
Meeting the Global Challenge: How Libraries Can Help North Carolina Businesses Enter the Export Market

Diane Strauss

In January, amidst considerable media hoopla, McDonald's opened its first restaurant in Moscow. Network news had a field day. Television cameras registered the reactions of hungry or curious Muscovites to American fast food, and newscasters conducted interviews to see just why Soviets would queue up for and spend hard-earned rubles on burgers and fries. The Moscow McDonald's became a symbol for millions of viewers—who might not otherwise have thought much about it—of the nearly limitless potential for the expansion of American business abroad.

For all the McDonald's fanfare, however, foreign trade is not new to business; the United States has been exporting machinery, chemicals, textiles, foodstuffs, and other products for centuries. What is newsworthy is that these days small- and medium-sized businesses as well as large multinational corporations have begun to sell their wares abroad. Businesses of every size in every state are going global. In North Carolina, the practice is well established, and it is not limited to tobacco and textiles. Greensboro-based Electrical South, Inc., for example, exports electronic motor controls to thirty nations,¹ while Carolina Biological Supply Co. of Burlington sells an array of unusual products—human skeletons, preserved rabbits, live cockroaches, and other educational supplies for science—to customers in many countries.² *Business North Carolina* recently profiled Paulette Agha, a cosmetology instructor at Guilford Technical Community College, who began the process of exporting beauty products to the U.S.S.R. after watching Soviet workers on a television newscast.

Diane Strauss, Head of the Business Administration/Social Sciences Reference Department of Davis Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is the first recipient of the Gale Research Award for Excellence in Business Librarianship. Her book, *Handbook of Business Information*, has been selected as an Outstanding Reference Book by the Reference and Adult Services Division of ALA and has also been selected as an Outstanding Academic Book by *Choice*.

There was this picture of a lady busting up pavement, loading the big chunks of asphalt on the truck. And it was obvious this woman worked hard. And there were these pictures of people in line to buy things The women in line needed their hair done. It was just hanging there. They didn't have any makeup. They're maybe 30 years back in time in hairdressing.³

So Agha was inspired to develop and export a line of beauty products (shampoo, conditioner, hair spray, styling gel, nail polish, and eye shadow) not only to Moscow but to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Byelorussia as well.

That decision has led her to U.S./Soviet conferences, on a 6,500-mile trip to Moscow and deep into the sophisticated world of international trade. "It's been a serious learning experience," Agha says. "I've never known anything about East-West trade. I've never known anything about the Soviet Union. I can talk hair, OK?"⁴

In contrast to Agha and every other North Carolina entrepreneur with the foresight and imagination to enter the export market, however, others shun foreign trade because they lack the necessary information and support. Librarians can help all prospective exporters by stocking a core collection of relevant resources and—perhaps even more importantly—by becoming familiar with the services and resources offered by federal and state government agencies and other organizations, so as to be able to provide referrals. Effective collection development and information referral should, in turn, be based on an understanding of the information that overseas traders require.

Exporters and Their Information Needs

Although any business with a good product or service to sell has export potential, chances of success are increased if certain steps are taken *before* exporting begins.⁵

First, would-be exporters need to examine and consider internal business operations. What effect will exporting have on present operations? What are the company's financial resources? Will

financial assistance of some kind be required? Companies must go beyond their own records, however, to answer other relevant questions. How does the company compare to others in the same industry? What is the outlook for the industry of which the company is a part? Based on this information, does it make sense to export?

Following such a preliminary assessment and a decision to commit to exporting, businesses should seek expert counseling and assistance. Such guidance is available from federal and state government agencies, colleges and universities, and private organizations and consulting firms, and will be described later.

Corporate and industry analyses and consultations with foreign trade experts should lead to selection of the country or countries in which the product is to be marketed. Although literally hundreds of markets may exist for the product, a business should narrow its initial choice to one or two countries to be manageable. With the selection of these markets comes the need for in-depth information about the countries involved. Language and cultural differences, current political and economic conditions, foreign trade regulations, and domestic and foreign competitors need to be considered.

The fourth step in an export venture is to develop a strategic plan for exporting, setting forth the firm's short- and long-term export objectives and specific tactics to be used, scheduling activities to reflect chosen objectives and tactics, and, finally, allocating company resources to support them.

