-998-7402). BXA maintains an Internet home page at <http://www.bxa.doc.gov>.

### **Trade Adjustment Assistance, U.S. Department of Commerce**

Trade Adjustment Assistance, part of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, helps firms that have been adversely affected by imported products to adjust to international competition. Companies eligible for trade adjustment assistance may receive technical consulting to upgrade operations such as product engineering, marketing, information systems, export promotion, and energy management. The federal government may assume up to 75 percent of the cost of these services. For more information call 202-482-3373.

### **Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce**

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) identifies minority business enterprises (MBEs) in selected industries. MBDA then seeks to increase their awareness of their relative size and product advantages and aggressively takes them through the advanced stages of market development.

Through an interagency agreement with the International Trade Administration, MBDA provides information on market and product needs worldwide. MBDA and ITA coordinate MBE participation in trade event.

MBDA provides counseling through the Minority Business Development Center network to help MBEs prepare international marketing plans and promotional materials and to identify financial resources.

For general export information, the field organizations of both MBDA and ITA provide information kits and information on local seminars. Contact the Minority Business Development Agency, Office of Program Development, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230; telephone 202-482-3261.

### **Cooperation between the Departments of Commerce and State**

There are some countries that do not have posts maintained by the Commercial Service. In these cases, the U.S. Department of State will assist your company with any of the services provided by the Commercial Service overseas. Your nearest EAC will provide you with all of the necessary information to make your efforts overseas a success.

## Small Business Administration

In addition to representation in many of the Export Assistance Centers located around the country, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will provide your company with finance and trade counseling through its 107 field offices in cities throughout the United States. Several its no-fee services are:

- **Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).** SBDCs provide a full range of export assistance services to small businesses, particularly those new to export. They also offer counseling, training, managerial, and trade finance assistance. Counseling services are provided at no cost to the small business exporter, but fees are generally charged for export training seminars and other SBDC-sponsored export events.
- **Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).** Members of the SCORE have practical experience in international trade. They can offer your firm assistance by evaluating your company's export potential and can strengthen your domestic operations by identifying financial, managerial, or technical problems. These advisers can also assist you in developing and implementing basic export marketing plans that show where and how to sell your goods abroad.
- **Export Legal Assistance Network (ELAN).** ELAN is a nationwide group of attorneys with experience in international trade which provides free initial consultations to new-to-export businesses on export related matters.

For information on any of the programs funded by SBA, contact the nearest EAC or SBA field office by calling 1-800-U-ASK-SBA (1-800-827-5722) or access the SBA home page at <http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov>.

## Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture offers exporter assistance through the Trade Assistance and Promotion Office (TAPO). A part of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), TAPO serves as the first point of contact for persons who need information on foreign markets for agricultural products or assistance in accessing government programs. TAPO provides country and commodity specific *Foreign Market Information Reports*, which focus on best market prospects, and contain contact information on distributors and importers. The Department also offers several low-cost services that help U.S. exporters make direct contact with foreign buyers such as the *Trade Leads*, *Foreign Buyer Lists*, and *Buyer Alert* programs. TAPO will provide basic export counseling and connect

exporters to the appropriate export program such as the *Export Enhancement Program*, the *Market Promotion Program* and *credit guarantee* programs. Questions regarding any of these programs offered by the Department of Agriculture should be directed to TAPO, telephone: 202- 720-7420, TDD: 202- 690-4837, fax: 202- 690-4374, or Internet: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>.

## **Foreign Requirements for U.S. Products and Services**

For information about foreign standards and certification systems, write the National Center for Standards and Certificates Information, National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), Administration Building, A629, Gaithersburg, MD 20899; telephone 301-975-4040.

NIST maintains a World Trade Organization (WTO) hotline (301-975-4041) with a recording that reports on the latest notifications of proposed foreign regulations that may affect trade.

## **District Export Councils**

Besides the immediate services of its Export Assistance Centers, the Department of Commerce has direct contact with seasoned exporters experienced in all phases of export trade. The EACs work closely with 51 District Export Councils (DECs) comprised of nearly 1,600 business and trade experts who volunteer to help U.S. firms develop solid export strategies.

