
INTRODUCTION



The world is a tough market. To be competitive today, businesses must produce the high-quality, value-added products that are demanded by discriminating consumers.

The biggest challenge facing Canadian exporters today is finding and pursuing niche markets for their goods and services. Canada's ability to maintain its competitive edge rests with the ability of exporters to compete for those markets aggressively and successfully.

Exports are the engine of Canada's economic growth; they create jobs and ensure Canada's future prosperity.

For most Canadian exporters, the first step is south of the border. The size, proximity and familiarity of the U.S. market makes it the logical entry point for companies with export potential. As more Canadian companies take advantage of the opportunities resulting from the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the United States will remain Canada's most promising export market in the foreseeable future.

However, taking advantage of that market is not as easy as one would think. Exporters must do their homework. Custom-tailored strategies are a prerequisite to any successful plan of action.

That is why the **Canadian Exporter's Guide to the U.S. Market** can provide assistance. It outlines a step-by-step approach to help exporters enter the U.S. market and maintain their lead. Case studies illustrate the steps taken by successful Canadian companies in the United States market.

Because this guide provides only a synopsis of what is needed to be successful, a list of contacts is included to answer questions or provide further assistance to help exporters achieve their goals.

Jointly prepared by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, External Affairs and International Trade Canada, and Industry and Science Canada, this guide provides a quick lesson on how to prepare to enter and successfully compete in the lucrative U.S. market.

Raymond Chabot International Inc., a management consulting firm based in Montreal, assisted the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in preparing the guide.