

The Export Tool Kit – Final Report

March 31, 2023

In the following pages, I have attached the final report of The Export Tool Kit.

On behalf of The COGS Approach Group, I would like thank Mike Baker and the WMCO team for engaging The COGS Approach Group in the important mission of fostering, supporting, and promoting exporting to the Wood Manufacturers of Ontario. I have enjoyed contributing and engaging all the participants.

Contributors, Mike Baker and Peter DeGelder.

Sincerely,



Peter DeGelder

President
The COGS Approach Group

Wood Manufacturing Cluster of Ontario

Toolkit of research resources for the US market – focusing on the Northeast, Midwest and Florida

Final Edition March 31, 2023

1. Export guides

Export guides describe the exporting process and government programs; guides specific to the USA provide more detail on the import process.

2. Exporter support programs

In the more intensive support programs, government trade advisors use your value propositions and export plan to learn quickly about your business, help fill gaps, and manage expectations.

3. The research processes

A brief introduction to research objectives, design and completing the export plan.

4. Market research basics

Introducing the market research process; commercial market reports and market research providers; and economic and trade data from international and US statistics agencies.

5. Resources: industry segments

For each segment, statistics sources; organizations and media providing directories and promotion opportunities; and tradeshow.

6. Resources: partners & distribution channels

7. In-market contacts

Resources on the channels and media for promoting your business and brand in the US market, and network opportunities for building your business.

8. Regulations and standards

Resources that cover a range of regulatory and standards requirements, from Canadian export paperwork to intellectual property protection, standards compliance and tax obligations.

9. Customs and logistics

Important topics at the culmination of your export venture – your logistics team is essential to the physical movement of your products to their destination.

Appendix: Tradeshow by date

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Introduction

The guide introduces resources which help small Canadian businesses assess their potential market in the USA. More detailed and specific resources have been identified to assist members of the Wood Manufacturing Cluster of Ontario (WMCO).

This guide also focuses on city markets in the Northeast and Midwest regions of the USA, and Florida. Where there are resources or directories with geographic focus, ones in those 22 states and in key cities are described.

Some states in the target area are very wealthy – New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New Jersey are in the top 10 nationally by 2022 GDP; Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York are also in the top 5 by 2022 per capita personal income.

Even in less wealthy states, there are cities worth targeting. (75% of the population lives in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants and their respective commuting areas, which corresponds to the OECD average. Of the 160 MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas) in the region, spread across the region are eleven with 2022 GDP greater than \$150 million:

New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Detroit, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, St Louis, Miami and Tampa.

In addition to New York City and Boston, four other MSAs have 2022 per capita income greater than \$75,000 (the national metro average is \$56,793): Barnstable Town (i.e., Cape Cod), Bridgeport-Stamford in the Northeast, and Naples and Sebastian-Vero Beach in Florida.

The guide's sections follow the natural progression of small businesses as they learn about the exporting process and start to research their target market(s). Since WMCO members have a variety of products/services and customer segments, the more detailed resources for those sectors/markets have been listed in Sections 5-7, to make them easy to find quickly.

While statistical sources are stable with only the data varying by year, and most resource publishers change their offerings only slowly over time, URLs and contact information are volatile. We intend to maintain the Toolkit on a regular basis – please alert us to bad links or other changes at info@cogsapproach.com

1. Export guides

1a. General export guides

1b. Exporting to the USA

When we learn to cook, we learn to first read the recipe, to see the entire process from start to finish. The resources in this section describe the recipe for exporting; they also alert you to the government programs and services for exporters which, along with your own market research, are key ingredients. The guides often contain checklists and export plan outlines – in recipes, this advice is “the method.”

There are also guides specific to exporting to the USA. These more focused guides can offer ideas for further lines of enquiry, as they describe the US import process in more detail, and the contacts provided will be more pertinent.

1a. General export guides

Step-by-Step Guide to Exporting

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/guides/exporter-exportateurs/exporting-guide-exportation.aspx?lang=eng>

Trade Commissioner Service. Contents include: Assess your export potential, Link to global value chains, Develop your export plan, Identify your target market, Develop your export marketing strategy, Enter your target market, Deliver the goods, Identify your export financing requirements, Understand the legal side of international trade, and Sell online using e-commerce. 91 pp.