The fifth and final step is to select a selling technique. Businesses can choose to sell their products directly to overseas markets, or they can decide to market their products indirectly, using the services of an intermediary. Such intermediaries include foreign sales representatives, distributors, retailers, and state-controlled trading companies. Choice of direct or indirect selling should be based on several factors, including the firm's products, size, and previous export experience, and business conditions in the overseas market selected.

These are the five preliminary steps exporters should take before launching their product overseas. Viewed from a librarian's perspective, it is clear that there are some areas in which libraries can be of little assistance: assessing a company's internal operations, for example, or drawing up a strategic plan for exporting. But there are several other areas in which libraries can be of great help. Consider, for a moment, how many library sources can provide at least some of the information

described below.

Industry-Specific — Information regarding new developments in the industry, statistics on recent performance, exports and imports, and projections for the future. Lists of trade associations and special trade publications. [Step 1]

Competitive Intelligence — Lists of other companies and composite financial statistics and operating ratios for companies in the same line of business. Lists of companies in the same industry that are operating in the selected overseas markets. [Steps 1 and 3]

Country-Specific — Information regarding the country generally, including the composition of the population, type of government, language(s) spoken, and the state of the economy. Business-oriented information including restrictions on foreign trade and other government regulations, foreign exchange, business holidays, etc. [Step 3]

Expert Sources — Lists of government agencies and consultants and in-house files on local experts. [Steps 2 and 5]

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Clearly, such basic reference sources as the *Europa World Yearbook*, *Statistical Yearbook* of the United Nations, and *United States Government Manual* will be extremely useful in beginning research. Other, more specialized sources—many of them relatively inexpensive—are also available and should be considered by any library interested in serving the business community.

Core Collection of Federal Information Sources for Exporters

There are hundreds of commercially published titles relating to foreign trade, with new ones being published daily. Some, such as the *Directory of Foreign Trade Organizations in*

Eastern Europe or *How to Do Business With the People's Republic of China*, are very specialized. Many are quite expensive. The *Political Risk Yearbook*, for example, costs \$1,000 a year, and libraries must pay over \$4,500 annually to receive the various regional newsletters for foreign areas published by Business International. Libraries operating on a shoestring budget, however, need not despair. To help promote the growth of the economy and the internationalization of U.S. businesses, the federal government has issued an array of useful and inexpensive publications. The titles listed below will enhance any library business collection.

Bibliographies

U.S. Superintendent of Documents. **Foreign Trade and Tariff**. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office (GPO), 1989. (Subject bibliography 123). GP3.22/2:123. Free. [To request a copy, write to the Superintendent of Documents, GPO, Washington, DC 20402].

Lists and annotates federal documents relating to international trade. SuDocs numbers, stock numbers, and prices are included.

Directories

U.S. Small Business Administration. **Exporter's Guide to Federal Resources for Small Business**. Rev. ed. Washington, DC: GPO, 1988. SBA1.19: Ex7/3/988. S/N 045-000-00250-1. \$4.00.

Describes major government programs designed to assist small business owners in exporting and identifies individuals in government agencies who can provide technical assistance and support to them.

U.S. Small Business Administration. **International Trade Resources: North Carolina**. [Washington, DC: SBA], n.d. Free. [To request a copy, write to the International Trade Officer, Small Business Administration, 222 S. Church Street, Suite 300, Charlotte, NC 27402].

Written in cooperation with AT&T, this single page handout lists and briefly describes federal, state, and local programs available in North Carolina and reviews the various types of international service firms providing assistance to exporters.

U.S. Small Business Administration. **International Trade, State and Local Resource Directory: North Carolina**. Washington, DC: GPO, 1989. SBA1.13/4/In8/NC. Free. [To request a copy, write to the International Trade Officer at the address shown in the preceding entry.]

Brief, but filled with useful information, including the addresses and telephone numbers of

government agencies, port authorities, small business development centers, chambers of commerce, trade associations, banks with international departments, export management companies, consultants, custom house brokers and freight forwarders, insurers, translators, and other organizations that can provide export assistance to North Carolina businesses. Use in conjunction with the *Exporter's Guide*.

Guides and Handbooks

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. **Marketing U.S. Agriculture**. Washington, DC: GPO, 1988. (Yearbook of agriculture, 1988). A1.10:988. S/N 001-000-04517-2. \$9.50.

