

GLOBAL DETECTION

CASE STUDY: SMITHS DETECTION

Smiths Detection sells to more than 100 countries around the world. When exporting its strictly regulated products, the company relies on UK Trade & Investment for expert advice and assistance.



FAST FACTS

COMPANY: SMITHS DETECTION

COUNTRY: UK

INDUSTRY: DEFENCE AND
TRANSPORT

WEBSITE:
WWW.SMITHSDETECTION.COM

Smiths Detection develops and manufactures sensors to detect and identify chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive materials. Its chemical and biological defence systems are used by military and other government agencies to protect armed forces transport systems, buildings and other public areas. The company's products can screen everything from a small ticket to a large truck and can be found in nearly all of the world's commercial airports.

With eight manufacturing centres in Europe and the US, the company employs 2,300 people and has offices in 14 countries. It sells its explosive, chemical and biological defence systems to more than 100 governments around the world, with the US as its largest market, followed by India, Germany, Japan and Australia.

"Detection systems like ours are closely regulated by the British Government," says Stephen Phipson, President of Smiths Detection. "UK Trade & Investment's Defence & Security Organisation provides us with an enormous amount of support which enables us to sell our products to governments around the world. They are constantly helping us find new opportunities and providing us with up-to-date information on where we are and are not permitted to market our products."

CRUCIAL SUPPORT

Smiths Detection worked with the UK's Defence Export Support Organisation for many years, and when it became part of UK Trade & Investment's Defence & Security Organisation in 2008 the relationship between the two groups flourished. Exports have grown to make up more than 50 per cent of Smiths Detection's UK business.

When looking at a new market, the company must first determine if UK regulations allow it to do business there. It then researches the country's need for security systems and whether there is government funding allotted to purchasing defence sensors. It works closely with local agents to sell its products and often relies on UK Trade & Investment to identify reliable local representatives.

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“It can often be difficult getting introductions to potential clients and finding reliable people to represent us abroad,” says Stephen Phipson. “UK Trade & Investment’s Defence & Security Organisation has introduced us to clients around the world. Their contacts within defence agencies have proved invaluable, and they often provide us with the details and support we need to tender successfully for new projects.”

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Smiths Detection is now researching the development of integrated detection systems onboard vehicles. It is also working to develop new filtration systems to protect against chemical and biological agents.

Although it already has a presence in India, Australia and South Korea, the company is working hard with UK Trade & Investment’s Defence & Security Organisation to increase its business in these areas and to win new contracts.

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“I don’t believe we would have the success we have now without the assistance of UK Trade & Investment’s Defence & Security Organisation,” says Stephen Phipson. “Without their help, it would have been extremely difficult to build a business in many of the countries where we have found success. In some UK Embassies there are more than a dozen people focused on the development of UK trade. It is very hard to obtain that sort of in-depth information on our own.”

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Phipson advises other companies who are thinking of exporting to develop a close relationship with UK Trade & Investment’s International Trade Advisers. He adds that for companies dealing with defence or government-regulated products, UK Trade & Investment is often the best way to facilitate sales to foreign governments.

“Form a close relationship with the trade advisers in the UK,” says Stephen Phipson. “Engage them, get them excited and give them a strong briefing of what your company is trying to achieve abroad. They are only too pleased to go out and find the help that your company needs.”



THE UK AND THE US

The US is Britain’s largest single export market, taking \$57 billion of UK goods in 2007. The UK is the sixth biggest exporter to the US, after Canada, Mexico, Japan, China and Germany. The US is also the leading overseas destination for British investment.

The sheer size of the United States means it should be treated as a series of regional markets with varying characteristics. The US economy is integrated and largely self-contained, with every major industry represented. US manufacturers often source components overseas and UK goods have traditionally enjoyed a good reputation for quality in the USA.

For further information about business opportunities in the USA, please go to www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

smiths detection
bringing technology to life



**UKTI DEFENCE
& SECURITY
ORGANISATION**

UK Trade & Investment is the Government organisation that helps UK based companies succeed in international markets. We assist overseas companies to bring high quality investment to the UK’s dynamic economy.

For further information, please visit: www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk