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SII Dry Kilns Benefits from ExporTech: The How-To for Exporting
NC Businesses Expanding Markets

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“Business is not the same at home as it used to be,” said Paula Turlington, vice president of SII Dry Kilns in Lexington. “Even to be stable, we need new markets.” NC State University’s ExporTech program helped the company to secure more than \$800,000 in new sales, but more importantly, from a new and unexpected market – Russia.

SII Dry Kilns, a family-owned business since 1969, manufactures lumber drying and heat treating equipment, including kilns, pre-dryers and fan sheds. Their kilns prepare hardwood materials that will ultimately be used for cabinets, floors and furniture.

The weak dollar, coupled with an increased demand for U.S. products, makes exporting a critical factor for survival for many manufacturers. However, according to Greg Sizemore, director of the Charlotte U.S. Export Assistance Center, 50 percent of exporters are only exporting to one market.

“The goal is to expand those markets,” said Sizemore, a 17-year veteran with the U.S. Commercial Service. “And that’s what ExporTech does. It links companies to experts and coaches; it builds relationships between clients and resources at state and federal levels.”

ExporTech was developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce in conjunction with the U.S. Commercial Service and NC State University. It’s the ‘how-to’ program that helps small- to medium-sized businesses enter or expand into global markets. By limiting participants, the program offers a mentor that works one-on-one with companies over a 3-month period to develop a customized export strategy.

“The experts took a real interest in all of us,” said Turlington. “We learned about logistics, financing and even cultural differences such as how to present your business card to people from different countries. ExporTech helped me to understand the vast network of export resources and showed me how to utilize them.”

Sandra Edwards, director of the Raleigh U.S. Export Assistance Center and a 22-year professional within the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Small Business Administration specializing in export and finance, will be one of the experts on-hand for the February offering of ExporTech.

Edwards is excited to participate in what she deems an ‘interactive event.’ “Similar to the export process itself, ExporTech demands a commitment to be successful,” said Edwards. “I know it may sound cliché, but our success is truly measured on theirs.”

Edwards and the entire panel of export experts stand ready to help companies grow and develop their export potential.

Additional sponsors and partners for ExporTech include the U.S. District Export Council, U.S. Department of Commerce, Small Business and Technology Development Center, and the NC Department of Commerce.

Participants in ExporTech have access to:

- Resources to help you rapidly move from planning to actual sales and payment
- International strategies and success factors based on real-world company research
- Assistance in developing a robust export plan in just three months
- Connections with reputable resources and expert consultations
- Accelerated speed to market, actual leads and sales

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