Getting Ready to Export Guide

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/getting-ready-export>

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Written for businesses new to exporting. Covers how to determine if your company is ready to export, how to develop an export plan and how to make international contacts. The appendix includes contacts and resources, and some sample forms required to export. 52 pp, 2016.

Going Global

<https://www.goingglobal.pro/>

Wood Manufacturing Council. Four online course modules: Supply chain management, Research and marketing, International trade finance, Culture and trade.

A Basic Guide to Exporting

https://legacy.trade.gov/Guide_To_Exporting.pdf

US Trade Information Center. Written for US small businesses. Sections will be useful for Canadian companies: developing an export strategy; developing a marketing plan; methods and channels; finding qualified buyers; exporting services; international legal considerations; shipping your product; pricing, quotations and terms; methods of payment; and selling overseas and after-sales service. 239 pp, 2015.

SBA Export Business Planner

<https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/SBA%20Export%20Business%20Planner.pdf>

US Small Business Administration. Written for US small businesses. This tool provides a roadmap for creating your Export Business Plan, exploring foreign markets, developing a Marketing Plan, exploring financing, costing your product, and more. The Planner comprises a series of topical chapters to guide you through the export planning process efficiently, effectively, and at your own pace. You can tackle several chapters at once, or work through them one at a time. 193 pp.

1b. Exporting to the USA

Exporting to the United States

<https://sbs-spe.feddevontario.canada.ca/en/exporting-united-states>

FedDev Ontario. Sections: Preparing to export, Customs & regulations, Export training, Export financing, Sources of export assistance.

Doing Business in the United States

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=eBook)

Export Development Canada. Chapters include: The US market, Regional markets of the United States, Planning your market entry to the US, Trade compliance, Logistics of trade with the US, Finding help and information when exporting to the US. 2018 (registration required).

Exporting to the United States – A Guide for Canadian Businesses

https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/guides/us-export_eu/index.aspx?lang=eng

Trade Commissioner Service. Chapters include: Preparing to export to the US, entering your chosen US market, legal side of exporting, basics of export financing, business travel, labelling and standardization, packing and shipping your goods, the Canada-US border, dealing with US Customs. 2015 (archived, post-CUSMA).

CCA Guide to Doing Business in the US

<https://www.cca-acc.com/best-practices-resources/cca-documents/general-publications/>

Canadian Construction Association. Contents: US market, Planning for the US, Entering US, Taxation, financing, insurance and bonding, Immigration issues, Employee issues, Customs issues, Lien law trusts: more value than a mechanic's lien, Glossary of Trade terms. 42 pages (\$).

A Guide to Exporting Products/Services to the USA

http://www.tcaconnect.com/pdf/Exporting_to_USA.pdf

Toronto Construction Association. Chapters include: Developing an export strategy, codes and specifications, material and product sales, environmental issues, health and safety in the US, construction services, export financing, NAFTA, strategic alliances. 30 pages, 2002.

Export Help Hub

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tool/export-help-hub.html>

Export Development Canada. Answers to frequently asked questions about USA, Mexico and EU.

2. Exporter support programs

- 2a. Training
- 2b. Value proposition & export plan
- 2c. Export readiness assessment
- 2d. Financial support
- 2e. In-market visits

In addition to information resources on their websites, such as the broad exporting guides (in Section 1 above), and tools for researching details such as tariffs and intellectual property protection (described in various sections below), governments in Canada – federal, provincial and municipal – offer programs to support companies who are planning to export.

Government trade advisors often ask for a succinct overview of your current operations, so they can come up to speed quickly. One option is to complete the one-page Business Model Canvas (see Section 2b.), which includes a value proposition section stating why customers buy your products and why key partners support you. The value proposition later helps you craft your key message when promoting your products and services in the target export market.

