

■ Recycling Online



There have been, in the last few years, articles in various online and print media expressing melancholy that the U.S.' major export by number of shipping containers appears to be scrap materials (commonly referred to as "trash"). The common consensus is that this represents our economic decline from a premier manufacturing power into a mere supplier of low value materials. Of course, two major points are missed here. First, would we be better off landfilling this stuff than selling it to someone who could use it? Second, only an advanced economy like ours could produce this vast stream of recyclable materials in the first place. While we should be lamenting that there isn't a larger industrial demand for these materials domestically, it also shows how crucial exporting is to both the North American economy in general, and to recycling specifically. For this reason, I have decided to explore what can be found on the Web on this topic.

This will be by no means a comprehensive survey since there are literally tens of thousands of export-oriented Web sites. My intent is to provide a listing of useful gateway sites that will help you to discover more efficiently where these Web-based resources are with regard to the needs of several different audiences. This month's column focus will be on sites that will help those readers who are unfamiliar with exporting and would like to know more about how to start doing it.

Getting Started

Export.gov (EG)

EG is a program administered by the

Getting out there

by Roger Guttentag

International Trade Administration (ITA), in cooperation with 10 other U.S. governmental agencies, to serve as a one stop Web portal to various federal export programs and support resources. This makes EG an especially useful starting point for anyone who needs to become familiar with how exporting works and who can help with different problems or issues. This assistance can be provided with respect to technical- or business-related topics. For the former, this can include covering the basics of export logistics, financing, regulations or licensing. EG can also help, with regard to the business side of exporting, in such areas as: gathering business intelligence; developing sales leads; creating export plans; and understanding specific overseas markets. Information is available online through print documentation and multimedia presentations, along with lists of contacts to regional offices.

Export-U (EU)

EU is a joint program between the Atlanta Export Assistance Center and the International Trade Center of the University of Georgia. This site offers access to past webinars (Web-based seminars) on nine topics such as export basics, market research and SBA financing. Registration is required but it is free. The site also provides information on future webinars being planned for other introductory and advanced exporting topics.

National District Export Council (NDEC)

The NDEC consists of 56 non-profit regional councils whose members are business volunteers appointed by the U.S. Department of Commerce to assist small to medium companies with their knowledge on exporting. The resources of this site are allocated among six subcommittees such as

Education and Trade Policy. Clicking on a committee link will take you to their home page, which provides an overview of their mission, resource downloads and contacts. There is also on the NDEC home page a map for locating NDEC councils throughout the U.S.

The U.S. Small Business Administration – Exporting & Importing (SBA)

The SBA's mission is to assist in the development and long-term success of small businesses in the U.S. The SBA definition of small business is fluid with respect to a specific industry, but generally it means companies with annual receipts of about \$21 million, or less. Many recycling product-and-service companies would certainly fall into this category and, for this reason, should take a look at what support the SBA can provide in regard to starting, or expanding, export activities. The exporting and importing section of the SBA site addresses a number of key topics, such as covering exporting basics from a small business perspective, rules and regulations that may apply to specific products or services, and the various financial assistance programs that are available for promoting U.S. small business exporting.

U.S. Census Bureau – Export Training Videos (USCB)

Sometimes a short, simple video can accomplish more, instructionally, in a shorter period of time than many pages of printed instructions. If you agree with this opinion, then I would recommend strongly spending some time on the USCB's Export Training Videos page (located in their Foreign Statistics section – go figure). There are 20 short videos ranging in length from approximately 3-to-10 minutes covering such exciting topics as "What is a Freight Forwarder?" and "Taxes and Tariffs." It

Web Address Directory

Export.gov	http://www.export.gov/
Export-U	http://www.export-u.com/ExportU/home
National District Export Council	http://www.districtexportcouncil.com/
Small Business Administration – Exporting & Importing	http://tinyurl.com/SBAExport
U.S. Census Bureau – Export Training Videos	http://tinyurl.com/CensusExport
U.S. Commercial Service	http://www.buyusa.gov/home/

may not be Academy Award-winning material, but it will help you better understand some of the more complex aspects of exporting based on listening to an actual human being.

U.S. Commercial Service (USCS)

The mission of the USCS, a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is to provide support to U.S. companies seeking to expand their international presence through market information, development of sales leads and technical assistance. The site has a drop-down listing showing the location of all USCS Export Assistance Centers. Selecting a particular center link takes you to their home page which provides an overview of their services as well as links to other resources, events and professional contacts.

Next Month

Next month's column will discuss Web resources that would be suitable for those readers that have some experience with exporting but who may be interested in more advanced issues. Some of the other Web sites to be reviewed will be more concerned with general export-related policies and statistical data.

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