



Export Success Story

University-Government Partnership Helps Local Small Businesses Export

Contact: Brian Davis, Phone–205-348-7621; bdavis@aitc.ua.edu
Alabama International Trade Center (AITC)
The University of Alabama

Exporting a Sweet Deal for Local Firm

Tuscaloosa, Alabama — When global markets are in a slump, exporting can sometimes be a hit or miss proposition. But a local firm, Bud’s Best Cookies of Hoover, found that exporting can be sweet deal.

“Last February we hit our highest production mark ever”, said Albert L. Cason Jr., Vice President of Sales. “On top of our regular domestic shipments, we had first-time orders from new customers in the Middle East.

The timing couldn’t have been better for this small family owned company. Both Harco and Brunos were going through big changes that affected Bud’s and other suppliers. It can be difficult for small companies, such as Bud’s Best Cookies, to compete with the big players for shelf space in the fast-paced retail trade.

“I see exporting as a way to expand our overall business”, cites Cason. Bud’s started exporting when representatives from the Alabama International Trade Center (AITC) introduced buyers from Japan. “Al was skeptical about getting paid and doing the paperwork for shipping”, said Brian Davis, director of the program based at the University of Alabama. Bud’s later joined the AITC’s in-house training program and received hands-on assistance for export quotes, payments, and shipping. The Center continues to work with Bud’s today, introducing them to buyers in other markets and alerting them to new export opportunities as they arise.

Al Cason’s enthusiasm and sales skills helped win several export orders including new business in the NAFTA countries. While exports are still a small portion of the overall picture, Cason and others at Bud’s Best Cookies are undaunted by the process now.

Says the fast-talking Cason: “I know of companies that got burned on their first export deal. It can leave a bad taste in your mouth. But with the AITC’s help, we got past the first hurdle trouble-free.”

The Alabama International Trade Center is a partnership program with the Small Business Administration.