

So You Want to Export . . .

The best time for a company to consider exporting is after it has established itself successfully in its domestic market and has the capability to cater to new markets. Under these conditions the businessman can assume that he has a good chance of profitably expanding his markets by venturing into new markets outside Canada.

Exporting is for small firms as well as large. Certainly, it is not the preserve of the multinationals. Many smaller firms have made highly successful ventures into foreign markets and their involvement in the international marketplace has had positive effects on their performance at home.

Exporting is not, however, a casual business that you can profitably walk in and out of. Foreign markets today are both sophisticated and complex and the demands they make on a company are significant. The decision to sell overseas has considerable implications for the products, finances and organizational structure of the company. It requires a great deal of preparatory work and a real commitment to selling a product abroad on a continuing basis.

Before you launch forth into uncharted waters, you should carefully appraise your products and your company so that you will have some idea of the impact exporting could have on your business. Your appraisal should address the following factors:

- An assessment of your company's performance over the last three to five years.
- An evaluation of your present domestic requirements — how they would be affected by export sales and the estimated contribution of exporting to your company's profitability.
- The company resources that are available to support export activities.
- A critique of your different product lines to determine the international saleability of particular items.

If your initial appraisal proves negative, you should postpone your export activities until a more opportune time. Exporting always involves risks. The challenge is to make it profitable.

The purpose of this booklet is to give information and tips that can help Canadian firms enter new markets abroad. It is divided into three sections: **Making a Market Survey; Tips for Your Trip and Your Reference Sources.**

Making a Market Survey provides an informal overview on making the decision to export. It also identifies potential markets.

The second section, **Tips for Your Trip**, discusses some of the do's and don'ts when journeying overseas on sales visits or exhibiting at an international trade fair.

Your Reference Sources, the third and last section, contains a listing of useful information sources on overseas markets and a brief glossary of terms used in exporting.