markets.

One overriding implication for a foreign market-oriented company is that competitive competence has become a ***generic*** requirement. Smaller companies find foreign competition more challenging than larger, resource-rich ones. Few smaller companies can sustain foreign marketing operations for very long without the skills and resources needed to effectively compete. For them in particular, export promotion by government provides an avenue to acquire or enhance competitive competence so essential in foreign markets. Export promotion programs seek to create awareness of exporting as a growth and market expansion option; assist in the reduction or removal of barriers to exporting; and provide various incentives to potential and actual exporters[2]. The concept of export promotion is widely accepted and programs are broadly similar across countries, whether delivered through government, private sector or mixed public/private sector arrangements[3]. 2

Export promotion can also be viewed as trade intervention. The arguments pro or con are discussed extensively elsewhere and only highlighted here[4]. The *market failures* argument is given as a key reason in support of export promotion. Namely, lack of information, selective access to resources and markets, or uncoordinated industry-wide learning by doing, would lead to markets that are inefficient and lack *transparency*[5]. We also know that both information and knowledge are important in export strategy and performance[6]. At least one study of experienced Canadian exporters, which showed deficiencies in information and skill when entering a new foreign market, supports the *market failures* argument[7]. While companies entering foreign markets are willing to accept greater uncertainty, it does not follow that government should attempt to correct any market failure encountered.

Thus using export promotion as a strategic commercial policy tool to give companies an equal footing in global markets, is also suggested. Success stories in South East Asian countries associating export promotion with trade and export development are well known[8]. 3

Counter-arguments are the high cost of intervention in trade generally and doubts that governmental trade development for a select group of companies meets broader social goals[9]. Another view is that any subsidy is incompatible with a free market and free trade. Supporting companies' entry into global markets prematurely may produce marginal gains rather than the competitive competence for long-term success, thus exerting an opportunity cost for the