

Reaching Out Into International Markets

by Lindsay Birley

(NAPSA)—In today's global economy, American businesses are feeling the gravitational pull of the international market. Particularly as the U.S. is expected to be a net importer for the foreseeable future, U.S.-based firms are increasingly feeling the pressure to establish overseas operations.

The opportunities are compelling. Besides the prospects for solid revenue improvement, the advantage of going global is that goods often command higher export profit margins overseas, and the cost of materials is often much cheaper for imports.

In recent years, countries previously considered as emerging markets have opened their doors to international trade. However, exporters must nevertheless be mindful that the risk of doing business overseas can be as great as the reward.

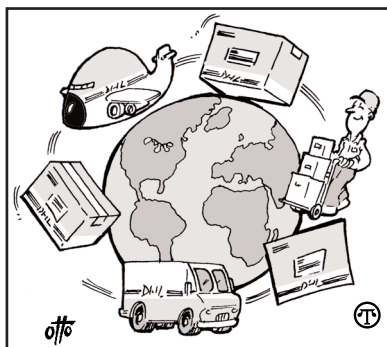
Know Thy Markets

Exporting and importing are two-way streets that often don't follow the same path. In general, exporting is a more complex exercise and involves multiple steps.

Importers should know precise lead times at every step of the importing chain and how the information flow can be fused to shorten those lead times while ensuring proper compliance and fewer unforeseen problems. A growing number of shipping providers supply importers with Web-based tools that enable them to take control of the supply chain and intelligently leverage the information at their disposal.

Think Holistically

Importers and exporters have a tendency to view logistics as an afterthought, often the last step in the process. This can be a mistake. To deliver the optimal out-



Many companies use express shipping providers as part of their global marketing strategies.

come, all of your departments—sales, marketing, finance, IT and logistics—must work in harmony, with no silos keeping them apart.

Choose Your Partner

Import and export planning involves a wide range of issues, from inventory levels and manufacturing lead times to customer preferences and transportation options. An express provider can be an invaluable ally. Not only can they offer the importer and exporter a broad range of transportation options, but they also understand the complexities of international trade and can guide you every step of the way.

Is it time to make the world your market? Global disposable income is increasing, emerging and established markets are open for business and the tools to capitalize on these favorable trends are more robust and functional than ever. When it comes to breaking into the international market, the biggest risk your company may face is not taking one.

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