

# 2 Help Desk



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Few companies will start with the ideal international operation. Often the beginning is modest and existing staff are called on to test markets on a part-time basis.

Once a profitable demand looks likely, it is essential that the person responsible has the freedom to follow up and service any enquiries promptly as well as to honour all promises made. Failure to do so could be costly. An initial disaster may put international aspirations back by several years.

Overseas markets will be unforgiving of poorly prepared representatives who are unable to quote and deliver promptly, or who may not have the capacity to supply a substantial market. It might make sense to start in an overseas market of modest size that you have the ability to service well and use this as the base for further growth. In this way you can lower your initial costs and risk in the event of that market not being an instant success.

You will also be unlikely to make sales on your first visit. Many contacts will want to get to know you before doing business. You should be prepared to undertake regular visits to your target market and to establish and maintain personal relationships to ensure continuing sales.

There is a wealth of information in New Zealand. You can use your intended market as a base for discussion, research and developing your marketing plan. Any research you do at the outset will ultimately save you money and help you in your thinking and planning.

Few first-time exporters have sufficient resources and experience at the outset. If entrepreneurs were to follow all the rules, hire expert staff and plan everything to the finest detail before considering exporting, many of them would not get to first base.

Large organisations have greater access to the resources, management and marketing skills needed to identify potential markets and conduct or commission research, thereby minimising their risks and maximising their chances of success.

The answer for most is somewhere between the two extremes. Try to avoid learning only through your own mistakes. For example, don't approach an overseas market convinced that your successful local product will meet the needs of a foreign community that may well have different values, customs, religions and tastes. Time spent researching your target market and tailoring your product to suit may make the difference between succeeding or failing.

So what should new exporters do first? Join a business or trade organisation and take advantage of the opportunity to spend time with other members who may be experienced international traders, either in your industry sector or in markets you intend to target.

Those organisations are listed on the following pages – choose wisely.



## New Zealand Trade and Enterprise

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) is the Government's international business development agency, supporting New Zealand companies in 37 locations around the world.

Our role is to increase New Zealand companies' international success, by helping them boost their global reach and build capability. To do this, we leverage our connections and government influence on behalf of businesses, and apply local knowledge – from the NZTE team and a network of private sector experts – to help them enter and grow in international markets. We also link businesses with services designed to improve efficiency and operations, spark innovation, refine strategy, enhance leadership, and access capital – building the capability they need to be successful and grow bigger, better, faster. More successful international businesses will grow our economy for the benefit of all New Zealanders, by providing jobs and raising our standard of living.

NZTE currently works with around 4000 New Zealand businesses, and focuses intensively on around 700 of these customers. So if you're exporting or thinking about it, and not already working with NZTE (or perhaps you worked with us a long time ago), please get in touch – call our free phone number (0800 555 888) or email [info@nzte.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzte.govt.nz) to talk to our customer advisor team about your plans. They'll be able to guide you on the next best steps and help connect you to the right sources of support.

For more information, visit [www.nzte.govt.nz](http://www.nzte.govt.nz) or follow us on twitter [@NZTEnews](https://twitter.com/NZTEnews)



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