Building your export marketing plan

Because marketing is an ongoing activity, your marketing plan is a work in progress that you'll modify continuously. As you develop it, consider the following questions:

- What is the nature of your industry?
- Who are your target customers?
- Where are they?
- What is your company's marketing strategy?
- What products or services do you plan to market?
- How will you price your products and services?
- Which segment of the market will you focus on?
- Does your marketing material accurately convey the quality of your products or services and the professionalism of your company?

As for content, a good marketing plan is closely related to your export plan and should contain the following:

- **Executive summary** – state the purpose of your marketing plan. This provides an overview of your objectives and how the plan will be used in your exporting strategy.
- **Product or service analysis** – give a clear description of your export product or service, its unique selling points and how marketable it might be internationally.
- **Market analysis** – describe your target market in terms of size and trends. Include key economic, social, political and cultural characteristics, a profile of your target customer, buying patterns and factors influencing purchasing decisions.
- **Competitive analysis** – analyze the competitiveness of your product or service. This will help you to position it effectively in your target market, and to decide pricing and marketing strategies.
- **Goals** – state your objectives in terms of market share, revenue and profit expectations. Indicate the position you would like to occupy in the target market and explain how you will go about achieving it.
- **Marketing strategy** – describe your marketing strategy, including information on specific product or service pricing recommendations, mode of delivery, and proposed promotional methods.
- **Implementation** – list the activities you'll undertake to carry out your marketing plan, indicating target dates and who will perform the activities. Prepare a detailed marketing budget.
- **Evaluation** – design a method of evaluating your marketing plan at various stages to determine if your goals are being achieved and what, if any, modifications may be needed.
- **Summary** – include a half-page summary of your marketing plan goals, describing how they fit into your overall export plan.

TIP

Building business relationships in foreign markets is best done face to face. Faxes, phone calls and e-mail are great for follow-up, but nothing beats meeting in person.

PITFALL

No translations – the exporter should be prepared to have documents translated into the language of the target market. Current and potential customers will appreciate it.