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Yes? Then draw up your first list of candidate market countries. Right off the top, you will probably come up with a respectable shopping list of target export market countries. Before you rush out to gladden the heart of your travel agent by booking a Grand Tour of the capitals of the world, are you sure your top candidate markets are really as promising as they seem at first glance?

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Identify your target market countries.

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You are about to make an important investment of time, effort and money to introduce your products and services to new customers. Which countries on your list combine the greatest potential for profitable export sales and the least for problems and costs? You will want to qualify your export markets, just as you would with any major potential domestic customer, to determine which one is your top prospect, which is the next best and so on.

Military strategy and export marketing share a common axiom: unless your resources are unlimited, avoid multi-front campaigns; don't risk spreading yourself too thin by trying to corner the world market the first time out.

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As coolly and objectively as you earmarked your products for export, you must now select the countries where you can most cost-effectively market them. A detailed market profile of each of the candidate foreign markets on your list will allow you to sort the wheat from the chaff and to identify your highest probability market.