

SME Export Checklist : Are They Ready ?

Is the SME ready to start exporting?

1. Is the product already available ?

- A. currently in production or being developed
- B. at the prototype stage
- C. at the idea stage only

2. Is the product selling in the Canadian market ?

- A. selling, and market share is growing
- B. selling, but market share is low
- C. selling in only one city in Canada

3. Does the SME have the surplus production capacity or available specialists to meet increased demand for their product ?

Yes / No

4. Does the SME have the financing required to adapt their product to suit the target market and to promote it ?

- A. financing is in place
- B. financing is being arranged
- C. no financing available

5. Is the SME management committed to sustaining their export effort ?

Yes / No

6. Does the SME have a good track record of meeting deadlines ?

Yes / No

7. Does the SME management have experience in export markets ?

Yes / No

8. Does their product have a distinct competitive advantage (quality, price, uniqueness, innovation) over their competition ?

Yes / No

9. Has the SME adapted their packaging (labelling and/or promotional materials) to the target market ?

Yes / No

10. Does the SME have the capacity and resources to provide after-sales support and service in the target market?

Yes / No

11. Does the SME have a Free on Board (FOB) or Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) price list for their product ?

Yes / No

12. Has the SME undertaken any foreign market research ?

- A. completed primary and secondary market research, including a visit to the target market
- B. completed some primary and secondary market research
- C. no research

13. Is promotional material available in the language of the target markets? (Business cards, brochures, websites)

Yes / No

14. Has the SME started marketing their product in the target market ?

Yes / No

15. Has the SME engaged the services of a sales representative / distributor / agent, or partnered with a local firm ?

Yes / No

16. Has the SME hired a freight forwarder or customs broker ?

Yes / No

Association Representative

Date

How did the SME score?

If you selected "A", or answered "Yes" to 12–16 questions, congratulations! The SME understands the commitment, strategies and resources needed to be a successful exporter. At the very least, the SME has the foundation in place to take on the world and succeed.

7–11: Not bad, but there are weaknesses in the SME export strategy. It may be wise for the SME to seek advice and guidance from government experts, export consultants or the international trade branch of their financial institution.

Less than 7: While the SME may be ready to visit faraway lands, they'll need to do more homework before they start exporting. SME to consider getting advice and guidance from government experts and/or export consultants.