

A BASIC GUIDE TO  
**EXPORTING**



**10TH EDITION**

U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration  
Washington, D.C.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Today, more than 70 percent of the world's purchasing power is outside the borders of the United States, a reality that presents tremendous opportunities for U.S. businesses. In the last 20 years U.S. exports have increased to almost \$2 trillion. Expanding use of the Internet, more transportation options, and the successful implementation of free trade agreements have dramatically increased access to markets around the world—making it easier, less costly, and less risky for U.S. firms to do business internationally.

Each year, U.S. companies rely on exporting to diversify their customer base, manage market fluctuations, grow, and become more competitive. It is not just larger firms that are experience these benefits. In fact, of the quarter million U.S. firms selling internationally, 97 percent are small and medium-sized companies.

Along with potential opportunities, selling abroad presents unique challenges, whether it is to obtain financing, find potential distributors or agents, understand regulatory or documentation requirements, or navigate through customs. Exporting requires commitment, but the return on your investment can be substantial.

Whether you look to make your first export sale or expand into new markets, this new edition of *A Basic Guide to Exporting* provides expert advice and practical solutions for reaching new customers and making sales around the world.

Best of luck in your export endeavors.

Sincerely,



Carlos M. Gutierrez  
Secretary of Commerce  
Washington, D.C.

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This book is intended to provide general guidance for businesses and practitioners in better understanding the basic concepts of international trade. It is distributed with the understanding that the authors, editors, and publisher are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. Where legal or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. This book contains information on exporting that was current as of the date of publication. While every effort has been made to make it as complete and accurate as possible, readers should be aware that all information that is contained herein is subject to change without notice.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

You are reading the 10th and latest edition of *A Basic Guide to Exporting: The Official U.S. Government Resource for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses*. There are other how-to books on the market, but this one is the easiest to use. We hope it will soon be your dog-eared favorite.

The book is largely created anew with updated information, a new introductory chapter, revised sample forms used in the export process, and case studies accompanying every chapter.

Publishing a book is a labor of love—an act of endurance and persistence. Many people suffered through this one, exalting and being exalted in the end. Colleagues at the International Trade Administration (ITA) include Jennifer Kirsch, who looked after all the details and kept the project moving forward. There would be no book without her skill.

John Ward, the publications director in the ITA 's Office of Public Affairs, has encyclopedic knowledge of how books come together, and much of what he knows is applied in the pages that follow. A book should be a pleasure to pick up. Because of John, this one is.

The work pulling together a new edition began several years ago with our colleague at the Atlanta U.S. Export Assistance Center. Tom Strauss heard from clients that a new book was needed, and he started compiling information with the help of an international trade specialist, Bob Abrahams. Trade specialists Keith Hwang and Bob Deane read the manuscript and provided useful comments and clarifications. Curt Cultice, senior media specialist in the marketing office of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, assisted in writing some of the case studies. Michele Robinson of ITA's Office of Public Affairs provided production assistance. Our interns, Robert Herren and Courtney Trumpler, also assisted production by researching the book's photos and publishing history.

On the production side, kudos to Linda Stringer of Publications Professionals LLC for her careful editing of the text and to our book design team, led by Amanda Drake of the Creative Services division of the U.S. Government Printing Office and Anne Masters of Anne Masters Design, Inc.

Finally, we hope you will be inspired and empowered to go beyond your own comfortable borders into a world of infinite opportunity.

Doug Barry  
Editor  
U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service  
Washington, D.C.

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