

Client Story

Grand Brands Baltimore, Maryland

Company Profile

Grand Brands launched its first product True Lemon in 2004. True Lemon is 100% all-natural crystallized lemon in portion-controlled packets for water, teas, and other beverages. From a start in just a few grocery stores in the Baltimore area, the company has expanded its distribution to include more than 15,000 retail stores in the U.S. and Canada today. The company recently added two new products—True Lime and True Orange—and has expanded its packaging to shakers and bulk packaging that provide the opportunity for the company to sell to the coffee service, food service, and ingredients markets.

International Potential

Grand Brands had achieved modest success in Canada, and recognized the great potential of international markets. The weaker dollar and the continuing interest of international markets to follow U.S. consumer trends indicated that international sales would be worth pursuing. Yet no one in the business had the knowledge or contacts that would make breaking into these markets possible.

Grand Brands' Vice President of Specialty Markets Ryan Svehla learned about ExporTech and enrolled in the program to become more knowledgeable about the ins and outs of exporting. ExporTech is a joint program of the U.S. Commercial Service's Export Assistance Centers (USEAC), the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), and the District Export Council (DEC) in Maryland, that brings together small groups of companies with an interest in entering or expanding sales in international markets to develop customized international business development plans.

Measurable and Immeasurable Results

Through a wide array of contacts and resources available through the program, Svehla identified target markets on which to focus. He also learned of a variety of opportunities for marketing and grants, as well as how to avoid potential pitfalls. In just three months since the completion of the ExporTech program, the company has:

- Completed transactions in Taiwan, Australia, Korea, and South and Central America;
- Received a \$50,000 matching grant from the Southern U.S. Trade Association for marketing efforts;
- Received a \$5,000 matching grant from the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development; and
- Developed alliances for sales and distribution in other international regions.



Svehla's has targeted 10% of total annual revenue to come from international sales in 2008, and anticipates doubling this goal in 2009. He praises the program's value for his company, and for others:

"ExporTech is a well-orchestrated and complete crash course in exporting. From finance to logistics, to freight forwarding, and everything else you need to know. It's absolutely fantastic.

"I would highly recommend this program to any and every company considering global trade initiatives. Although pursuing international markets is often time consuming, taking advantage of programs and resources at the state and federal level, such as ExporTech, is the best way to get started.

"Our success has been a combination of diligently pursuing potential opportunities, networking, and following the expert guidance of the industry veterans I met through ExporTech."

