

# TRADE TALK TUESDAY

## A Guide to Exporting for Small Businesses

### RESOURCE GUIDE

#### Things to Consider When Exporting

1. Determine if your product or service needs a U.S. Export License; most don't, but you still need to check to comply with the law. This applies to any product leaving the United States, no matter the value.
2. Review required documentation and shipping options.
3. Research foreign standards, certifications, and regulations that apply to your products.
4. Research the duties, tariffs (taxes), shipping and insurance costs. These can impact your profit margin.

#### Resources for each of the above steps

1. [Comply with U.S. Export Regulations](#)
2. [Documents and Shipping, Customs Requirements and Documentation & Understanding HS Codes](#)
3. [Prepare Your Product for Export & Comply with Foreign Import Regulations](#)
4. [Research Duties and Tariffs & Determine the Total Export Price](#)

For more in-depth guidance on the export process, see Josh's presentation slides on pages 4-12.

#### Recording:

<https://stream.mux.com/iGBX3VtR1FM68agRdDfoepdYCCVUeipLY2YvX1pLql8/medium.mp4>

#### Trade Talk Tuesday

Please join us for the next 20-minute free webinar discussing Incoterms.

##### Date

TBD - February 2025

Registration information will be available soon.

#### Your Local Office

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# TRADE TALK TUESDAY

## A Guide to Exporting for Small Businesses

### Page 2

#### Export 101 Q&A

- **What is the definition of exporting?**
  - When a company from one country sells their goods and services to a company or consumer in another country. This means that any orders you receive from buyers outside of the United States, including Canada, are considered an export.
- **Should I approach an international sale the same way I'd approach a sale to a U.S. customer?**
  - No, you should not. There are several factors that make international sales distinct, including legal and regulatory requirements, logistics and delivery, export and import regulations, and duties and tariffs.
- **What risk does my company face if I don't follow the steps required when exporting?**
  - If your company makes a mistake in the export process, this can result in your shipment not clearing U.S. or foreign customs leading to delays and financial losses, seizure of goods by customs officials, nonpayment, legal or liability issues which includes fines and penalties, and reputation damage. The consequences are generally not catastrophic unless you break export controls laws or actively try to defraud the U.S. or foreign governments or your customers. Nonetheless, there are certainly more opportunities to incur extra costs, delays, and headaches for yourself and your customers in the export process than with U.S. domestic sales.
- **Can I use a third-party company to handle the export process, including determining my HS Code?**
  - Yes, you can utilize services to support your company through the export process. However, as the U.S. Principal Party of Interest (USPPI), your company is ultimately responsible for any mistakes made during the export process. Regardless of how you get your product to the foreign customer, your business remains accountable to customers and regulatory authorities.
- **Is there a way to avoid duties and tariffs?**
  - Yes, under the [De Minimis rule](#), companies can avoid paying duties when shipping to a particular country if the value of your shipment does not exceed the De Minimis value established by the country of import. Find [De Minimis values by country here](#).
- **How can I become a proactive and strategic exporter?**
  - You can become a more strategic exporter by developing an export plan and ensuring the market is right for your product. [Follow these key steps to develop your company's export plan](#).



# TRADE TALK TUESDAY

## A Guide to Exporting for Small Businesses

### Page 3

#### Export 101 Q&A cont.

- **Why export?**
  - Exporting can be profitable for businesses of all sizes. On average, sales grow faster, more jobs are created, and employees earn more than in non-exporting firms. For more information on why exporting is a good business decision, [check out this video](#).
- **What do I do if I still have questions about the export process?**
  - Your local U.S. Commercial Service Trade Specialist is ready to help answer your questions about the export process. Contact them today for one-on-one expert guidance.

#### Acknowledgments:

Thank you to our speaker, Josh Halpern, for sharing your knowledge. Appreciation is also given to the [East Michigan](#) and [West Michigan](#) District Export Councils for supporting the Trade Talk Tuesday series.



