

Export Sales Manager

Introduction

Export sales managers sell products or services to overseas customers. They research potential markets, conduct personal selling visits, organise sales promotions, appoint agents and distributors and negotiate sales contracts. Some might also arrange the transport of goods and the collection of payments. Hours are often long and unsocial.

Also known as

- Sales Manager - Exports



Work Activities

As an Export Sales Manager, you will be responsible for managing the sale of products or services to customers in other countries.

You'll need to develop knowledge of the cultural, business and political background of the countries you are responsible for, together with an understanding of consumer tastes. Then you can combine this with the results of your market research to decide what will sell in these countries and how to sell it. You must also look for new opportunities to sell to different international markets.

It is important that, as an Export Sales Manager, you build up and maintain good relationships with customers, agents and distributors. To do this, you'll negotiate with them (often in a foreign language) to try to make a sale. Depending on the level of your responsibility, you will often travel internationally, and could sometimes spend weeks away from home.

You might have to decide whether the product can be modified to meet the customer's requirements or whether special discounts can be offered. This is usually done after consultation with Product Managers and suppliers.

You'll also have to consider, and comply with, legal and ethical restrictions on international trading - you'll need to do your homework first!

As an Export Sales Manager, you will also need to provide quotations (estimates of price); for larger orders, and you might need to complete a tender document (a competitive bid for the supply of goods or services) - and agree a final contract if the bid is successful. Your role will be very varied!

You must carefully monitor the processing of orders and check that the distribution is running smoothly and that everything is on schedule. When the product has finally been delivered, you might have to deal with any complaints or queries that occur.

Other duties involve producing marketing plans, budgets and sales reports for discussion by company management. You'll also organise sales briefings and conferences, and visit international trade fairs.

Export Sales Managers are usually responsible for a department of other export sales and support staff.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As an Export Sales Manager, you will need:

- Good interpersonal skills.
- Negotiating skills.
- Knowledge of international contract terms, foreign currencies, tariffs and trading regulations.
- Verbal communication skills.
- Foreign language skills.

- The ability to work to deadlines.
- Knowledge of economics, business and accounting.
- The ability to use IT.
- Delegating and leadership skills.
- To be well organised.
- Stamina to cope with international travel.
- Number skills (for managing budgets and analysing sales figures, for example).
- Written communication skills.

In some companies, you might need technical skills and experience in the specific products being sold in addition to sales skills.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

As an Export Sales Manager, you can expect to earn in the range:

- Starting: £23,000 - £35,000
- With experience: £43,000 - £60,000
- Higher earners can make up to £85,000 a year.

Salaries might include performance or profit-related pay, and a company car and expense account could be included with the salary.

Hours of work

Export Sales Managers usually work a basic 40-hour week, Monday to Friday. However, you might sometimes need to work long hours, including evenings and weekends, as the job demands.

Where could I work?

Posts in international marketing and sales are available in manufacturing and export companies. Other areas of employment include:

- merchant/overseas banks
- freight insurance and shipping companies
- warehouse management
- advertising for export companies.

Opportunities for export sales managers occur in some towns and cities throughout the UK.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on recruitment and employers' websites, and on Universal Jobmatch (www.gov.uk/jobsearch).

Social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, are a great way to network, find vacancies and get in contact with possible employers. Make sure that your profile presents you in a professional manner that will appeal to potential employers.

Take a look at our General Information Article 'Finding Work Online'.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Some Export Sales Managers first gain experience in business, sales, marketing or shipping before specialising in exports. In addition to this experience, many new entrants are graduates, with a degree in, for example, international trade, international marketing or international business.

Degree courses in business studies and marketing sometimes include options or specialisms in European or international trade.

Alternatively, you could start off in a shipping department or export office, dealing with customer service or orders. Then, you might move on to deal with export administration, export sales support or export marketing, before putting all these skills together as an Export Sales Manager.

An Advanced Level Apprenticeship is also a great place to start.

