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Appendix A: Your Exporting Checklist

Here's a checklist you can use to track the general progress of your exporting venture, or simply to get an overview of the whole process.

1. Planning and preparing

Whether you export goods or services, many of the following preparatory steps will be similar:

- Research the market using techniques and resources such as described in this guide.
- Visit or call the International Trade Centre in your province for information on trade opportunities and market intelligence from around the world.
- Ask the Canadian Trade Commissioner in your target market for help in assessing your market prospects and to provide you with a list of qualified contacts.
- Visit cities in the region and talk to potential buyers and intermediaries.
- Request a face-to-face briefing with the Canadian Trade Commissioner in the region to discuss the latest developments in the market.
- Develop a network of contacts and potential partners. Find out who your competitors and potential allies are, and who are the most important importers, distributors and agents for your product or service.
- If working through agents and distributors, make a short list of potential candidates and assess their qualifications and capabilities. Develop a profile of the ideal associate, then select the one whose skills and experience best complement your export objectives.
- If exporting a service, consider the possibility of finding a local partner to represent your interests.
- Put together a promotional package describing your company and its products or services.
- Attend a regional trade fair, if possible. Do some preliminary promotion and establish contacts with potential buyers and associates.
- Make arrangements with key export service providers such as freight forwarders, trading houses and customs brokers.

TIP

If you've decided to mount your trial run in the U.S., choose a specific regional market as your focus.