2. Export Readiness: Diagnostic

Companies should not export unless they are ready. Having evaluated the company's internal capabilities, the next step is to set those against the requirements of exporting. A critical element in any export effort is corporate commitment. Does the company understand the export process? Does it have the specialized skills needed to pursue this course of action? Is the company committed to exporting? Will it dedicate executive time and funds to the effort? This part of the planning process should culminate in a decision on whether or not the company should actively begin investigating and pursuing foreign market opportunities.

Human Resources

- Do you have at least one staff member that can be assigned to the export effort on a full-time basis? Or, would you have to assign several individuals on a part-time basis to this function? Would they be both interested in and committed to the export effort? What incentives would they be given to make it succeed? Are they willing to travel frequently?
- Is there a senior executive in the company who is willing to champion the export effort? How much time can they devote to developing the firm's international business? Can they travel abroad frequently? Does the executive have the position and influence needed to cut across red tape and make things happen? What incentives would be required?
- Does the firm and its chosen representative(s) have the time to pursue foreign business opportunities? What activities would have to be given up to make such time?

Financing

- Do the company's planners have an idea of what the export development effort will cost and how long it will take? If not, how will they find out?
- Does the company have assets that can be used to support the expenses of an export effort?
- Can the company afford to take money out of its operating funds to support the export effort? If so, how much?
- Does the company have access to additional sources of financing such as investors, strategic partners or commercial financing institutions?
- How large a cashflow deficit — and for how long — could the company afford before its core business begins to suffer?