

KEY STEPS TOWARD EXPORTING SUCCESS IN THE U.S.

There are three options for providing service to U.S. customers. The Canadian firm may retain a local service organization or ask the distributor to provide the service. In both cases an investment will be required to train the personnel of the service organization. Since it can be difficult to monitor the quality of the services rendered to your customers, choosing a service organization or asking the distributor to provide service presents fewer risks when the organizations in place have experience and a good reputation in serving similar clients.

The last option is to post or dispatch personnel to the United States. While it is more expensive than the previous options, it allows for a better control of the quality of service and for a closer relationship with your customers. Direct service also helps develop a positive corporate image in a new market. The Free Trade Agreement now allows technicians and engineers to enter the United States to service equipment if the service is part of the sales agreement. It is strongly suggested that U.S. immigration authorities be contacted for information on the specifics of the temporary entry requirements.

New Exporters to Border States Program (NEBS)

The New Exporters to Border States Program (NEBS) is managed by EAITC and ISC in cooperation with provincial trade departments. NEBS introduces a group of non-exporting companies to the possibility of doing business in the United States. Small groups of business people are taken to the nearest Canadian trade office in the U.S. for an intensive two-day program which demystifies U.S. Customs clearance procedures, immigration requirements, and financial and legal issues related to doing business in the United States.

They also meet with U.S. manufacturers' agents and distributors to learn more about U.S. business practices. Some 5 000 potential new export firms have already been exposed to the U.S. market through NEBS. About 50 per cent of the participants on NEBS missions eventually make an export sale.

Trade Shows

Hundreds of trade shows take place annually in the United States. Trade shows are held for almost every conceivable product sector. Attending a trade show is a good way of gathering information on customers and competitors. Exhibiting at a trade show should take place only after you feel ready to launch an active export program. If you are exporting for the first time, it may be a good idea to start with regional trade fairs. They are less expensive and give you a chance to test your product before presenting it at a national fair. Information on U.S. trade shows can be obtained from your nearest International Trade Centre (ITC). Each year, thousands of firms participate in Canadian government-sponsored exhibitions in the United States.

To help facilitate clearing customs when carrying samples or display products you can obtain a document called an A.T.A. Carnet from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The Carnet is used as a "merchandise passport" when you cross the border. Goods exported temporarily from Canada can be listed on it, thus replacing any other customs documentation usually required. The fee for a Carnet ranges between \$45 and \$200 depending upon the value of your goods.