**View Trade Talk Tuesday Recordings:** <https://www.eastmichigandec.org/>

**For additional insights, contact your [local U.S. Commercial Service office](#).**





## Cross-border Fundamentals for US Companies



Host



VANBASSADOR

Getting to Global



Josh Halpern



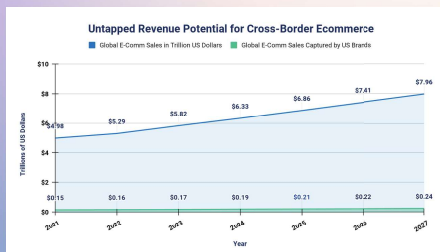
### NOW

- Chair, Getting to Global & the ([www.growbig.org/programs](http://www.growbig.org/programs))
- The VanBassador ([www.vanbassador.com](http://www.vanbassador.com))

### THEN

- US Commercial Service Officer (Diplomat)
  - Founder, Director: eCommerce Innovation Lab
  - US Embassy China
- Head of Omni International Partnerships, BigCommerce
- Getting to Global, Inc.: Cross-border consultancy: Calafia Farms, Paris Hilton Skincare, REVOLVE, ShopBop, government agencies

## Seize the international e-commerce opportunity



**2.71 billion**  
global online shoppers

**52%**  
of shoppers look for products internationally

**34%**  
shop online 1+ times per week

**20%**  
of retail purchase expected online in 2024

**\$121 AOV**  
for cross-border (+\$9 vs. domestic)

**21% CAGR**  
predicted through 2032

Passport



## Untapped Revenue Potential for Cross-Border Ecommerce

Global E-Comm Sales in Trillion US Dollars Global E-Comm Sales Captured by US Brands

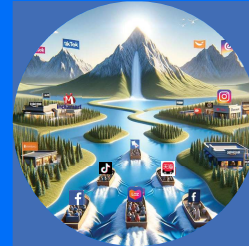


## Top considerations

1. CHANNELS
  - A. MARKETPLACE OPTIMIZATION
  - B. SOCIAL COMMERCE
  - C. BRICK AND MORTAR
  - D. YOUR OWN WEBSITE
2. B2B OR DTC OR HYBRID
3. DIGITAL MARKETING
4. FULFILLMENT AND LOGISTICS
5. PAYMENT FACILITATION
6. FINANCING
7. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND PROTECTION

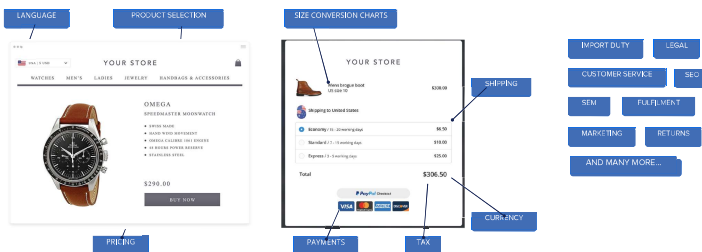


## What channels are you selling through?



### Channels

#### 1 Your website: Localization considerations



#### Website and online store: **Localization** of your customer experience is paramount

1

##### Multi-Locale

Set up a store layout that makes it easy for shoppers to select their country to shop in

##### Language

Storefront language translations that align with locales or can be selected separately

##### Merchandising

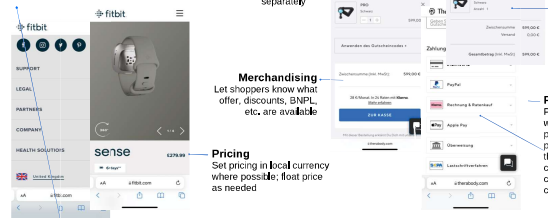
Let shoppers know what offer, discounts, BNPL, etc. are available