Contains articles written by experts, grouped under the following headings: Marketing in a Changing World, Marketing Strategies, Discovering What Buyers Want, New or Better Products to Meet Demand, Delivering Quality Goods, Promoting Agricultural Products, and Where to Get More Marketing Information. Many pertain to overseas trade.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. Office of Transportation. **Export Handbook for Agricultural Products**. Rev. ed. Washington, DC: GPO, 1985. (Agriculture handbook 593). A1.76:593/2. S/N 001-000-04440-1. \$8.50.

Includes general shipping information as well as export specifications for various agricultural products, and directories of state extension services and other state agencies, sources of technical assistance, and other information.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **A Basic Guide to Exporting**. Rev. ed. Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. C61.8:Ex7/3/986. S/N 003-009-00487-0. \$8.50.

Authoritative, inexpensive, indispensable. Discusses export strategy, market research, financing and related topics as well as the errors that novice exporters commonly make. A bibliography and glossary are included.

U.S. Small Business Administration. **Market Overseas With U.S. Government Help**. [Washington, DC]: SBA, Office of Business Development, 1987. (Management aids 7.003). SBA1.32:7.003/987. \$1.00. [To order, write to SBA, 300 S. Church Street, Suite 300, Charlotte, NC 27402.]

This brief guide describes the services and information available from the federal government.

Periodicals

U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service. **AgExporter**.

Washington, DC: GPO. Monthly. A67.7/2. S/N 701-027-00000-1. \$13.

Contains articles on overseas markets and buying trends for farm products, new competitors and products, and overseas promotional activities.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **Business America**. Washington, DC: GPO. Biweekly. C61.18. S/N 703-011-00000-4. \$40.

Articles and statistics on foreign markets, trade developments, and trends. Regularly lists trade fairs and other government-sponsored promotional events. Annual list of foreign business holidays. A basic source.

Regulations

U.S. Office of Export Administration. **U.S. Export Administration Regulations**. Washington, DC: GPO. Annual in looseleaf format, with irregular updates. C61.23. S/N 903-014-00000-8. \$87.

Comprehensive guide to the rules controlling exports and export licensing. Supplementary *Export Administration Bulletins*, included in the subscription, provide replacement pages to keep the regulations current.

Country Information

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. **The World Factbook**. Washington, DC: GPO. Annual.⁶ PrEx3.15: (year). \$23.

Brief (1½ to 2 pages per country) demographic, geographic, and economic information about the countries and territories of the world. Summary foreign trade data are provided, including estimated dollar value of imports and exports, major commodities traded, and the countries with which most business is transacted.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **Foreign Economic Trends and Their Implications for the United States**. Washington, DC: GPO. Annual. C61.11. S/N 803-006-00000-8. \$55.

This series, consisting of more than one hundred country-specific pamphlets prepared by American embassy staffs, reviews current business and economic developments and economic outlooks. Implications for the United States are also discussed, particularly as they relate to foreign trade. Although the information in each pamphlet varies, most suggest strategies for taking advantage of prime export opportunities.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **Overseas Business Reports**. Washington, DC: GPO. Annual C61.12. S/N 803-007-00000-4. \$14.

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national Trade Administration, this collection of reports provides basic background information for prospective exporters. Each country report, usually about fifty pages long, summarizes the foreign trade outlook, identifies and describes the best exporting prospects, and includes general information about the country's trade regulations, marketing and labeling requirements, distribution and sales channels, major government purchasing agencies, transportation, utilities, advertising, investment, and labor. Also included are tips on business etiquette and a list of sources of commercial and economic information. A library's best buy.

Industry/Product Information

U.S. International Trade Administration. **U.S. Industrial Outlook**. Washington, DC: GPO. Annual. C61.34:(year). \$24.

Contains reviews of one- and five-year forecasts for more than 350 manufacturing and service industries. For each, a brief description is followed by an analysis of recent developments and a discussion of its size, trade position, and growth history. The *Outlook's* value is enhanced by the inclusion of bibliographies and the names

and telephone numbers of the government experts who wrote the reports.

Other federal government publications provide information on single industries. Although building a collection of sources on every industry would be impractical for most libraries, many libraries will want to select titles from the following series.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **A Competitive Assessment of the United States [name] Industry.** Washington, DC: GPO. Dates vary. C61.2. Prices vary.