DECs assist in many of the workshops and seminars on exporting arranged by the EACs and sponsor their own. DEC members may also provide direct, personal counseling to less experienced exporters by suggesting marketing strategies, trade contacts, and ways to maximize success in overseas markets.

Assistance from DECs may be obtained through the EACs with which they are affiliated.

## **State Governments**

State economic development agencies, departments of commerce, and other departments of state governments often provide valuable assistance to exporters. State export development programs are growing rapidly. In many areas, county and city economic development agencies also have their own export assistance programs. The aid offered by these groups typically includes the following:

- **Export education** Helping exporters analyze export potential and orienting them to export techniques and strategies. This help may take the form of group seminars or individual counseling sessions.
- **Trade missions** Organizing trips abroad enabling exporters to call on potential foreign customers. (For more information on trade missions, see [Chapter 13](#)).
- **Trade shows** Organizing and sponsoring exhibitions of state-produced goods and services in overseas markets.

Readers interested in the role played by state development agencies in promoting and supporting exports may also wish to contact the National Association of State Development Agencies, 750 First Street, N.E., Suite 710, Washington, DC 20002; telephone 202-898-1302. To determine if a particular county or city has local export assistance programs, contact the appropriate economic development agency.

## Commercial Banks

Many U.S. banks have international banking departments with specialists who are familiar with specific foreign countries and various types of commodities and transactions. These large banks, located in major U.S. cities, maintain correspondent relationships with smaller banks throughout the country. Larger banks also maintain correspondent relationships with banks in many foreign countries or operate their own overseas branches, thus providing a direct channel to foreign customers. International banking specialists are generally well informed about export matters, even in areas that fall outside the usual limits of international banking. If they are unable to provide direct guidance or assistance, they may be able to refer inquirers to other specialists who can do so. Banks frequently provide consultation and guidance free of charge to their clients since they derive income primarily from loans to the exporter and from fees for special services. Many banks also have publications available to help exporters. These materials often cover particular countries and their business practices and can be a valuable tool for familiarization with a foreign industry. Finally, large banks frequently conduct seminars and workshops on letters of credit, documentary collections, and other banking subjects of concern to exporters.

Among the many services a commercial bank may perform for its clients are the following:

- Exchange of currencies;
- Assistance in financing exports;
- Collection of foreign invoices, drafts, letters of credit, and other foreign receivables;

- Transfer of funds to other countries;
- Letters of introduction and letters of credit for travelers;
- Credit information on potential representatives or buyers over-seas;
- Credit assistance to the exporter's foreign buyers.

## **Export Intermediaries**

Export intermediaries are of many different types, ranging from giant international companies to highly specialized, small operations. They provide a multitude of services, such as performing market research, appointing overseas distributors or commission representatives, exhibiting a client's products at international trade shows, advertising, shipping, and arranging documentation. In short, the intermediary can often take full responsibility for the export end of the business, relieving the manufacturer of all the details except filling orders.

Intermediaries may work simultaneously for a number of exporters on the basis of commissions, salary, or retainer plus commission. Some take title to the goods they handle, buying and selling in their own right. Products of a trading company's clients are often related, although the items usually are noncompetitive. One advantage of using an intermediary is that it can immediately make available marketing resources that a smaller firm would need years to develop on its own. Many export intermediaries also finance sales and extend credit, facilitating prompt payment to the exporter. For more information on using export intermediaries see [Chapter 4](#).

## **World Trade Centers and International Trade Clubs**

Local or regional world trade centers and international trade clubs are composed of area business people who represent firms engaged in international trade and shipping, banks, forwarders, customs brokers, government agencies, and other service organizations involved in world trade. These organizations conduct educational programs on international business and organize promotional events to stimulate interest in world trade. There are 320 world trade centers or affiliated associations located in major trading cities throughout the world. By participating in a local association, a company can receive valuable and timely advice on world markets and opportunities from business people who are already knowledgeable on virtually any facet of international business. Another important advantage of membership in a local world trade club is the availability of benefits - such as services, discounts, and contacts - from affiliated clubs in foreign

countries.

