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Superior Attains Global Grain Bin Gains

Kindred, ND – based Firm Exports Worldwide

Superior Manufacturing fabricates steel grain bins and drying equipment. The company has transformed from a regional business into a global player in four short years. The company has developed a secret sauce that has yielded impressive results in many countries that are not easy export markets. International Sales Manager Jon Engelstad took a break from criss-crossing the globe to share his insights into Superior's secret sauce.

"Achieving a successful export program takes patience and a commitment in time and resources," says Engelstad. "But just as important, it also requires a plan and the U.S. Commercial Service has provided many valuable resources to help develop and implement that plan."

Superior starts with *superior* products. A company must be able to differentiate its products from competing brands; otherwise it will be difficult to get buy-in from overseas buyers, who have to commit significant resources to take on a new imported brand. Superior's state-of-the-art, automated 24/7 production line allows the company to be nimble, building all components in house and quickly ramping up or down depending on demand.

In addition to great products, managers realized that success requires investment and a long term commitment, so Jon Engelstad was given full responsibility and backing to travel and develop connections worldwide. It took several years and many international air miles, but the hard work is now paying off.

At first, Engelstad was visiting international trade shows without a plan, but he soon realized that without a pre-set contacts and appointments, it was too aimless and was not yielding strong enough connections. Engelstad began to engage very pro-actively with the U.S. Commercial Service, receiving assistance in 30 different markets on 6 different continents since 2010. Engelstad also realized early on that he would be better off pursuing markets in a strategic fashion instead of willy-nilly, so he signed up to participate in the ExporTech program in 2011, where he developed a strategic export plan and received customized coaching from U.S. Commercial Specialist North Dakota International Trade Specialist Heather Ranck. Armed with a plan, Engelstad began systematically and strategically approaching markets, using a combination of the Initial Market Check (where for \$350 companies can get some quick feedback on the interest level for their products), the Gold Key Service (where the U.S. Commercial Service sets up appointments with pre-screened potential international partners), advertisements in Export USA magazine, USA Pavilions at major ag machinery shows around the world, including Nampo in South Africa, Agritechnica in Germany, Expo Santa Rita in Paraguay; and participating actively in US-based ag shows where international delegations frequent (such as the Big Iron Farm Machinery Show and Farm Progress Show). Engelstad often traveled multiple times to a market before a sale would emerge.



Jon Engelstad of Superior Mfg. signs agreement with new Paraguayan partner

Now, Superior is recording sales, partnerships and successes in Canada, Europe, Africa, Australia, South America and Asia. The company has already realized over \$1 million in international sales since 2010. With focus, strategic planning, consistent leveraging of U.S. Commercial Service resources and committed follow through, Superior Mfg. has evolved from a new-to-export company to successfully exporting to every continent except Antarctica. Who knows, maybe they need some grain storage in Antarctica too!

Engelstad shares some of his insights in the [Export Experts video series](#) (videos 4, 5 and 6). For a list of support available to U.S. agribusinesses at overseas shows, [click here](#). For information on the U.S. Commercial Service, call (701) 239-5080, or visit www.export.gov/northdakota.

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