



How to Expand into New Markets

I want to import but what does that entail?

- **Conduct market research.** The [U.S. Census Bureau](#) provides detailed statistics on goods and estimates of services entering the country from foreign countries. The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides a [resource guide](#) for importing agricultural products, automobiles, chemicals, defense products, food/beverage products, industrial goods, or pharmaceutical goods.
- **Review import laws and trade barriers.** First, be sure to check U.S. trade barriers and laws within the country of origin to ensure you can legally export your goods. Some countries have more stringent quality controls, while others restrict some items for export. Particular care should be made when importing agricultural products. SBA provides more information here: <https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oit/resources/14324>.
- **Build relationships and networks in the export country.** You will want to meet the producer or distributor of the product you will be selling. Try to establish whether the company you're dealing with has export experience. SBA's [Doing Business Abroad](#) guide can help you plan your trip.
- **Consider hiring a customs broker.** A licensed customs broker can help you navigate laws and regulations that apply to your transaction, including licenses, taxes, and duty fees.
 - You can search for certified customs brokers at the [National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America](#). For international brokers visit the [International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations](#).
- **Check license or permit requirements.** Many [imported and exported](#) products are regulated by federal agencies and require specific licenses and permits or additional paperwork.
- **Get assistance and training.** The federal government provides a wide array of resources.
 - [Small Business Development Centers \(SBDC\)](#)
 - [SCORE](#)
 - [U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\) Contacts](#)
 - [International Trade Administration \(ITA\) Services](#)

What about exporting?

Federal agencies provide a wide range of resources to help U.S. businesses that are currently exporting or looking to export for the first time, some of which have special mandates for assisting small businesses.

- [U.S. Export Assistance Centers](#) offer trade counseling, market intelligence, business matchmaking, and other services. Many also house representatives from the SBA and the Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank that can help small businesses obtain export financing.
- The [SBA](#) and [Ex-Im Bank](#) have programs to help you obtain financing.

- If you have a specific problem or face a foreign trade barrier, the [SBA Office of International Trade](#) has services to help resolve the problem: Call toll free: (855) 722-4877 or send an email to international@sba.gov with your name, company name, mailing address, and phone number, as well as a brief description of the export problem or challenge you are encountering.

How do I create an online presence?

The Internet is leveling the playing field by allowing small and medium-size companies to compete with large companies on the global market. Whether you are a consumer or a business-to-business resource, some of the most efficient marketing and selling tools are available by going online.

- [SBA's E-commerce](#) resources can help you get started with everything from sales strategy and operation, to marketing and compliance.

After Exploring the benefits of e-commerce, don't forget to protect online information against cyber threats. SBA and other federal agencies provide resources and guides for safeguarding your information.

- **Toolkit for small and midsize businesses - [C3 Voluntary Program](#).** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its partners have established a Critical Infrastructure Cyber Community (C3) Voluntary Program to help educate business owners about cybersecurity. For additional tools and resources for small employers, visit: <http://www.dhs.gov/publication/stopthinkconnect-small-business-resources>.
- **Small Biz Cyber Planner.** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), in collaboration with other government agencies and industry leaders, created the [Small Biz Cyber Planner](#).
- **SBA Online Course: Cyber Security for Small Businesses.** [Cyber Security for Small Businesses](#) will help you learn more about the security principles you should keep in mind when online, as well as the ways you can protect your information and networks in case of a cyberattack. For in-person assistance, visit your local [SBA office or mentor](#).
- **Cyber Resilience Review (CRR) assessment tool.** Developed by DHS, this no-cost, voluntary [CRR assessment tool](#) helps businesses assess their information technology resilience.
- **Cybersecurity Advisors (CSAs).** CSAs are regionally-located DHS personnel who offer immediate and sustained cybersecurity assistance to prepare and protect organizations, including small and mid-sized businesses. For more information about CSAs, please email cyberadvisor@hq.dhs.gov.
- **Cyber Security Tips.** Many federal agencies have a role in assisting and providing tips and best practices for small businesses cybersecurity needs, including [SBA](#), [FCC](#), and [DHS](#).