## **Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations**

Many local chambers of commerce and major trade associations in the United States provide sophisticated and extensive services for members interested in exporting. Among these services are the following:

- Conducting export seminars, workshops, and roundtables;
- Providing certificates of origin;
- Developing trade promotion programs, including overseas missions, mailings, and event planning;
- Organizing U.S. pavilions in foreign trade shows;
- Providing contacts with foreign companies and distributors;
- Relaying export sales leads and other opportunities to members;
- Organizing transportation routings and shipment consolidations;
- Hosting visiting trade missions from other countries;
- Conducting international activities at domestic trade shows;

In addition, some industry associations can supply detailed information on market demand for products in selected countries or refer members to export management companies. Industry trade associations typically collect and maintain files on international trade news and trends affecting manufacturers. They often publish articles and newsletters that include government research.

## **American Chambers of Commerce Abroad**

A valuable and reliable source of market information in any foreign country is the local chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce. These local chapters are knowledgeable about local trade opportunities, actual and potential competition, periods of maximum trade activity, and similar considerations.

American Chambers of Commerce abroad usually handle inquiries from any U.S.

business. However, detailed service is ordinarily provided free of charge for members of affiliated organizations. Some chambers have a set schedule of charges for services rendered to non-members. For contact information on American chambers in major foreign markets, call 1-800-USA-TRADE.

## **International Trade Consultants and Other Advisers**

International trade consultants can advise and assist a manufacturer on all aspects of foreign marketing. Trade consultants do not normally deal specifically with one product, although they may advise on product adaptation to a foreign market. They research domestic and foreign regulations and also assess commercial and political risk. They conduct foreign market research and establish contacts with foreign government agencies and other necessary resources, such as advertising companies, product service facilities, and local attorneys.

These consultants can locate and qualify foreign joint venture partners, as well as conduct feasibility studies for the sale of manufacturing rights, the location and construction of manufacturing facilities, and the establishment of foreign branches. After sales agreements are completed, trade consultants can also ensure that implementation is smooth and that any problems that arise are dealt with effectively.

Trade consultants usually specialize by subject matter and by global area or country. Their consultants can advise on which agents or distributors are likely to be successful, what kinds of promotion are needed, who the competitors are, and how to conduct business with them. They are also knowledgeable about foreign government regulations, contract laws, and taxation. Some firms may also be more specialized than others. For example, some may be thoroughly knowledgeable on legal aspects and taxation and less knowledgeable on marketing strategies.

Many large accounting firms, law firms, and specialized marketing firms provide international trade consulting services. When selecting a consulting firm, the exporter should pay particular attention to the experience and knowledge of the consultant who is in charge of its project. To find an appropriate firm, advice should be sought from other exporters and some of the other resources listed in this chapter, such as the Export Assistance Centers and local chambers of commerce.

Consultants are of greatest value to a firm that has specific requirements. For this reason, and because private consultants are expensive, it pays to take full advantage of publicly funded sources of advice before hiring a consultant.

## **Export Seminars**

In addition to individual counseling sessions, an effective method of informing local business communities of the various aspects of international trade is through the conference and seminar program. Each year, EACs participate in approximately 5,000

conferences, seminars, and workshops on topics such as export documentation and licensing procedures, country-specific market opportunities, export trading companies, and U.S. trade promotion and trade policy initiatives. The seminars are usually held in conjunction with DEC's, local chambers of commerce, state agencies, and other trade organizations. SBA field offices also co-sponsor export training programs with the Department of Commerce, other federal agencies, and various private sector international trade organizations. For information on scheduled seminars contact the nearest EAC. To locate the EAC nearest you, call the Trade Information Center at 1-800-USA-TRADE, or access the ITA home page on the Internet at <http://www.ita.doc.gov>.

Unz & Co. "Basic Guide to Exporting" 1998-9