

Making a Market Survey

Your first concerns as a potential exporter are: product and market. The two are interdependent and are best handled through a market survey. Before you leave on your export trip, you must determine *which* of your products has the greatest export potential and *where* the most promising markets for this product are likely to be. To do this, you will need to critique each of your products within a global framework. Your product critique will identify your most promising products and specify two or three likely market areas that warrant further investigation.

Product Critique

Specifically, your product critique should address the following factors:

- Who are the users of your product? Does it have a wide use, or is its use limited to a particular socio-economic group? This may immediately rule out certain markets.
- Is the use of your product influenced by climatic or geographic factors?
- What is its shelf-life? A product with a very short shelf-life obviously cannot be in transit very long.
- What are the operating costs of your product? What other equipment must a buyer purchase before being able to use it?
- Does your product require assembly, or involve a special skill?
- Will special packaging or "instruction literature" be required? These costs must be taken into account in determining whether or not you can export it at a competitive price.
- Does your product involve technical standards or other regulations that may differ from country to country?

- How much product adaptation would be required before you could export? Are there markets where less or no adaptation is required?
- Does your product require after-sales service and would this pose insuperable problems?
- Does your product ship easily or would shipping costs be exorbitant?
- Are there certain countries where your product would not sell because of traditionally negative attitudes toward that type of product, or a glut in the market, import barriers or political factors?
- Do you have the capability to supply both Canadian and overseas markets?

The way you answer the above questions will help you decide if you are ready to venture into exporting. It will also help you narrow your market choices to the two or three most promising potential markets. In making your final selection, you should prepare a comprehensive profile for each of these markets. This will allow you to compare, appraise and select the market that offers the greatest likelihood of success.

List of Potential Markets

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Remember, the first rule of exporting is: Don't go all over the globe in one fell swoop! Establish yourself in one market before spreading your wings any further. As well, focus your efforts on one or two products. Once they are successfully established abroad, others can follow.