##### Pricing

Set pricing in local currency where possible; float price as needed

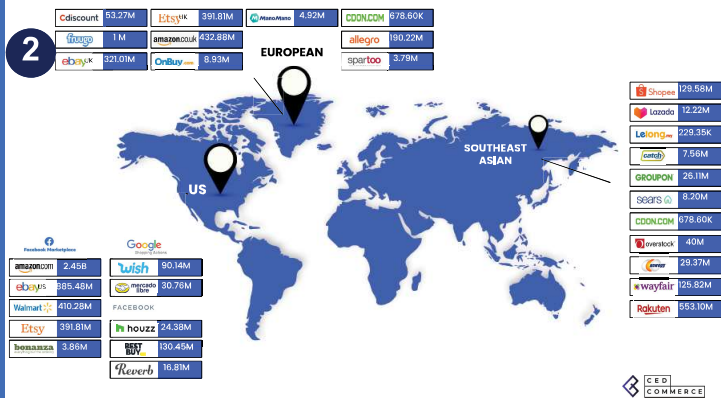
**Tax & Duty**  
Shipping, VAT, import tax and duties, etc.

**Payments**  
Present shoppers with the option to pay with preferred payment options in the shopper's country; this is critical to cart conversion rates





2



## Cross-Border Selling

Many global marketplaces encourage brands to sell cross-border to give their customers a wider range of products. This form of selling is particularly beneficial when a brand is first testing and building demand in a new market.

### PROS

- No local entity set up required
- Removes barriers of entry as long as you can receive payments in local currency
- No localized labeling
- Circumvents regulatory concerns

### CONS

- Stock pool decisions
- Increased fulfillment timeframes
- Increased fees — delivery costs, sales tax, duties
- Different pricing strategies

## Channels

### 3 Social Commerce is a BIG Deal

#### Instagram's popularity speaks

Over 1 Billion users worldwide, (Shhh Tiktok)

#### The world is mobile-first

Share of products purchased on mobile increased by 10% in May compared to pre-COVID (January).

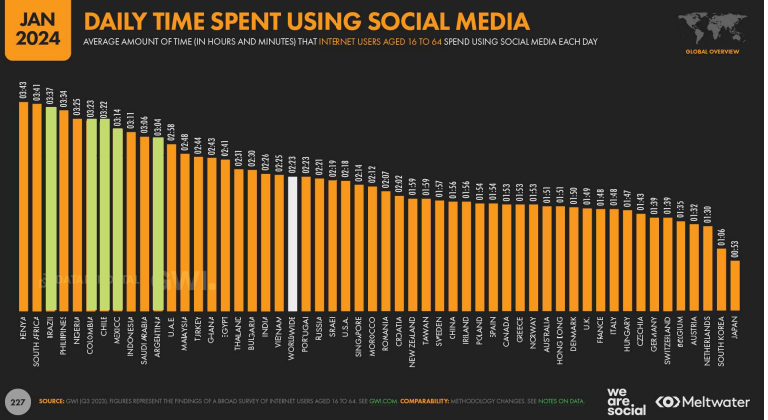
#### Social selling is on the rise

70% of shoppers worldwide now turn to Instagram for product research and discovery.

#### IG is a Shopping Destination

80% of users follow a business on Instagram.

Sources: [Econsult](#), [Facebook](#)



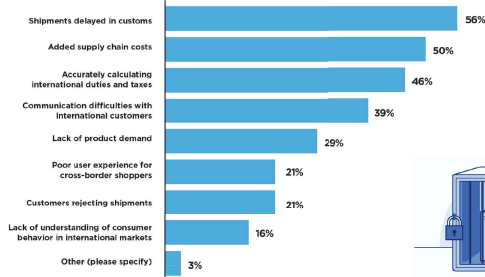
## LATAM Top Platforms:

- **WhatsApp:** Key tool for direct sales and customer service.
- **Facebook:** Large user base and strong in marketplaces.
- **Instagram:** Popular among young people with significant visual impact.
- **TikTok:** Growing in social commerce, especially with short video formats.



