

Method

This book is both for exporters and by exporters. What is meant by this statement? The first part is clear enough but the second may need some explanation. Although the study was designed and conducted by four people knowledgeable in the field, the work was approached with as few preconceptions as possible. In other words, although the sizeable literature was read and some ideas developed about what leads to success in exporting, it was decided not to approach the interviews in a truly "scientific" manner, that is, with a model in mind to be field-tested. Rather, the successful businesspeople were encouraged to speak out in their own words on exporting:

A series of general questions were developed to guide the discussions. These were very much open-ended questions, phrased to draw out the thoughts, opinions and beliefs of the executives being interviewed. Discussions were tape recorded and later transcribed.

Similarly, in analyzing the information collected in the company visits, as well as the background material from newspapers, magazines, company reports, and the

export award applications, an attempt has been made to let the exporters' voices be heard. Naturally, organization of this information was required, but the structure was allowed to emerge from what had been heard and read, as opposed to forcing it according to some pre-determined order.

This wasn't an easy way to proceed, but it is believed that the method has merit. A richer final product results, because the exporting story is essentially one told by highly successful practitioners.