Training

Many companies offer in-house training for their staff. The Institute of Export runs a series of short training courses in export sales and related topics. It could be possible to work towards a general work-based qualification in sales at levels 2 and 3, and/or a work-based qualification in foreign language skills.

Increasingly, employers require potential managers to gain the Institute of Export's professional qualifications. The Institute offers the Certificate, Advanced Certificate and Diploma in International Trade. There are no formal requirements for entry to the Certificate.

To register for the Advanced Certificate, you must have one A level pass (or equivalent) plus four GCSEs at grade C or above, including English, or at least three years' relevant practical experience in international trade.

After completion of the Advanced Certificate, it is possible for applicants to study for the Diploma in International Trade.

These qualifications are provided by supported distance learning. The Institute of Export offers a foundation degree in Professional Practice of International Trade (in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University).

Some full-time postgraduate and degree courses (usually in international trade, marketing or business), and certain HNDs, could provide exemption from some or all of the Institute of Export's exams. Contact the Institute for more information.

Progression

Export Sales Managers can progress by, for example, handling larger accounts, moving to larger companies and taking further qualifications in exporting, sales, marketing and management. Some might progress to senior management and director posts.

Some might become international trade advisers, helping other businesses to start trading overseas.

Qualifications

As well as having experience in export business, sales, marketing or shipping, many new entrants are graduates.

The usual minimum entry requirements for a relevant degree are:

- 2/3 A levels
- GCSEs at grade C/4 or above in 2/3 other subjects
- English and Maths at GCSE (grade C/4 or above).

GCSEs and A levels in Business Studies and a modern foreign language are often required.

Alternatives to A levels include:

- BTEC Level 3 qualifications (a subject such as Retail Knowledge would be great)
- the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

To get onto an Advanced Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need 5 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, including English and Maths, or to have completed an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

Skills/experience

Some export sales managers first develop relevant skills in business, sales, marketing or shipping before specialising in exports.

People who do not meet the usual academic entrance requirements could, at the Institute's discretion, study for the Institute of Export's professional examinations, provided they have relevant practical experience in international trade.

Access courses

If you don't have the qualifications needed to enter your chosen degree or HND course, a college or university Access course (for example, Access to Business) could be the way in.

These courses are designed for people who have not followed the usual routes into higher education. No formal qualifications are usually needed, but you should check this with individual colleges.

Distance learning

Distance learning is available from the Institute of Export, including a foundation degree in Professional Practice in International Trade (in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University).

There are degree and postgraduate courses in business and marketing available by distance learning.

The Open University offers foundation degrees in business and management.

Further Information

Professional institutes Professional institutes have the following roles:

- To support their members.
- To protect the public by keeping standards high in their professions.

The Institute of Export is the main professional institute for this career.

Contacts

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
Website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- **Open University (OU)**
Tel: 0845 3006090
Website: www.open.ac.uk

- **British International Freight Association (BIFA)**
Address: Redfern House, Browells Lane, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 7EP
Tel: 020 8844 2266
Email: bifa@bifa.org
Website: www.bifa.org
- **Institute of Export (IOE)**
Address: Export House, Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE2 6FT
Tel: 01733 404400
Website: www.export.org.uk
- **Careers in Logistics**
Address: Langstone Technology Park, Langstone Road, Havant, Hampshire PO9 1SA
Tel: 0844 5619149
Website: www.careersinlogistics.co.uk
- **Skills for Logistics**
Skills for the freight logistic industry
Website: www.skillsforlogistics.org
- **Languages Work**
Website: www.languageswork.org.uk
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 028 4844
Website: ams.careerswales.com/

Related Careers

- Market Research Executive
- Marketing Manager
- Field Sales Executive
- Advertising Account Executive
- Art Director (Advertising)
- Copywriter
- Media Planner
- Media Buyer
- Event Manager
- Market Research Analyst
- Marketing Executive
- Communications Manager
- Advertising Media Salesperson
- Bill Poster/Fixer
- Direct Marketing Manager
- Market Research Interviewer
- Sales Manager
- Model
- Account Manager
- Digital Marketing Executive
- Social Media Manager
- Brand Manager
- Marketing Assistant