

EXPORT PRO INC.

Export Master®. A project to Internationalize Municipalities, stimulate local industry to expand and attract foreign companies

Background

Every municipality establishes Official Plans for population, skilled labour force and industrial sector growth that meet the dual objectives of managed economic development and quality of life. Another objective is to encourage expansion of existing industry and to attract industrial and related commercial development to provide a more balanced municipal assessment base.

The key to a successful industrial growth strategy is a healthy local industrial sector. It is easier to increase the number of people employed by 50-100 through the development of existing companies than to try to attract a new company employing that number of people. A new employer will no doubt seek grants and other concessions which may be difficult to rationalize in tight economic times. Furthermore, there is always the risk that the new company may be shut down if business projections cannot be met.

Activate/Stimulate local industrial growth

Local industry can be activated and expanded through:

- Expert assistance and advice about more effective marketing;
- Raising awareness of how they can access overseas markets and export their products;
- Expanding their product lines by importing goods and representing foreign companies in the domestic market;
- Manufacturing foreign products under license or as part of a joint venture.

The project to internationalize a municipality starts with a survey of existing industries to identify their capacity and willingness to grow and to determine what would be needed to support their expansion (funding, skills & knowledge, facility upgrades, product adaptation, etc.) Usually, an experienced municipal planner or economic development official will lead the development of this inventory of companies.

The next step is a workshop led by a knowledgeable professional using proven educational/information materials. A small group of elected officials, public and

private sector managers and planners will work together to develop workable plans that meet their particular needs.

Here is an example of some marketing ideas. Locating in our town has many benefits, such as:

- x million people within one day transportation distance
- Located close to major transportation routes, major airports and smaller regional airports
- Proximity to university and community college training facilities
- Large pool of labour available within 100 km distance
- Serviced land zoned for industrial development
- There is existing infrastructure and streamlined processes to support industry
- The Town has room to grow and a solid plan for industrial and commercial expansion
- High quality living at affordable cost

Attract Foreign Investors

Multi-Nationals

Large corporations conduct extensive surveys and research the markets before establishing a foreign operation. It is often difficult to convince multi-nationals of the benefits and attract them to smaller communities that have potential. Furthermore, in addition to a skilled workforce and other resources, they frequently look for government funding, special considerations and concessions. Offsetting the benefits of having a large company locate in your municipality, there is the risk when municipalities become too dependent on a major employer based offshore. There are numerous stories of the negative impacts on workers and the local tax base when an economic downturn leads to reduced production and staff layoffs.

Small and Mid-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

As a viable alternative, small and mid-sized overseas companies with 10 to 200 employees can be targeted. In most economies, the majority of businesses are SMEs. These companies generate most of the innovation and economic expansion in the economy. If SME managers see a municipality as offering access to a large potential market (for example, all of Canada and the USA or Europe), a pool of qualified or trainable labour, suitable industrial locations and desirable neighbourhoods in which employees can live, they will not aggressively search for alternative sites in which to set up their companies.

Population Growth

Activating the expansion of existing industries and attracting new industries creates a multiplier effect. As the profile of a municipality is raised and promoted locally and internationally, it will become more attractive to workers, managers and spin-off industries.

Activity

A skilled facilitator/consultant will work with local business and development partners and assist with needs assessments, strategic planning, program development and implementation.

The consultant, together with representatives from the Economic Development department, will select 10-15 Small or Medium-sized companies. During a two-year period, SME staff will receive training and support for domestic and international expansion. These activities have specific goals, performance measurement targets and time lines with a focus on increasing international business while improving productivity and profitability. A detailed activity plan will be designed after the project objectives and terms of reference are agreed upon by participants and sponsors.

Sample Goals

- Increase the scope of domestic and export business for small and medium-sized companies;
- Promote exporting of local products and services to global markets;
- Set up representative arrangements with foreign companies in the domestic market; arrange licensing or joint venture agreements for manufacturing foreign products for the domestic market;
- Increase the level of good quality employment opportunities for residents currently working in other locations;
- Stimulate employers and local government to work and think more internationally.

Project Responsibility:

Municipal economic development staff
Communications staff

Project sponsors:

Municipal Councillors or other elected officials
Local businesses, manufacturers, service providers
Chambers of Commerce, business development committee

Promotion:

The objective of an ongoing communication initiative is to raise awareness of global business and promote the importance of international business to industry, elected officials and the community through:

- Production of newsletters, press releases and other media placements;
- Advertising company and employee success stories using print and electronic media;
- Delivering orientation workshops to industry, media, elected officials and other interested parties to 'sell' the project, generate 'buzz' and solicit participants for future projects.

The chart below outlines examples of suggested activities. Note that several of the activities can be run in parallel.

Time horizon	Activity	Lead Responsibility	Remarks
	Approval of draft work plan, budget projections	Economic Development department	Approval-in-principle from the Mayor and Council, Project participants and/or Sponsors
	Completion of detailed plan, including profiles for each company	Economic Development department Consultant	
	Final approval of work plan and budget	Economic Development department	Final approval from Municipal Council, Project participants and/or Sponsors
	Project kick-off Public presentation of plans	Economic Development department Consultant	Participants: Mayor's office, representatives of sponsors, industry and media
	Interviews with 50-75 Companies	Economic Development department Consultant	Consultant will assist with interview form designs, initial interviews and revisions of interview formats
	Final selection of 10-15 companies to participate in the Project	Economic Development department and selection panel of industry representatives, with the Consultant's assistance	

