



# EXPERT EXPORT GUIDES

## HOW DO YOU DECIDE YOUR EXPORT STRATEGY?

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**STEP 3** of our '**7-Steps to Export Success**' programme is the '**How**'. How are we going to define our strategy and go to market in our target country?

To do this, it is important to have assessed all the key elements and the objectives of your export strategy including:

- Required financial investment
- Required other resources such as staff
- Are your products ready for export?
- Is your organisation prepared for export?
- Detailed assessment of your target markets including barriers to entry
- Timescale and deadlines for action. Deadlines work in ensuring we achieve our goals
- Level of Risk you are willing to take
- Route to Market Strategy – distributor, agent, own team, direct?
- Milestones along the way – what you need to achieve, by when, to be successful
- Expected Outcomes at each stage 3, 6, 12, 24 and 36 months

We cover each of these elements in detail in **Steps 1 and 2** of our **7-Steps** programme as covered in our **Expert Export Guides 1-9**, also available as **FREE** resources here. We strongly recommend you read these before finalising your plan.

Review the different options for your strategy and calculate the investment required, compare that to your self-assessment of your business capabilities and attitude to risk.

Do they match? If so, it is now time to commit to your preferred route-to-market option. That might be one of or a combination of the following:

- Distributor
- Agent
- Wholesaler
- Your own team
- Direct Sales

Whatever that is, once you've decided do not waver, focus on it. Find the best distributor, agent or employee, whichever is your choice. Be patient. There is no need to take the first thing offered. Look around. Ask a lot of questions. Seek advice from people you trust within the market and within your company. Take the time to make the right decision, it could be the deciding factor in your export success so merits careful consideration.

Be certain that the investment required is both affordable and justified:

- Will the returns exceed the costs?
- In what timeframe?
- Is that affordable?
- Do the potential returns warrant the exposure and the risk?

Are you comfortable with the predicted timescale and the time investment required from your current team? Do you have the internal resource or do you need extra staff/expertise?

Remember that a distributor/agent is often more work than an end customer. **They should actually be viewed as your most important customer.** As with any customer, they need nurturing and supporting, motivating and enthusing about your company and products above all others in their portfolio.

At this stage of the process with our clients we pull everything together in to a detailed plan. We recommend you do the same and would be pleased to support you in this process. Email [mike.wilson@goexporting.com](mailto:mike.wilson@goexporting.com) for details.

Make sure you are comfortable with the overall plan and the detail, with each of the elements above. Discuss it with your stakeholders to ensure everyone is on the same page. Obtaining the buy-in from colleagues now will save a lot of questions later on.

Review and compare the plan to the actual results often. Measure if you have successfully passed your milestones and achieved the expected outcomes. Highlight any anomalies and work to put them right. Be vigilant in keeping the plan on track.

If it is working, great. If not however, do not be afraid to question everything. Are you delivering the resources and investment agreed in the plan? Is it the execution that is wrong or the plan itself? Don't be afraid to change tack if necessary, but be sure of the reasons first.



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