

EXPORT READINESS CHECKER: *An Export Guide for SMEs*

Successful exporters know that expanding into overseas markets can bring significant rewards. They have however warned that expanding your business internationally takes time, energy, commitment and money. Whether you are a new exporter or an existing exporter seeking new markets, now is the time to assess your export-readiness using our export-readiness checker.

This tool contains 46 questions and will give you an opportunity to do a quick assessment on the export readiness of your business by identifying possible gaps before entering an overseas market. Firms that are already exporting may find some useful tips as well.

The questions are organized in eight sections, each of which covers an important aspect of export preparation. Each question is to be answered [yes] or [no]. Answering [yes] indicates that you have planned that aspect of the export and [no] indicates that you need to do some more work on that area to improve your readiness.

Section 1: Your Strategy

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Are you aware of any bilateral or multilateral trade agreements that make exporting your product(s) attractive to a particular area(s)?		
2.	Do you know of any incentive offered by the Government for the manufacturing of your product(s)?		
3.	Do you have a clear and written description of who your potential buyers are or might be?		
4.	Have you considered adapting the features of your product to the needs and wants of prospective buyers to improve your bargaining position with them?		
5.	Have you written a distribution strategy for your product(s) that may improve your bargaining position with prospective buyers?		
6.	Have you written a strategy to build an image for your products and company to improve your bargaining position with your prospective buyer?		
7.	Have you written a pricing strategy for your product that may improve your bargaining position with your prospective buyer?		

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Section 2: Marketing

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Have you examined your potential market to determine the needs and wants of buyers which can be satisfied competitively?		
2.	Do you have the means to communicate with prospective international buyers through advertisement and promotion?		
3.	Do you have the means to communicate with prospective international buyers through participation in international trade events, trade missions, circulation of sales literature and personal sales?		
4.	Does your business have qualified staff and the necessary infrastructure/procedures in place to carry out international and contract negotiations effectively?		
5.	Have you begun dialoguing with sales agents/distributors/importers to gain strategic advantage in your prospective market?		

Section 3: Production

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Is your present production capacity sufficient to produce the quantities that will be required for future export orders?		
2.	Have you established a system that ensures the level and consistency of quality of the product to be exported?		
3.	Have you established a system that ensures the consistency of production capacity (which includes the ability to source sufficient quantities of raw materials)?		
4.	Do you have a system in place to ensure timely production of export orders?		

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5.	Do you have a system in place to reduce production costs?		
6.	Do you have any international/regional/national standards certification?		

Section 4: Distribution

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Have you researched packaging requirement for shipping and made preparations for them?		
2.	Is your staff knowledgeable in handling export procedures and documentation?		
3.	Have you looked at all alternative modes of freight for shipping your export orders and selected the optimum mode with respect to reliability and cost?		
4.	Have you made preparation for special storage requirements that may be needed for your products?		

Section 5: Finance

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Have you made calculations to determine how much initial capital you may need to begin exporting and when it will be required?		
2.	If you require funding for initial capital investment from financial institutions, can you meet the criteria for creditworthiness?		
3.	Do you have the resources to develop a foreign market without endangering your local market position?		
4.	Have you done your assessment on how exporting to a new market will affect your profitability?		
5.	Have you made preparations to evaluate overseas customer creditworthiness?		

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	and ensure timely collections from them?		
6.	Do you have a system in place to keep accurate records of your export transactions?		

Section 6: Analysis and Planning

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate and justify the selection of your target market?		
2.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate and justify how the export product will be positioned in terms of its features and attributes in the target market?		
3.	Have you decided which capabilities you must have to successfully implement your strategy?		
4.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how you intend to communicate (promote and advertise) within the market?		
5.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how you will secure sufficient quantities of inputs at proper quality at an affordable cost and on time?		
6.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how you intend to build sufficient production capacity to produce and deliver the quantities for export orders?		
7.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how you intend to ensure the timely production of export orders at minimum cost?		
8.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how you will achieve the desired level of quality for the products to be exported consistently?		
9.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how distribution channels (agents, wholesalers, retailers etc.) will be selected and utilized?		
10.	Does your written export plan clearly articulate how you will install procedures to keep accurate records of your export transactions?		

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Section 7: Organization and Coordination

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Have you appointed someone to prompt sales inquiries, respond to them and close sales negotiation?		
2.	Do you have or can you acquire the resources (time, money etc.) for prompting sales inquiries, responding to them and closing sales?		
3.	Have you appointed someone to arrange for the production and delivery of export orders?		
4.	Do you have or can you acquire the resources (time, money etc.) for the production and delivery of export orders?		

Section 8: Monitoring and Improvement

No.	Question	YES	NO
1.	Have you developed procedures to monitor the completion of tasks related to prompting sales inquiries, responding to them and closing sales?		
2.	Have you developed a system to monitor the completion of tasks related to maintaining an adequate level of working capital for export production and operations?		
3.	Have you developed procedures and a system to monitor the completion of tasks related to the production and delivery of export orders		
4.	Do you have a system in place to provide information on the completion of tasks in all key areas and how they can be improved?		

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Grading System

- Scoring less than 50% indicates that you are below the half way mark in your export readiness. A lot of work is required to improve your capability and chances of success in securing and operating in the export market.
- Scoring 50% - 75% indicates that you are above the half way mark in your export readiness. You have addressed most of the critical areas to improve your capability and chances of success in securing and operating in the export market. You still have some more grounds to cover, but you are close to becoming an export ready enterprise.
- Scoring above 75% - 95% indicates that you are almost there in your export readiness. You only have a few areas to address to improve your capability and chances of success in securing and operating in the export market. In the short term you will be ready for the export market.
- Scoring above 95% - Congratulations, you are ready for the export market! Let's talk about the exporter registration process. [JAMPRO CONTACT INFO TO BE ADDED & Link to the exporter registration platform)