## What sucks for cross-border sellers?

### Top challenges faced by cross-border sellers

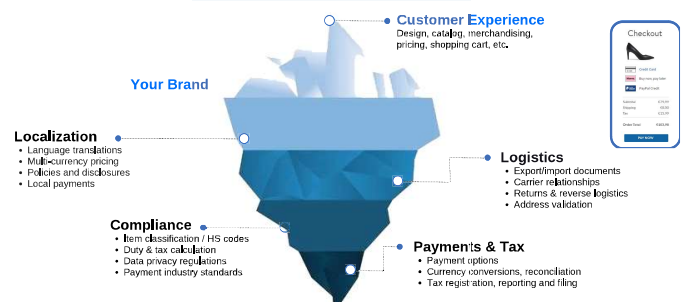


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### Most of the Complexity is Beneath the Surface



Digital River | GROW BIG initiative

# HS Code Classification

## Meeting expectations starts with classification

Customs officials want to know what's in the box



- Inaccurate item classification

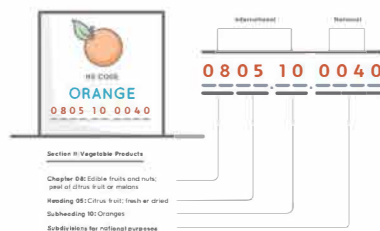
- =
- Delays & added costs



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## Classification requires HS codes

Harmonized System (HS) codes are a system to classify globally traded products – the purpose is to enable the accurate calculation of customs duties



Each country may have a unique HS code for the same product.

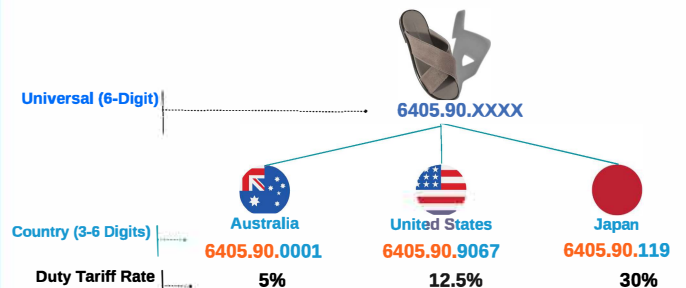
- The **first 6 digits** are universal – they are the same for all countries for a specific product.
  - The **last 4-6 digits** are country-specific.
- Mapping HS codes is a pre-requisite to accurately calculate customs duties.
- HS codes tie directly to a country's **tariff rates**.



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## HS codes are country-specific

Duty rates may vary by country



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## HS codes are country-specific

Varying Duty into Canada



Universal (6-Digit)



6403.59.XXXX

Country (3-6 Digits)



Canada

6403.59.1000

Medical or Ballet

0%



Canada

6403.59.2000

Female Other

11%



Canada

6403.59.9100

Slippers

18%

Duty Tariff

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7

Payments is not the same in all markets



**Payments:** Customers frequently abandon their purchase if the right **local payment options** are not available



Logistics

**Fulfillment operations:** Choose **Logistics** partners that can enable you to scale



- ✓ **Cross-border and in-country support**  
As international sales grow and reach milestones in top countries you need partners that can support **local in-market** (or region) operations alongside your broader cross-border strategy
- ✓ **Product classifications**  
Shipping international packages is highly dependent on HS codes / country-specific tariff classifications; make sure you understand your product catalog and work with providers experienced in this area
- ✓ **DDP incoterms**  
Allow customers to pay duties/taxes during checkout and ship orders duties delivered paid (DDP) so there are no surprise costs upon delivery



**Building Out Your Proposition**

A carefully thought out pricing and ranging strategy should be a vital part of internationalization plan, Brands should answer the below questions before they determine their marketplace proposition

**PRICING STRATEGY**

- Does your pricing include or exclude local taxes?
- Have you factored in any additional logistical or operational costs to ensure you remain profitable?
- Does your pricing strategy take into account fluctuating foreign exchange rates?