Participation in the more intensive government export programs usually also requires an export plan (in Section 2b.), even if incomplete – the trade advisor will review your plan to identify any gaps they can help you fill, confirm your expectations, and assess your export readiness (see Section 2c.).

A combination of an export plan structure, market research (in its widest sense), and some knowledge of the support available to you will give you an adequate plan and the confidence to execute it.

2a. Training

Webinars and events

<https://www.edc.ca/en/events.html>

Export Development Canada. Free webinars on trade topics, like how to target and win new customers, where to find your next market (and trustworthy agents within it), how to get more money to grow, etc. For example, ‘U.S. outlook: What Canadian businesses need to know,’ and ‘The New NAFTA: How to leverage CUSMA to enter new markets.’

Calendar of international trade programs and events [Ontario]

<https://www.ontario.ca/tradecalendar>

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Information about upcoming free exporter education seminars and workshops, for example ‘Export Readiness – Focus on the United States.’

Trade Accelerator Program

<https://wtctoronto.com/tap/>

Toronto Region Board of Trade, World Trade Centre Toronto. Intensive longer programs offered in the GTA and across Canada. Session 1: a two-day session introduces your company to the exporting resources available and explores the principles of building and implementing an export plan. Session 2: an intensive day of mentoring by TAP partners, in which you'll develop an export strategy and export plan. Session 3: a day of one-on-one meetings between participating companies and export specialists. (\$)

FITTskills Lite Series

<https://fittfortrade.com/fittskills-lite-series>

Forum for International Trade Training. Free downloads from the FITTskills training courses, on topics such as 'Selecting a Market Entry Strategy' and 'International Contracts & Partnership Agreements.'

2b. Business model & export plan templates

Templates for the Business Model Canvas and export plans are included in this section. Use them to categorize your research findings, to keep track of your research, and identify any gaps.

International Growth Collection

<https://app.marsdd.com/international>

MaRS Discovery District & Export Development Canada. Portfolio of services to help Canadian science and technology companies expand globally. Guides include 'Customer discovery in international markets' and 'Accelerating your international growth through strategic partnerships;' tools include: 'Assessing product-market fit.'

Business Models: The Business Model Canvas

<https://www.strategyzer.com/resources/canvas-tools-guides>

Strategyzer. Click on *Learn more* and register with Strategyzer to download a template and find links to tools to help you complete it.

Value Propositions: The Value Proposition Canvas

<https://www.strategyzer.com/resources/canvas-tools-guides>

Strategyzer. Click on *Learn more* and register with Strategyzer to download a template and find links to tools to help you define the value propositions for key customers and key partners.

Creating a unique sales proposition

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Guide)

Export Development Canada. A unique sales proposition (USP) is a strategic tool to help your business stand out from competitors, market more effectively, and increase sales. This guide includes examples of good and bad USPs, tips on how to prove your claims, and even how to shape your online presence. 10 pages, 2023 (registration required).

Develop your export plan

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/guides/exporter-exportateurs/step3-etape3.aspx?lang=eng>

Trade Commissioner Service. Step 3 of the Step-By-Step Guide to Exporting is an outline of a typical export plan.

Adapting Products and Services

<https://fittfortrade.com/fittskills-lite-series>

Forum for International Trade Training. Free download from the FITTskills training course: identify your adaptation options, choose the option best suited for your specific customers and market requirements, and customize your value proposition and pricing to ensure success.

Marketing Plan Template

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/templates-business-guides/marketing-plan-template>

Business Development Bank of Canada. The marketing plan template will help you to: Define your brand; Identify your customers; Understand your competitors; Identify your company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; Define what makes your business different; Map your customers' purchase journey; Create your marketing action plan; Monitor, measure and improve your marketing tactics. (Registration required.)

Interactive Marketing Plan

<https://www.desjardins-business-tools.com/interactive-marketing-plan/>

Desjardins. This planning tool provides a methodology to help you build your market research, target your audience, analyze your competitors, determine the strengths and weaknesses of your business, and predict the opportunities and threats it may face. (Registration required.)