Time horizon	Activity	Lead Responsibility	Remarks
	Kick-off meeting with selected companies	Economic Development department Consultant	The first seminar provides information about work plans, implementation schedules, goals, etc. Overview presentations by participating companies
	Preparation of strategic plan for each Company	Consultant working with each Company	Individual meetings to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and long term goals Identification of activities needed to achieve goals
	Presentation of Companies' strategic plans	Consultant Economic Development department	Copies to be provided to Council and sponsors
	Ongoing activities: Workshops and seminars every second month Individual meetings with consultant Telephone and email communications between Companies and consultant for priority problem-solving	Consultant and Companies	Information-sharing and confidence-building
	Training/updating Companies in media relations Media coverage – project updates, success stories, participant interviews Aggressive use of social media	Economic Development department Communications/media relations officer	Generated by professional media personnel in the municipality and in the companies

Time	Activity	Responsibility	Remarks
	<p>Project evaluation, review and analysis of goals achieved</p> <p>Identification of improvements needed for the next phase</p> <p>Summing Up and preparation of final project report</p>	<p>Economic Development department</p> <p>Consultant</p>	<p>Each company will deliver "before and after" presentations on their involvement with the project</p> <p>Overview of companies' long-term plans</p>
	Monitoring and follow up on company progress	<p>Economic Development department</p> <p>Companies</p>	Scheduled 8-12 months after project completion

Responsibilities

Role of Elected Officials (Mayor and Council)

- Ensure that policies, bylaws and programs that affect the local business environment are streamlined and conducive to stimulating industrial growth
- Contribute to, approve and participate in the international project activities and related events
- Nominate one or two Councillors to serve as official liaison with the international project team
- Free up municipal resources (people and places) for planning, coordination, meetings
- Provide funding to support start-up and selected ongoing activities
- Active promotion to the community, media, local industry, prospective companies and the community

Role of the Economic Development Department

- Lead responsibility for the international project, from start-up through implementation to the successful conclusion and post-project evaluation
- Coordinate the selection and orientation of participating companies
- Facilitate ongoing communications between Council and international project participants
- Generate suggestions for streamlining approvals and other authorizations to facilitate business start-up and expansion

- Contacting and conducting interviews with potential companies/participants and functioning as a member of the final selection committee
- Developing/updating company profiles
- Coordinating visits with foreign companies wishing to establish a local business or partner with local businesses
- Researching material for preparation of the final project report and preparing a presentation to Council

Project Sponsor (local industry, Chambers of Commerce, provincial governments, etc.) roles:

- Involvement in pre-project information sessions
- Serve as a sounding board in brainstorming sessions for project planning
- Promoting the project to the local business and industry
- Assisting in the selection of prospective companies to participate in the project

Export Pro's Roles:

- Functioning as an expert coach for government representatives, sponsors and project participants
- Design and participate in all project pre-planning sessions and implementation meetings
- Assisting with overall project planning, strategic planning and goal-setting with companies
- Facilitate preparation of company profiles prior to selection interviews and assist in the selection of project participants
- Work with economic development and communications staff to prepare articles, press releases, presentations on international business for a variety of audiences
- Developing content for and conducting workshops, conferences and seminars
- Coach and mentor companies at individual meetings and/or by telephone consultations
- Assist in development and completion of project evaluations

Why hire Export Pro Inc. as a coach and consultant for this project?

The principal of Export Pro has:

- More than 40 years of practical international business experience in a variety of industries, in more than 100 countries
- A proven track record of successfully carrying out similar projects with other municipalities and authorities
- Achieved the best result recorded for an EU project. A two-year program with nine participating companies in Sweden resulted in an average export increase of 29% per company. In addition, the companies achieved 21.6% growth in sales, productivity increases of 11.8 % and hired 24.7% more employees to respond to company expansion. Other projects in Europe achieved similar results.

- The material to be used has been tested and validated by numerous projects
- More than 5000 companies and individuals have attended Export Pro led educational and workshops in Europe and North America
- More than 200 companies have been established in overseas markets as a result of the hands-on assistance and coaching of Export Pro Inc.

Export Pro has developed a broad range of seminars and workshops. Programs can also be customized to the needs of each client. Programs can be delivered in English and Swedish. Visit www.exportpro.com for more details and user testimonials.

Read our book:

Export & Import - Winning in the Global Marketplace: A practical hands-on guide to success in international business, with 100s of real-world examples + exercises (ISBN 9780968114810). Order one today. We promise that after reading the book, you will have a better understanding of international business. Visit www.exportpro.com to view the table of contents and look inside the book.

Leif Holmvall, Owner and President of Export Pro Inc.

Leif has more than 40 years' experience in International Business in more than 100 countries. He has lived and worked in Europe and North America. He gained his experience as an executive of several Swedish companies, covering a broad range of industries, and as Swedish Trade Commissioner to Canada. He has operated his own consulting businesses since 1982, coaching companies to become successful in international business. Leif also teaches at international universities and conducts seminars for executives in Europe.

Most of Leif's business is with overseas clients. His portfolio includes acting as an agent or representative for foreign companies to set up distribution, select distributors and activate them. His clients today include companies in North America, Europe and Asia.

Leif has over four decades of practical, hands-on experience. He is known for his ability to discuss not only each company's specific activities but also to give detailed answers on country-specific questions. His presentations are down-to-earth, interactive, refreshing and based on his many years of real-life business experience. He is the author of many books on international business (a list can be found at www.exportpro.com) and is a popular guest speaker at universities, business schools and corporations in North America and Europe. Over 5,000 company representatives and individuals have attended his seminars and workshops. Over 200 companies have expanded into international business using his expertise.

Leif is an engineer with numerous degrees and credentials in international marketing.

For more information about his company, visit www.exportpro.com .

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