**RANGING STRATEGY**

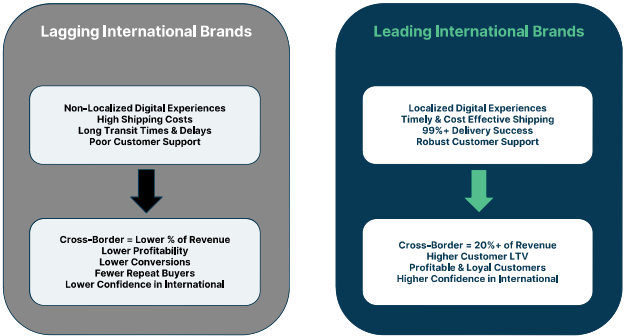
- Examine whether your product range will resonate in the chosen marketplace
- Is the marketplace you plan to launch on known for discounted ranges?
- Remember you may need to consider and alternative range to enable you to meet the consumer needs and business objectives

**REGULATORY & LABELLING**

- Does the country you plan to launch in require local language product labelling?
- Does the marketplace you plan to launch on require additional product labelling?
- Are there any regulations that you need to comply with?
- Are certain ingredients banned?



**Brands Grow Faster with the Right Buyer Experience**



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### WHAT IS A ROUND ROBIN SESSION?

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the future based on demand. Email today to express interest.

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### WHY ATTEND?

- GAIN ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY EXPERTS. YOU'D BE AMAZED BY HOW MUCH WE CAN COVER IN A SHORT TIME
- DISCOVER NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND OPTIMIZATION
- ENHANCE YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY IN JUST ONE HOUR AND FIFTEEN MINUTES
- NETWORK WITH OTHER SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS LEADERS

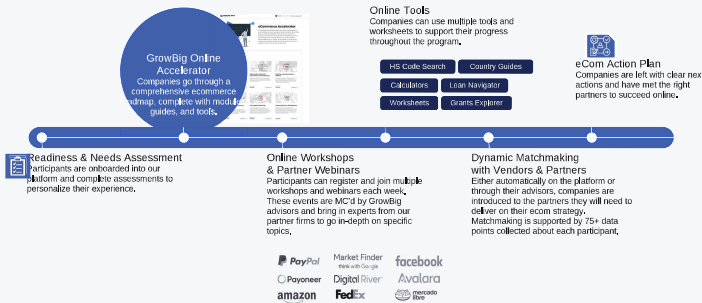
### Our experts

Our experts are industry leaders, agency owners, and ecommerce technology consultants who have signed an agreement to offer education-only insight, not sell their services or technology.

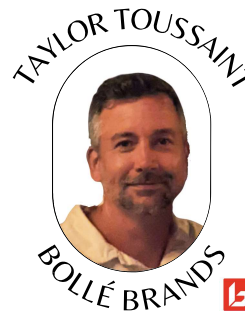
### ABOUT GROW BIG

The Grow Big Initiative (GBI) under Getting to Global, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Small Business Administration, brings together industry experts, business leaders, and government officials to empower manufacturers, brands, and retailers to sell more online across new channels and geographies. Learn more at [www.growbig.org](http://www.growbig.org)

## Merchant growth accelerator program



2024



BOLLÉ BRANDS



### WHAT DO BRANDS GET WRONG WHEN IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL ECOMMERCE AS IT RELATES TO SEO?

- DIFFERENT TOP-LEVEL DOMAINS.
- POOR TRANSLATIONS.
- NOT USING AN SEO TOOL THAT CAN ACCURATELY TRACK INTERNATIONAL SEO.



### WHAT ARE SOME BIG DIFFERENCES IN DIGITAL MARKETING AND ECOMMERCE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES/REGIONS?

- DIFFERENT LAWS, GDPR FOR THE EU.
- PERSONALIZATION (COOKIES), EMAIL, ETC.
- NO MAP (MINIMUM ADVERTISED PRICE) IN EU.

TOM DUSTMAN



SUNNEN PRODUCTS



B2B ECOMMERCE – SUNNEN HAS BEGUN THE JOURNEY OF E-COMMERCE – OVER 100,000 SKU'S, WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?



GLOBAL ERP – SUNNEN HAS A GLOBAL FOOTPRINT WITH MORE THAN A DOZEN SUBSIDIARIES – HOW DOES SUNNEN MANAGE THE ERP SYSTEM VARIATIONS, EXAMPLES ARE ORACLE IN THE USA VS SELECTLINE IN SWITZERLAND.