SBA Export Business Planner

Chapter 4: Creating an export business plan

<https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/SBA%20Export%20Business%20Planner.pdf>

US Small Business Administration. Written for US small businesses. Includes these worksheets: market expansion – benefits/trade-offs; business analysis; industry analysis; products with export potential; matching products to global trends/needs; most penetrable markets; markets to pursue; and short- and long-term goals.

SBA Export Business Planner

Chapter 5: Developing your marketing plan

<https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/SBA%20Export%20Business%20Planner.pdf>

US Small Business Administration. Written for US small businesses. Includes these worksheets: market factor assessment; your industry in target global markets; building a distributor or agent relationship; marketing your product/service; marketing your product – identifying practical needs; defining your marketing strategy; and identifying customers within your chosen markets.

2c. Export readiness assessment

"Export readiness" refers to your firm's capacity for success in an export market. While you may get an unsolicited query through fortuitous circumstances, your firm is unlikely to be profitable abroad without having addressed the following three factors:

Resources: You have sufficient internal capacity to handle extra demand, internally efficient systems to respond to customers quickly, senior managers and marketing staff with culturally sensitive marketing skills, and senior management support for export objectives.

Competitiveness: You have a service that is unique and/or competitive in the type of market you are targeting, sophisticated market entry methods that you are already using, and market research demonstrating the viability of your service abroad.

Expectations: You have clear and achievable export objectives, a realistic idea of what exporting entails, an open-mindedness to new ways of doing business, and realism about what will be necessary to be profitable abroad."

[Source: UNCTAD Export Readiness Diagnostic for Service Firms]

Export quiz: Are you ready?

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/quiz.aspx?lang=eng>

Trade Commissioner Service.

Exporter Assessments

<https://www.trade.gov/exporter-assessments>

US International Trade Administration. Link one of three exporter assessments that best describes your company: New Exporters, Expanding Exporters, Experienced Exporters. These pages give an overview of the export resources provided by the US government but are a useful tool for understanding your own capabilities and resources, and the actions you can take. [NB Intended for US firms.]

Export Readiness Initial Assessment

<https://ibc-static.broad.msu.edu/sites/globaledge/medc/MEDC-Export-Readiness-Initial-Assessment-AnswersScoring.pdf> (Cut and paste this link)

Michigan State University, International Business Center. This assessment consists of 5 separate dimensions: Competitive capabilities, Motivation for going international, Commitment of owners and top management, Product readiness for foreign markets, and Skill, knowledge and resources. Your score along each dimension as well as overall is explained at the end of the assessment. 7 pages.

2d. Financial support

CanExport SMEs

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/funding-financement/canexport/sme-pme/index.aspx?lang=eng>

Trade Commissioner Service. Small and medium-sized companies may access up to \$50,000 in funding to assist with international market development activities. From April 2023, the program funds up to 50% of eligible costs for up to \$50,000 per project. Eligible activities include: Gathering market intelligence (custom research, reports and studies); Applying for intellectual property protection; Applying for certification; Seeking expert legal and business advice; Search engine optimization; Marketing materials; Participation in trade shows, networking functions, and visits to foreign markets.

Business Scaleup and Productivity

<https://www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/02466.html?OpenDocument>

FedDev Ontario. Funding is available to... Increase businesses' capacity to grow through market diversification and entry into global markets. Examples of project activities include automating and digitizing processes, and related skills development, to improve productivity and increase business capacity and competitiveness.

Southern Ontario Fund for Investment & Innovation

<https://www.sofii.ca/en/>

Community Futures Ontario. A loan fund includes financing for new product or service development. and new applications or markets.

BDC Financing

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/financing>

Business Development Bank of Canada. BDC's equipment purchase financing can be used to increase capacity – purchase production line machinery, equipment, or specialized equipment such as lab material. Commercial real estate financing is available to buy or renovate facilities to increase your capacity for growth.