The reports in this series cover a broad range of industries including cellular radiotelephones, international construction, sports equipment, and robotics. Each industry report is roughly fifty to one hundred pages long, and is available for prices ranging from \$3.00 to \$6.00. Although coverage varies, most reports cover foreign and domestic markets for the industry, assess the U.S. position in the world market, describe foreign competition, and identify and describe policy options. Bibliographies and glossaries frequently are included.

Statistics

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Directorate of Intelligence. **Handbook of Economic Statistics, [year].** Washington, DC: GPO. Annual. PrEx3.10/7-5: (year). \$19.

Contains statistics for all Communist and selected non-Communist countries throughout the world. Charts and graphs included.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **U.S. Foreign Trade Highlights [year].** Washington, DC: GPO. Annual. C61.28/2: (year). \$25.

Summarizes major trends in U.S. trade, with emphasis on developments during the year being reported. For the past eight years, includes tables of data on U.S. foreign trade in merchandise, manufactures, and agriculture for world, regions, and all individual countries.

Miscellaneous

U.S. Dept. of Commerce. Office of General Counsel. **US-USSR Joint Legal Seminar.** Washington, DC: GPO, 1989. C1.2:L52/2. S/N 003-000-00661-1. \$7.50.

These proceedings focus on the commercial legal systems of both countries. Included are papers dealing with joint ventures, sources for financing, and technology transfer in the U.S.S.R.

U.S. Dept. of State. Bureau of Public Affairs. **Europe 1992: A Business Guide to U.S. Govern-**

ment Resources. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of State, n.d. Free. [To order, write to the Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Dept. of State, Room 5815A, Washington, DC 20520-6810.]

Provides a good basic overview of the European Community and Europe 1992, as well as a list of government contacts and information sources.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **Caribbean Basin Business Information Starter Kit.** Washington, DC: GPO, 1984. C61.2:C19/2/984. [No longer in print, but available at depository libraries.]

Describes the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the government programs that support firms interested in doing business there. Strategies for identifying and developing opportunities and key information sources and business contacts are also included.

U.S. International Trade Administration. **EC 1992: Growth Markets, Export Opportunities in Europe.** Washington, DC: GPO, 1989. C61.2:Eu7/2. S/N 003-009-00565-5. \$4.75.

A quick reference guide on the economies of the European Community, its twelve member nations, and other countries. Indexed by products and countries.

Although helpful, the sources listed above are by no means comprehensive. An array of publications, varying greatly in comprehensiveness, price, and quality are available from commercial publishers, trade associations, and international and state government organizations. Selection of such materials will, of course, be determined by the size of a library's materials budget and the needs and interests of its users.

Library services need not be limited to the resources at hand, however. Equally important is referral to government agencies and other organizations, particularly those operating in North

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Carolina. Some of the most important ones are listed and described below.

Referral to Government Agencies and Other Organizations

North Carolina businesses about to break into the export market can call upon a variety of organizations for specialized information and assistance.

Federal Government Agencies

Two key agencies have field offices in North Carolina.

International Trade Administration. Part of the Department of Commerce, the ITA is the primary federal agency responsible for assisting exporters. The ITA is staffed with country and industry experts and marketing professionals responsible for analyzing and reporting on current conditions. Field offices of the ITA offer export counseling and market support as well as seminars and workshops. In addition, each field office offers access to special government databases and a collection of printed sources that far exceeds in breadth and depth the core collection listed above. For more information, contact:

International Trade Administration
324 W. Market Street
Greensboro, NC 27402
(919) 333-5345

Small Business Administration. Offers counseling, financial assistance, export workshops, and referrals to other federal, state, and local programs. For more information, contact:

Small Business Administration
222 S. Church Street, Suite 300
Charlotte, NC 28202
(704) 371-6395

While not represented in North Carolina, other federal agencies also provide useful services. (Addresses and telephone numbers for these agencies are included in the *United States Government Manual*.)

Agency for International Development. AID administers non-military foreign economic assistance programs of the U.S. government. Its programs provide an opportunity for businesses to compete in the sale of goods and technical services being supplied to underdeveloped countries under loans and grants made by AID.

Export-Import Bank of the United States. Aids the export of U.S. goods through a variety of loan, guarantee, and insurance programs. Also

known as "Eximbank."

