Identifying Potential Manufacturing Customers

Manufacturing companies often need help designing products, cleaning up environmental problems, improving their production process, marketing their product, implementing new systems and taking care of other functions. The *Manufacturing U.S.A.* directory encompasses 460 manufacturing industries and provides information on 26 000 companies. The directory is an invaluable source for Canadian firms interested in selling their solutions and expertise to U.S. manufacturers. It is available from Gale Research at (313) 961-2242 for US$169. Libraries should also have a copy.

Here's an example of how a meat processing services company might use this directory. The Nova Scotia firm provides systems improvement to a Canadian meat processing company. The firm would examine SIC Code 2013 (Sausage and other Prepared Meats). This section of the directory provides fairly detailed information on the size, structure, recent performance and trends in the U.S. industry, as well as a comprehensive listing of main companies, contacts, size and location.

If the firm wanted to target the Eastern Seaboard States, the directory would indicate that 80 meat processors operate in Pennsylvania, 111 in New York State, etc. Immediate contacts in the Eastern Seaboard region could then be identified from among 14 firms listed.

Developing an Effective Export Plan

An export plan describes your firm's export objectives and details the steps necessary to achieve them. It should tie in all your strategic export planning work so that you can be sure that all members of your firm have common goals.

If you do not have an export plan, use the worksheet on the next page to help develop one. If you already have one (or a marketing plan that covers export activities), you can evaluate its potential effectiveness by answering these questions. Circle the applicable answer:

1. Is your U.S. export objective clearly stated?
❑ YES ❑ NO

2. Is the objective's rationale clear?
❑ YES ❑ NO

3. Are the resource implications, such as additional staff, clear?
❑ YES ❑ NO

4. Have the objective, rationale and resources you need been approved by top management?
❑ YES ❑ NO

5. Does the plan contain a clear set of steps to achieve your objective?
❑ YES ❑ NO

6. Have specific staff members been assigned responsibility for each step?
❑ YES ❑ NO

7. Has an overall schedule been developed for achieving the export objective?
❑ YES ❑ NO

8. Have reporting deadlines been set for at least the first steps?
❑ YES ❑ NO

9. Has a "go"/"no go" point been identified to determine whether exporting to the United States will be profitable for your firm and worth pursuing?
❑ YES ❑ NO

10. Have performance or sales targets been set to evaluate whether the export objective has been achieved?
❑ YES ❑ NO

If you answered "YES" to each of the above questions, you are in a good strategic position to move ahead. If you answered "NO" to some, you may wish to review the items on the following page to help you fine-tune your plan.