COMPLIANCE – EXPORT COMPLIANCE IS A DYNAMIC TOPIC, DOES SUNNEN HAVE AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND A COMPLIANCE PLAN TO ASSIST IN KEEPING UP TO DATE ON COMPLIANCE?



BEN SINGER



HYLAND'S NATURALS

Hyland's.

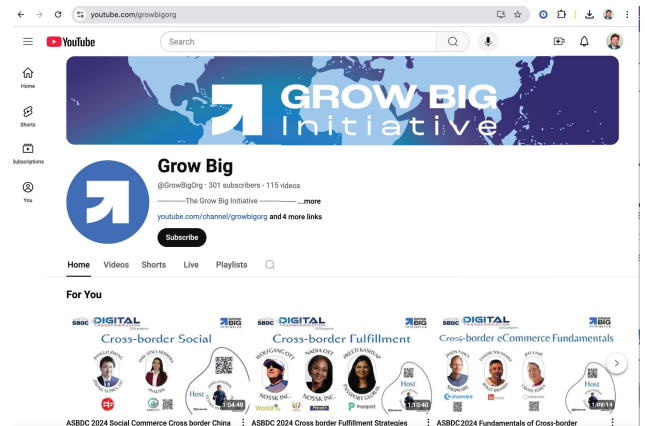


1. AS AN EXPORTER, WHAT ARE THE TOP RED FLAGS THAT YOU LOOK FOR WHEN FINDING AN ECOMMERCE PARTNER?
  - A. LACK OF EXPERIENCE
  - B. UNCLEAR OR NON-TRANSPARENT PRICING AND COST STRUCTURES
  - C. WEAK REGULATORY COMPLIANCE PROCESSES
- WHAT ARE YOUR PRODUCT-SPECIFIC REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND COMPLIANCE STANDARDS?
  - U.S. FDA ADHERENCE
  - GMP'S
  - CERTIFICATE OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS
- MANY IN-COUNTRY DISTRIBUTORS ASK FOR PRODUCT PACKAGING TO BE COUNTRY SPECIFIC. HOW DO YOU MANAGE THIS REQUEST?
  - STICKERING PROGRAM WITH IN-COUNTRY LANGUAGE
  - IF MOQ'S ARE MET, WE CAN PRODUCE COUNTRY-SPECIFIC PACKAGING
  - STICKERING TO BE DONE IN COUNTRY AT IN-COUNTRY LABOR COSTS.
- WHAT DOES THE COST/EXPENSE STRUCTURE LOOK LIKE FOR SELLING INTERNATIONALLY WITH IN-COUNTRY ECOMMERCE

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END CUSTOMER  
24/7/365

1. **Regulatory Restrictions:** Some countries may classify certain natural remedies or ingredients as pharmaceuticals, requiring a much stricter approval process. Failure to obtain proper licensing or approval can lead to heavy fines or product seizures.
2. **Prohibited Ingredients:** Ingredients that are legal in one country may be banned or restricted in another due to safety concerns, different scientific evaluations, or cultural taboos. This can result in products being denied entry or even recalled.
3. **Product Liability and Safety Concerns:** Cross-border markets may impose different liability laws. If a product is found to cause harm, it may lead to lawsuits, recalls, or reputational damage. Be mindful of product safety documentation and adverse event reporting requirements in foreign markets.
4. **Counterfeiting Risks:** Entering certain markets can increase the risk of counterfeiting, especially for health-related products. This can dilute brand value and pose health risks to consumers. Vigilant monitoring of the supply chain and intellectual property protection are essential.
5. **Complex Labeling Requirements:** Each country will have specific labeling requirements that differ significantly from others. These include warnings, usage instructions, ingredient listings, and claims about health benefits. Mislabeling or inadequate information can lead to non-compliance and product removal from the market.



