

Case study: Anglian Meat Products

From the initial decision to exhibit at a European trade show to distribution in 28 countries around the world, Anglian Meat Products has made exports a fundamental and growing part of its business model.



Over the past four years, the firm, which produces Nature's Menu pet food at its base in Watton, Norfolk, has seen its export market expand to cover much of northern and eastern Europe, including Holland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Poland, with growing opportunities in China and New Zealand.



Craig Taylor, Managing Director

The business' first foray into exporting came in 2008 when the decision was made to exhibit at the Interzoo trade show in Germany.

While the show was successful and led to some initial openings in Europe, the firm soon realised that their approach needed to be more targeted to ensure they were making the most of their contacts, and that is where their association with UKTI began in 2010.

Managing Director Craig Taylor said: 'We had done the usual thing of introducing ourselves to everyone and anyone at our first show and it soon transpired that our approach had been too general.'

'We decided that we would go back to the show and when we spoke to some business contacts, they suggested that we get in touch with UKTI for some help.'

'We were put in touch with our advisor and after coming to visit us, he recommended that we took advantage of the Passport to Export programme. We took part in a two-day course in Cambridge and soon realised that working closely with them could really help us.'

Passport to Export is the first stage of assistance that UKTI can give to potential exporters and is the scheme which businesses will sign up to if they have never exported before.

John Tingle, trade team manager on the east side of the region for UKTI in the East of England, said: 'As part of Anglian Meat Products' participation on Passport to Export, we worked with them to review where they were, where they wanted to be, and how to make the most of new opportunities.'

'Their access to financial support available through the Passport to Export programme met some of the costs of their overseas activity on a matched-funding basis, including supporting visits to prospective new distributors in northern Europe.'

Anglian Meat Products were soon putting their new-found knowledge into practice at their second trade exhibition in Germany.

Mr Taylor said: 'By the time we attended the trade show for the second time, our whole approach was much more structured and organised and we had much clearer ideas about how we wanted to plan our distribution.'

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'The support from UKTI helped us to be more targeted and we were able to market ourselves to some selected European retailers, which meant we could drive our business through some key markets rather than aiming for blanket coverage.'

Anglian Meat Products now exports its Nature's Menu pet food to 28 countries and international business has been so successful that the company employs staff to work purely in exports.

The firm has also taken advantage of UKTI's Gateway to Global Growth programme.

This is a programme of structured support designed for exporters with several years' experience who are looking to develop their offering into new international markets.

It includes a full strategic review and, like all UKTI programmes, encourages companies to access UKTI's resources and business contacts throughout its network of around 150 offices in Embassies and Consulates worldwide.

As part of this support, Mr Taylor recently received a market visit support grant to help fund a visit to new distributors in China.

Mr Tingle said that the firm's success is due in part to their enthusiasm for applying what they have learned from UKTI.

'They've been very organised and focused and that has certainly paid off. We have regular update meetings to discuss their strategy and I think they have found it really useful to know that they can call on us to get an independent view and practical support.'

'They knew that they had a product and business model which worked well in the UK market and they have shown that it can work well overseas too,' he explained.

Exporting has indeed been successful for Anglian Meat Products. In just four years their export business has grown to be worth £350,000 in 2011 and they hope for bigger and better things in the coming years.

Mr Taylor added: 'It was a steep learning curve but with support from UKTI, we've now got a great model in place.'

'Our sales forecasts show that we should exceed £500,000 of exports in 2012 and I think in ten years' time we'll definitely see that exports are of huge value to our business.'

The firm, which employs 75 staff and has been trading in the UK since 1981, exported more than 850,000 units of pet food in 2011.

It is one of the UK's biggest specialist pet food brands, retailing 2.6million units of pet food every four weeks.



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