Export Development Canada

<https://www.edc.ca/en/solutions.html>

Export Development Canada. A crown corporation which helps Canadian exporters manage risk e.g., through credit insurance, secure financing, and grow working capital such as the Export Guarantee program. Examples of guides: 'To insure or not to insure?' and 'Managing risk: A guide for exporters' at <https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (choose Format=eBook); example of webinar: 'Managing business risk at home and abroad' at <https://www.edc.ca/en/events.html> (registration required).

Funding & support programs for doing international business

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/index.aspx?lang=eng> (under Get help..., click on Funding...)

Trade Commissioner Service. Financial support and advisory programs to connect with potential foreign partners and pursue new business opportunities abroad.

2e. In-market visits

Trade advisors at the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT) and the federal Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) organize visits to foreign markets, often to important tradeshows. Export-ready Ontario businesses will be invited to exhibit, and to participate in meetings with local buyers. As additional assistance, programs such as CanExport (Section 2d above) are particularly useful for helping to cover the cost of participation in such in-market visits.

Trade missions and events [federal]

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/events-evenements/index.aspx?lang=eng>

Trade Commissioner Service. Trade commissioners based in the market arrange business-to-business meetings and site visits, provide information on local events, and advise on business development in the region.

Calendar of international trade programs and events [Ontario]

<https://www.ontario.ca/tradecalendar/>

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Information about upcoming trade missions and exhibitions, incoming buyer's missions, e.g., Ontario Infrastructure Export Business Mission to the International Builders Show (IBS).

ATA Carnet

<https://www.e-ata.ca/default.aspx>

Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Internationally recognized customs document for the temporary importation of goods. The carnet is commonly used to bring commercial samples to commercial customers or trade shows, and by service companies to travel with their professional equipment. Login Required.

Trade shows and you: How to get the most from your trade show investment

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. a compact, practical guide to the major stages of a trade show: planning your show strategy, preparing for a show, working the show itself and following up after the show. So, no matter whether you are an experienced exporter or an aspiring one, do not overlook the promise and potential of these events. 21 pages, 2016 (registration required). [For more on this topic, see section 7c, below.]

3. The research process

The export planning process involves establishing your export objectives, identifying your export-related strengths, and identifying the resources you will need for market development – all parts of the export readiness assessment. Then you will need to research the opportunities in the target geographic market, a lengthy process in which you collect numerous items of information to piece together a picture of what operating in that market will be like – this Toolkit is designed to help you with that research.

Ultimately, we hope the picture you build motivates you into activities to build market credibility and generate sales queries.

Research objectives

It may seem that your goal is simply to find out as much as you can about the US market for your product/service. But the ultimate purpose of market research is to uncover insights that will help you validate assumptions and make strategic decisions.

For example, the first objective of the research may be to decide between two geographic markets: Will my first target market in the USA be California, or will I start with Chicago as a test market for later expansion into wealthier and bigger cities further south? Or the first objective may be to determine if your bestselling product in Canada will be the first product line you introduce into the USA.

In practice, market research is an iterative process – insights from your effort researching the first objective will lead you to explore further, and you can then undertake a second research project with a second more focused, or even tangential, objective.

Research design

Research design refers to your approach: a roadmap of your research steps, based on your objective. For example, if you are comparing two possible geographic markets for a consumer product, you might start by finding socio-demographic statistics in those cities or regions, or data on the number and size of the appropriate retail outlets – using sources listed in Section 3d Statistics.

The design roadmap for the first iteration of the research may be broad, as you check out interesting by-ways, whereas the design roadmap for the subsequent iterations may specify particular resources to be explored in depth.

The research approach will differ from product to product, and customer segment to customer segment. Research intended to help Joe sell unique designs into a sophisticated hotel market will be very different from research to help Ursula find an installation partner for cabinetry in high-rise refurbishment projects. For price-sensitive products, economic trends are important; climate differences or local preferences may affect the materials that feature in your product. Knowledge of your existing customers will help you decide if particular topic needs in-depth rather than cursory research.

So the research design – the sequence of your search for specific information and the type of sources that you will use – will vary with the research objective.

Start building your export plan

As you follow your roadmap and execute your research design, record your journey – organize the data and your insights into an export plan. Examples of export plans are included in Section 2b, above.

