



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada

Export Marketing Mentoring

The blend of marketing initiatives and technology to support e-business has become a crucial element in today's commercial economy. Firms seeking to expand their markets may not be familiar with the advantages and/or techniques associated with current export marketing approaches. Such techniques include using the Internet to support marketing efforts and enhance business transactions in a cost-effective manner.

Accordingly, a few years ago ACOA delivered a series of major e-business awareness programs to four hundred participants in thirteen communities in Nova Scotia. An outcome of ensuing discussions with participants was that they wanted one-on-one e-business and export marketing advice tailored to their company's specific needs.

In this light, ACOA set an **objective** "... to enhance the ability of Nova Scotia Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) to exploit international trade opportunities through improved business practices and through access to exporting advice" which would embed advice on e-business techniques.

ACOA chose to support this objective by engaging Novus to design a customized program of one-on-one consulting in e-business and exporting to companies that are now exporters, are export ready, or are considering exporting. The program was developed and then launched as a pilot project in the King/Hants County and Pictou/New Glasgow areas with mentoring to participating firms provided by Novus.

The success of the program design and Pilot Project led a full rollout of the "eEXPORT" program, which ACOA ultimately expanded to the current four-module "Export Mentoring Program".

The focus of the Program is to provide successful SME applicants with 40 hours of mentoring consulting. The role of the consultant is to provide counsel and coaching in the exporting and e-business strategy development. This includes providing guidance in becoming prepared for exporting, conducting appropriate research and guidance in accessing research information sources, and advising on the preparation and documentation of export strategic and action plans.

The role of the client is to actually conduct the detailed work to ultimately arrive at their export plan. Clients can expect to devote at least 80 hours of their time to the program.

The four modules in this Program are:

1. Export Readiness Assessment;

This element focuses on assisting clients determine their understanding of exporting and their readiness to do so.

- Consultants coach clients in understanding their product/service strengths;
- Determining if they have personnel equipped to manage the export process; and

- Introducing them to the key steps in assessing the market and accessing market intelligence; and devising a plan to take the next step toward developing a full-fledged export strategy and plan.

2. E-Business and Export Mentoring;

The basis of this module is ensuring client prepare an export marketing plan that integrates an e-business strategy.

- Determine the client's knowledge and use of internet and e-business, and ensure the client understands the factors of e-business that are appropriate to their product or services;
- Coach the client in the steps of developing an export marketing strategy, an integral part of which is the development or enhancement of an e-business strategy and plan;

3. Export Marketing Plan Mentoring;

This element is designed to help the client develop an effective export marketing plan.

- Confirm the client's product/service attributes and differentiators.
- Determine resident skills and export experience.
- Set guidelines for market research in target markets.
- Help analyse research results and guide client through to completion of an export marketing plan.

4. Aftercare/Mentoring and Follow Up

A client will have executed part or all of their marketing plan and need follow-up advice.

- Review progress with the client and identify successes and problems with their plan execution;
- Determine the areas, such as market penetration, competitive response, or order fulfilment, that need attention and set strategies and plans to address these issue; and
- In some cases, the firm might have done very well and is looking to expand their export market. Here the consultant will coach the client in gearing their plan toward expansion.

The Atlantic Canada World Trade Centre Inc., (ACWTC), now manages the program on behalf of ACOA. Successful applicant firms pay \$500.00 toward the 40 hours of consulting. The application and start-up process elements include the following:

- Interested firms complete an application to participate. It is reviewed by ACWTC and, if approved, they select a consulting firm from their roster of firms that best match their experience with the specific needs of the company;
- The company and consultant agree on the key objectives of the work program;
- The consultant prepares a brief statement of work including time, roles and objectives, and agrees with the client on the work plan;
- The consultant coaches the client in following and executing the key steps relevant to the module for which they have been approved; and
- The consultant provides progress and final report on the project.

An important element of the Program is to ensure client companies establish a working relationship with Industry Canada, DFAIT, ACOA, NSOED and Business Development Centre executive directors and other appropriate business development agency representatives. This will help ensure the client companies are aware of up to date export market situations and have formalised a helpful contact in target markets.

Clients that Novus has worked with under the Export Mentoring Program include:

Acorn Timber Frames Ltd.	MacGregors Custom Machining Ltd.
Allendale Electronics Ltd.	Minas Seed Ltd.
Benjamin Heating Products Ltd.	Nautel
Bio-Medica	Ocean Organics Ltd.
BJ Stewart Polythane Ltd.	Pastaman
Eastern Protein Foods Ltd. – ACA Coop.	PSC Analytical Services
Emery Smith Fisheries Ltd.	Rainbow Farms Ltd.
Garex Consultants International Inc.	RKO Steel Limited
Jacques Whitford Ltd.	Spring Water
JustUs! Coffee Roasters	Wear Well Garment Co.
Kenomee Log Homes Ltd.	