



Information Sheet:

Suggested assistance processes

There are actually two processes involved in implementing an export development program to provide services and materials to small and medium size businesses. They consist of a “process” for getting ready to serve firms in a given area, followed by a “process” of providing firms with assistance. These can be defined as:

Implementation Process

There are basically three steps in getting ready to serve firms with export services and materials:

Training

In-service export training programs provide a basis for understanding the roles of *awareness*, *networking* and *facilitating*. It is suggested that those economic developers who are willing to be involved with clients to **facilitate** their needs with state and federal assistance programs be given sufficient training so they know about the programs and how they can be used. This might be as simple as having trade specialists from both agencies brief staff for this purpose. Providing staff with an access to NTDB and an understanding of how to use select materials would also be a great aid for providing export assistance.

Scheduling basic export training program(s)

These same state and federal agencies can help identify training programs for businesses to become acquainted with the various key facets of exporting. These often include sessions on the following generic export topics: basics of exporting; global marketing; shipping and documentation; banking (the two key topics are usually “methods of payment,” with an emphasis on letters of credit, and “working capital,” focusing on SBA and EXIM loans and receivable insurance programs); and legal (distributor agreements and intellectual property rights).

Recruiting firms

Using personal visits to recruit firms into the “client service” process (various NTDB reports can be very helpful in creating a firm's awareness).

Client service process

The process that an economic developer can use to provide assistance to a firm will generally consist of three steps, usually done in a sequence as follows:

- start with creating awareness on the firm's part (information available from NTDB);
- then assist them to enroll in a training session (identified by State or Federal agencies);
- followed by providing direct assistance “facilitating” them to available export service programs (state and federal resources).

Since this “client service process” focuses on developing a firm's **export readiness**, it generally consists mostly of helping a firm become aware of resources and making those contacts. It may incorporate some global marketing aspects such as preparing an international marketing plan. The *facilitating* role generally will include more advanced trade promotion marketing services available from the State and Federal programs (State Economic Development & Commercial Service).

A key service that the economic developer can provide is helping prepare a firm to respond to contacts made by State and Federal programs.

These following are key topics to help define a firm's **export readiness**:

- management commitment
- international marketing plan
- identify market potential
- determine primary markets
- assess readiness
- prepared programs and forms