

Getting Export Smart

Exporter case study



Alfresco Gas Flares

Established in 1991, Alfresco Gas Flares is a family owned and operated North Queensland business.

The company's decorative flares illuminate tropical garden and water surroundings, providing a natural, soft golden flame that enhances the ambience of outdoor areas.

Alfresco Gas Flares are available for both domestic and commercial applications and are in high demand by luxury resorts, industry, hotels, restaurants and home owners throughout the world.

Motivations to export

Alfresco Gas Flares considers itself an 'accidental exporter', commencing export operations after a large overseas company with a chain of hotels and resorts placed an order for some decorative flares. Alfresco Gas Flares then began attending training programs and workshops to find out more about exporting, which encouraged the company to develop a website to allow easier contact with overseas customers.

Activities that contributed to its export success

Owner Lynnell Williams believes planning was key to the company's export success. Having accounting processes and procedures in place was beneficial to deal with financial issues such as exchange rates and export tax.

The company also participated in a trade mission to the Middle East to explore the potential to export to developing markets such as Dubai, which has numerous luxury resorts. Alfresco Gas Flares exhibited at the Big 5 trade show, which generated a lot of interest in the product from attendees and resulted in some large orders.

Lessons learned and mistakes made along the way

Alfresco Gas Flares learned that some marketing knowledge is important when you begin exporting. Although the company's employees knew their product really well, they had to develop their marketing skills to increase the chances of exporting success.

The company learned the benefits of developing a strong business profile through websites and marketing collateral. While most customers learned of the gas flares through word of mouth or seeing product labelling on flares installed at resorts, the company realised it was also important to establish a professional image through the use of marketing materials.

Early on the company was called Aussie Lifestyle Industries, which didn't tell people anything about what it sold. The company renamed itself Alfresco Gas Flares and developed a professional corporate identity and brand. It employed a professional photographer to photograph its products, and used the images on its website and in other marketing materials, including brochures and a promotional DVD. This allowed the company to project a professional image to its customers, instilling confidence in potential buyers.

How exporting has benefited the business

Alfresco Gas Flares has grown from a small Queensland-based business into an international company with customers around the world. Exporting its products has encouraged the company to develop its branding to meet the expectations of the international marketplace, which has in turn benefited its overall profile and reputation in Australia and around the world.

Assistance received from the Queensland Government

Alfresco Gas Flares has received assistance from Trade Queensland's Export Advisory Service. The company attended a number of workshops and training sessions, including the Getting Export Smart workshops, which gave it a greater understanding of the exporting process and encouraged it to improve its business profile. The workshops helped the company see the importance of branding, leading to marketing efforts to position its flares as a quality product.

Words of advice for exporters

The company advises that researching potential overseas markets and planning your export strategy is important to identify where opportunities lie.

The company also recommends attending trade missions and overseas trade shows, ensuring that while you are there, you obtain the business cards of people that show interest in your product and make the effort to communicate with them when you get home. It helps to write notes on the cards about the person, such as what they looked like or what you spoke about, to remember them and their business in the months to come.

This case study was prepared for the **Getting Export Smart** workshop series.

For more information about the Queensland Government's export services contact:

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