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With time and more experience, these firms may decide to approach export markets more independently.

Another teaming approach is to work with a Canadian-based trading house. This will not necessarily mean that the exporter benefits from the resources of a larger partner. What it will mean — if a careful selection of a trading house is made — is that valuable experience and contacts are made available to the exporter, either in a particular export trade (or industry), or in a specific region of the world.

Teamwork then, can be an effective method for exporting. And it isn't just a strategy for small firms. As the Spar Aerospace Limited experience (Opportunity 3) indicates, large companies sometimes use teaming approaches too.

Some potential problems of being small have been dwelt on above. It's worth reminding ourselves, however, that "small can be beautiful" too. Western Packaging Systems Ltd., for example, benefitted initially from its small size since this gave it the needed flexibility to adapt quickly to changing product-market needs. Similarly, Rock-O-Matic Industries' outstanding success was attributed by its chief executive officer to its small

size and consequent high level of communication, flexibility and responsiveness to customers' problems.

Exporting action

To the uninitiated, the award winners' advice may seem a somewhat formidable checklist. It's hoped that this isn't the case. If the list seems long and detailed, recall that thousands of Canadian firms have been successful in international markets. TannerEye Ltd. started business in 1978 with the princely sum of \$7,500 capital, and immediately started selling offshore. And look what they've already achieved. Countless other companies like TannerEye have demonstrated that forethought, care, perseverance and patience can pay rich dividends.

Another thought to bear in mind is that exporting can be both exciting and enjoyable. Jim Smith, chairman of Canparts Automotive International Ltd. is a good example here. He related that he has so much fun in his company (largely export-based at 87 percent of total sales outside Canada), that he starts his day at eight in the morning in the mailroom, curious to see what that day's delivery has brought him from around the world.