Foreign Agricultural Service. Part of the Department of Agriculture, the FAS offers a network of agricultural counselors, attachés, overseas trade officers, commodity analysts, and marketing specialists who can assist U.S. companies in introducing new products to foreign markets, arranging contacts with potential buyers, and offering promotional assistance.

Office of the United States Trade Representative. The President's principal advisor on international trade policy and its implementation.

State Government Agencies

North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Division of Marketing, International Marketing. Assists agriculture-related businesses and farmers in identifying international trade opportunities, providing individual firm counseling, developing trade leads, and promoting export development opportunities. For more information, contact:
International Marketing, NC Dept. of Agriculture
Agricultural Building
1 W. Edenton Street
Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-7912

North Carolina Department of Economic and Community Development. International Division. Provides practical marketing guidance for companies, "with an emphasis on personal assistance at intermediary and advanced levels."⁷ Organizes and coordinates participation of North Carolina firms in overseas trade missions and catalog shows. For more information, contact:
International Division
NC Dept. of Economic and
Community Development
430 N. Salisbury Street, Room 2056
Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-7193

North Carolina World Trade Association. Provides information exchange through regular meetings and educational activities. Seven local chapters are scattered throughout the state, and an eighth is being formed. For more information, contact:

North Carolina World Trade Association
P. O. Box 28271
Raleigh, NC 28271
(919) 794-4327

Conclusion

Firms are finding that to thrive—or even to

survive—they must compete on a global level.

It's time for Americans to roll up their sleeves and go to work. As a Nation, we can no longer rely on the oceans or on our abundant natural resources for protection against foreign competition. We must begin to rely more on the abilities and imagination of our people and on the knowledge and discoveries they are able to provide.⁸

Exporting is one way in which firms can enter the international marketplace. A successful exporting program will lead to the creation of new markets, result in increased sales volume, and contribute to the firm's growth and the state's economy.

Going global is as inevitable— and as essential—for libraries as for businesses.

Going global is as inevitable—and as essential—for libraries as for businesses. It is no longer enough to have a solid collection of domestically-oriented business reference sources; a collection that does not include international sources is incomplete. While many of the commercially published titles are so costly that only the largest and most affluent libraries can afford them, a collection of inexpensive and useful federal government documents is well within the reach of most libraries. By stocking these sources and by developing an awareness of the array of services that government and community organizations stand ready to offer, libraries can help North Carolina businesses meet the global challenge.

References

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2. "Exporting Pays Off," *Business America* 110, 9 (May 8, 1989): 13.
3. Michael Hetzer, "Better Heads Than Reds," *Business North Carolina* 10, 1 (January 1990): 47.
4. *Ibid.*
5. "How to Export Your Products Now," *Business America* 109, 7 (March 18, 1988): 26-27.
6. Note that GPO stock numbers for most annual publications change from one year to the next.
7. U.S. Small Business Administration, *International Trade, State and Local Resources Directory: North Carolina*. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1989): 5.
8. Statement of Senator Terry Sanford, U.S. Congress. Senate Committee on the Budget. *Restoring America's Competitive Edge: A North Carolina Perspective*. Hearings, 100th Congress, 1st session. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1987): 3.



Instructions for the Preparation of Manuscripts for North Carolina Libraries

1. *North Carolina Libraries* seeks to publish articles, book reviews, and news of professional interest to librarians in North Carolina. Articles need not be of a scholarly nature, but they should address professional concerns of the library community in the state.
2. Manuscripts should be directed to Frances B. Bradburn, Editor, *North Carolina Libraries*, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. 27858. N.C. 27604.
3. Manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate on plain white paper measuring 8½" x 11".
4. Manuscripts must be double-spaced (text, references, and footnotes). Manuscripts should be typed on sixty-space lines, twenty-five lines to a page. The beginnings of paragraphs should be indented eight spaces. Lengthy quotes should be avoided. When used, they should be indented on both margins.
5. The name, position, and professional address of the author should appear in the bottom left-hand corner of a separate title page.
6. Each page after the first should be numbered consecutively at the top right-hand corner and carry the author's last name at the upper left-hand corner.
7. Footnotes should appear at the end of the manuscript. The editors will refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th edition. The basic forms for books and journals are as follows:
Keyes Metcalf, *Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings*. (New York: McGraw, 1965), 416.
Susan K. Martin, "The Care and Feeding of the MARC Format," *American Libraries* 10 (September 1979): 498.
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