

CHAPTER 12: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

BUILD A TEAM

A key element in getting an export drive started is to secure the commitment of those employees who will be charged with its implementation. Regardless of their level in the organization, they should be brought into the process and informed about why the company is taking the initiative, the role each individual is to play, what the company hopes to gain, and what each participant can expect to get out of it. This is the first step in developing an export-oriented mind-set within the company.

Ideally, the team should include a variety of functional areas and skills to ensure that it can respond effectively to the wide variety of issues that will arise. For many smaller companies, at least in the initial phases of the export drive, it is more realistic to speak of the individual who is tasked with managing the export plan. In many smaller firms, that person may be the owner.

Regardless of how many people are involved in the effort, it is vital that there be a champion with the authority to make things happen and the persistence to carry the effort through to a successful conclusion. This individual should be sensitive to the cultural nuances of the target market and possess strong interpersonal skills to bridge gaps and establish fruitful relationships.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTING

The best approach to implementing many major business initiatives consists of a series of manageable small steps, none of which puts the business at risk. Because the steps follow each other in rapid succession, the company can move swiftly toward its objective. For the novice exporter, the recommended approach is to test the waters with a trial run. Once the team has gained experience and confidence, more ambitious export objectives can be pursued.

On completion of the first successful sale, it is a good idea to review several features of the export strategy and, if necessary, revise the export plan in light of the experience acquired. The firm should ask itself a series of critical questions.