## The World is Open for Your Business

Our global network of experienced trade professionals is located throughout the United States and in U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide. Whether you're looking to make your first export sale or expand to additional markets, we offer the expertise you need to connect with lucrative opportunities and increase your bottom line.



### Export Counseling

- Develop effective market entry and sales strategies.
- Understand export documentation requirements and import regulations of foreign markets.
- Navigate U.S. government export controls, compliance and trade financing options



### Market Intelligence

- Analyze market potential and foreign competitors.
- Obtain useful information on best prospects, financing, laws, and cultural issues.
- Conduct background checks on potential buyers and distributors.



### Business Matchmaking

- Connect with pre-screened potential partners.
- Promote your product or service to prospective buyers at trade events worldwide.
- Meet with international industry and government decision makers in your target markets



### Commercial Diplomacy

- Overcome trade obstacles to successfully enter international markets.
- Benefit from coordinated U.S. government engagement with foreign governments to protect U.S. business interests.

### Let Our Global Network Work for You

#### Worldwide Reach

As the U.S. government, we can open doors that no one else can. With trade experts in more than 80 countries, we can provide you with on-the-ground knowledge and results.

#### Local Connections

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# U.S. Commercial Service Offices

Find detailed contact information for each of our offices at [trade.gov/commercial-service-office-lookup](https://trade.gov/commercial-service-office-lookup)

## U.S. Offices

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	<b>Georgia</b> Atlanta Savannah	<b>Kentucky</b> Lexington Louisville	<b>Missouri</b> Kansas City St. Louis	<b>North Carolina</b> Charlotte Greensboro Raleigh	<b>Puerto Rico</b> San Juan	<b>Rhode Island</b> Providence	<b>Vermont</b> Montpelier
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<b>Argentina</b> Buenos Aires	<b>Chile</b> Santiago	<b>Egypt</b> Cairo	<b>Guatemala</b> Guatemala City	<b>Japan</b> Osaka-Kobe Tokyo	<b>Morocco</b> Casablanca	<b>Peru</b> Lima	<b>Singapore</b>	<b>Thailand</b> Bangkok
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<b>Austria</b> Vienna		<b>Ethiopia</b> Addis Ababa	<b>Hong Kong</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b> Almaty	<b>Myanmar</b> Rangoon	<b>Poland</b> Warsaw	<b>South Africa</b> Cape Town Durban Johannesburg	<b>Ukraine</b> Kiev
<b>Belgium</b> Brussels	<b>Colombia</b> Bogotá	<b>European Union</b>	<b>Hungary</b> Budapest		<b>Netherlands</b> The Hague	<b>Portugal</b> Lisbon	<b>South Korea</b> Seoul	<b>United Arab Emirates</b> Abu Dhabi Dubai
<b>Brazil</b> Belo Horizonte Brasília Recife Rio de Janeiro São Paulo	<b>Costa Rica</b> San José	<b>Finland</b> Helsinki	<b>India</b> Ahmedabad Bengaluru Chennai Hyderabad Kolkata Mumbai New Delhi	<b>Kenya</b> Nairobi	<b>New Zealand</b> Auckland Wellington	<b>Qatar</b> Doha	<b>Spain</b> Madrid	<b>United Kingdom</b> London
	<b>Cote D'Ivoire</b> Abidjan	<b>France</b> Paris	<b>Indonesia</b> Jakarta	<b>Kuwait</b> Kuwait City	<b>Nigeria</b> Lagos	<b>Romania</b> Bucharest	<b>Sweden</b> Stockholm	<b>Uruguay</b> Montevideo
<b>Bulgaria</b> Sofia	<b>Croatia</b> Zagreb	<b>Germany</b> Berlin Düsseldorf Frankfurt Munich	<b>Ireland</b> Dublin	<b>Lebanon</b> Beirut	<b>Norway</b> Oslo	<b>Russia</b> Moscow St. Petersburg	<b>Switzerland</b> Bern	<b>Vietnam</b> Hanoi Ho Chi Minh City
	<b>Czech Republic</b> Prague							