Before you start to write a plan, you should think about your overall objectives for exporting. Doing the following things should help you do this:

* Assess your current level of success – is it in line with your expectations
* Establish the significant events or decisions contributing to your current position
* Set out your company goals for the next 5 or 10 years
* Identify the options to achieve these goals

Use this export action plan to guide you through the key steps to develop your international business. Work through each section setting out the tasks and timeframes you need to undertake so you have a detailed plan of what needs to be done start exporting or developing into new international markets.

The comments in the boxes are examples of what you need to do at each step. A summary of the key action points is to:

* + Set out your aims and objectives
  + Assess your budget and resources
  + Prioritise export markets
  + Identify your USP
  + Consider your costs and pricing
  + Plan your marketing approach

**Step 1: Marketing budget and resource**

**Objective**

To determine the budget and staffing required

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**  *Assess how much you can spend on:*   * *Overseas market visits* * *Translation of brochures and website* * *Exhibition and other promotional costs* * *Legal fees for agents/partnership agreements* * *Training of in-market partners* | **Detailed activities**  *Obtain a budget cost for each activity* |
| **Method**  *Identify the activities for the next 12 months* | **Output**  *Agree on the priorities within the budget available* |

**Step 2: Market research and selection**

**Objective**

*To* *define your target markets and make sales forecasts*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**  *Consider a range of potential overseas markets:*   * *Undertake market research* | **Detailed activities**  *Select a few markets or a region for further investigation* |
| **Method**  *Desk research*  *Field research*  *If possible, make an exploratory visit to your top target market or conduct research using Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp, and phone calls* | **Output**  *Agree on priority export markets to be developed.*   * *Establish sales forecasts with target dates, to help you set budgets and make cash flow projections* |

**Step 3: Marketing and promotion**

**Objective**

Identify your unique selling points for the target market(s) and how to promote effectively

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**   * *Identify what’s special about your service,* * *Understand any requirements for local compliance, approvals and standards* * *Promotion – website(s), marketing material, and social media* | **Detailed activities**   * *Research to ascertain customer requirements* * *What changes are required to your website and other marketing materials?* |
| **Method**   * *Marketing & promotion, consider local requirements and tastes:* * *Branding, Packaging, Design, Names, Logos, and Colours* * *Contact a local marketing agency* | **Output**   * *Meeting client expectation with your response, reliability, and delivery* * *Localise your service as required* |

**Step 4: Routes to market**

**Objective**

To select the best way to sell your service to the end customers in your target market.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**  *Understand the different options available*  *To select the most appropriate route to market*  *Identify your partner(s)*  *Decide on which staff members will lead on face to face contact with customers and partners* | **Detailed activity**  *Make a decision on the route to market*  *Agree on your preferred trading terms*  *Research potential partners*  *Assess/check out the partner*  *Draw up a partnership agreement, for example, an agency agreement* |
| **Method**  *Research online, follow up with emails, and conference calls.*  *Market visit if possible*  *Professional advice on contracts* | **Output**  *A partner is finalised and the details of territory, targets, commissions, and other terms are agreed in full.* |

**Step 5: Costs and pricing**

**Objective**

To establish all the costs incurred in supplying the product/service internationally.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**  *Consider any additional export costs when establishing your price.*  *Key points to include in your price building up:*   * *Currency* * *Payment terms* * *Specific contract travel costs* * *Commission to partners* * *Competition pricing* | **Detailed activities**  *Consider the currency to use for quotations*  *Agree commission rates with partners*  *Select secure payment terms*  *If delivering the service in country, itemise your travel costs*  *Research prices in the market* |
| **Method**  *Research cost and pricing; seek advice from partner on local conditions* | **Output**  *Be in a position to make competitive offers, taking into account all additional costs* |

**Step 6: Market development**

**Objective**

Have a clear understanding for development of the target market (Who, What, Where, When, & How)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**   * *Overseas market visits (if possible, in 2021?) - their number and length* * *Communication with key contacts, clients and partners - regularity and how?* * *Staffing and capacity* | **Detailed activity**  *Assess staff capacity and production capability*  *Consider joining a virtual trade missions or event.*  *Contact clients and partners using their preferred method: Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp, Skype etc.* |
| **Method**  *Follow up by your sales/marketing team*  *Advice and support from local partner (agent)*  *Utilise webinars, overseas conference calls and virtual missions to increase your knowledge* | **Output**  *Finalise a market development strategy and budget for the overseas market(s)* |

**Step 7: Getting paid, and avoiding risk of bribery and corruption**

**Objective**

To have a clear understanding of how you will manage any financial risk for your services.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start date** |  |
| **End date** |  |
| **By who** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tasks**  *Consider how you will manage any risk of non-payment, or unethical and illegal practices. This applies within your organisation and via your partners* | **Detailed activities**  *Consider the ideal payment terms*  *Avoid any unlawful actions overseas or contravening the UK bribery act* |
| **Method**  *Set out within the business your acceptable payment terms*  *Agree a code of conduct that staff, and overseas partners are fully aware of.*  *Add a clause to agency/partnership contracts about bribery and corrupt practices* | **Output**  *As a company be clear on the acceptable payment terms and level of risk; also, be fully compliant with the bribery act* |