



Port Hosts Export Seminar Businesses get valuable insight on how to reach markets abroad

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Exports offer small- and medium-size businesses great growth opportunities, and the time has never been better to explore foreign markets, a panel of trade experts told business owners during a seminar hosted by the Port of Long Beach and the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, July 17.



The free business seminar attracted close to 150 local business owners who came to hear practical advice on how to sell their products and services abroad.

Recent free trade agreements with South Korea, Columbia and the upcoming Pacific Rim Trans-Pacific Partnership have made this an especially favorable time for U.S. businesses to explore the world market.

Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster welcomed the attendees, adding that increasing exports through the Port is an essential element to growing the Long Beach economy. He spoke of the city's commitment, through the Port and other agencies, to enhancing export opportunities for small businesses.

Long Beach Harbor Commission President Susan E. Anderson Wise said, "The Port of Long Beach is the premier U.S. gateway for transpacific trade and, in recent decades, much of that trade has been inbound. But exports are on the rise and likely to grow."

Harbor Commission Vice President Thomas Fields, himself a small business owner, moderated the panel of experts that included representatives from government, finance and trade development, as well as successful local exporters.

Rachid Sayouty, Director of the U.S. Department of Commerce Export Assistance Center in Los Angeles, said that every successful company in the U.S. has potential for international trade, but that only 1% of U.S. companies think about exports despite the fact that the "Made in the U.S.A." label holds automatic allure in many countries.

Mayank Bhardwaj, whose company, Sundari LLC, exports skincare products, and

Harmut Schroeder, CEO of global exporter SNUGTOP automotive products, based in Long Beach, said U.S.-made merchandise is highly desirable to consumers around the world, especially goods from California.

Exports offer great opportunities for growth and can hedge long-term risks by buffering downturns in domestic demand, but it is not a short-term solution, and companies need to be prepared to do their homework and plan long-term, the panel said.

"It is important to do your due diligence and prepare thoroughly when considering exporting, and our clients complete a six-step process that includes assessment, market research, training, finding potential clients, and getting financing in place before the final step, which is match-making," said Cesar Arellanes, trade manager for the Long Beach International Trade Office and program manager for the Center for International Trade Development at Long Beach City College.

Scott Kaiser, senior vice president of City National's International Banking and Trade Finance group, discussed export finance options and the importance of selecting the method of financing that will minimize risk but get a foot in the door with new trading partners.

The panelists agreed that there is no substitute for actually going to countries targeted as trade partners, attending their trade shows, working with the U.S. Embassies there and getting to know the local experts.

The seminar took place at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach, and is part of the Port's ongoing efforts to assist trade-related businesses in the region.

For more information about the Port's trade activities visit www.polb.com/trade. For information on export opportunities visit the U.S. Department of Commerce's website at www.export.gov and the Long Beach International Trade Office at www.lbito.org, sponsored by the Port of Long Beach.

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