
Make sure you're export ready

Before you take the big leap into exporting for the first time, you need to make sure you're export ready. Here's how.

Prove your business model

Get experience and customers in the home market first, as this is less risky for most businesses.

Do your desk research

Much of your preparatory market research can be conducted via the Internet, from browsing trade magazines online to checking out competitor websites and industry white papers.

Attend an international trade fair

This is the most cost (and time) effective way of figuring out the lay of the land, sizing up the competition and identifying opportunities.

Leverage your networks at home

Tap into your contacts not just for advice and further contacts, but also for opportunities to sell overseas to customers you already have at home which have international operations.

Have resources in place

You need to have financial, human and other resources in place to prepare for an export drive. If you are successful, you need to have the capacity to cope with increased demand.

Weigh up the sales alternatives

Consider whether to sell through a direct sales team or partner with an existing business overseas, whether to use an agent or a distributor and whether to send your own staff overseas or hire local talent.

Get your costs right

Factor in shipping, transport and warehousing costs.

Consider currency risks

If selling to the UK or outside of the EU, have a strategy in place to help you cope with currency

exchange rate fluctuations.

Consider other risks

Explore export credit insurance to minimise the risk of bad debt. Good credit management can be harder to achieve in distant places so have a strategy in place to ensure you get paid.

Seek help from State or industry bodies

Tap into the state export development agencies, including [Enterprise Ireland](#), [Bord Bia](#), [Bord Iascaigh Mhara](#), the [Local Enterprise Offices](#) and [Intertrade Ireland](#), to see what assistance they can offer. See also your local [Chambers of Commerce](#) and the [Irish Exporters Association](#) which offer export assistance and advice to members.

Consider joining a relevant inter-country trade organisations such as the Ireland China or Ireland India Business Associations, the Ireland US Council or the British Irish Chamber of Commerce.