As you probably do with your travel mementos, be sure to annotate each piece of information with its source (association, URL, trade advisor, statistics agency, etc.). Inevitably you will lose track of which websites were useful and which were not, and you will make some conflicting notes that you must double-check. When it comes time to update your export plan, your List of Sources will be invaluable!

Just as a final travel memory-book may be thematic rather than chronological, the order that the information finally appears in your export plan may not match your research steps (the design). In fact, sometimes an insight is important enough to appear several times in the plan.

Most of the information you find will be about potential regional markets and how to reach customers there (i.e., marketing); it will be logged into the ‘market overview’ and ‘market entry plan’ sections of your export plan. You will also find ideas for other parts of the plan – for example, city or region overviews may highlight risk factors that will need to be addressed; network contacts in sector associations may uncover potential in-market strategic partners; regulatory sources may alert you to the importance of seeking tax or intellectual property advice.

Secondary market research naturally results in reams of undistilled information. The pertinent material goes in the appropriate section of the export plan as evidence to support your conclusions about your potential success and the decisions you make about implementation. Most of the background information should be just that – in the background. So keep it as an appendix to the plan.

Having an export plan is often a condition for receiving government funding, or the support of a government trade advisor. So it is useful to have a self-standing export plan, in addition to key pieces becoming the ‘international’ section of your existing business plan.

Secondary and primary research

Much of the market information needed for your export plan is already out there, available from government agencies, industry journal publishers, and competitor websites – all “external” sources.

“Internal” sources will also yield insights; for example, statistics about your own website’s visitors will indicate their country of origin and the web pages which interest them. As you develop your Business Model Canvas (see Section 2b) you may be reminded of other useful existing connections – key suppliers in Canada with branches in the US, or architect contacts who are affiliated with US firms.

Pulling information from these external and internal sources is called secondary research or desk research. This toolkit covers external secondary sources.

Primary research, on the other hand, means finding data and insights specifically for this research project – information that was not previously available in one spot. For example, you may need to visit the target city to compare the prices that competitors are charging for similar products or services, or you may need a focus group of target buyers to gauge reaction to your new designs. Primary research involves surveys, focus groups, visits to the target market and other expensive activities.

A sensible approach is to do secondary research first, aiming for quality rather than quantity. Then design a new research project to fill the most important gaps in your knowledge, using further secondary or primary research.

Customer and geographic market types

Market research firms distinguish between consumer research and B2B (business to business) research.

In consumer markets, the number of potential buyers may be very large, with small groups of consumers (segments) having different preferences, perceptions, and motivations. Consumer buying behavior also varies between frequent purchases such as gifts, infrequent purchases such as furniture, and investments such as remodeling. For your export plan, collect basic demographic data and information on competing products or services, but also research market entry partners such as retailers and service firms who can provide insights into complexities like local appeal.

B2B products and services have typically far fewer potential customers, who are more easily identified since they are companies, institutions or government agencies. On the other hand, the purchasing process within each organization involves influencers, such as a technical department which sets specifications, a financial department which imposes budgets, and the purchasing department which places the order. Again, collect basic information about the buying organization, and also research sales agents and similar specialists who have insights into target customer organizations.

Trade advisors also distinguish between fast-paced markets and relationship-based markets. In fast-paced markets such as here in North America, quality and service excellence dominate, especially for B2B. In relationship-based markets, established suppliers are stiff competition and exporters must take time to develop a relationship with the potential customer. Consumer purchasing is also increasingly relationship based, with strong brand loyalty for even commodity-type products and services.

For these reasons, researching your market entry options (see Section 6) is as important as researching potential buyers.

Narrowing your focus through statistics

In the introduction, we showed briefly how to whittle 160 cities (MSAs) down to a more manageable fifteen to research, using just two filters, GDP and personal per capita income. Both filters are indicators of spending power (wealth) – GDP indicates the overall wealth of a region, both industries and people; personal per capita income indicates the spending power of people.

You will use other filters based on your own understanding of your customers, such as B2B versus B2C, and preferred targets within that group, as discussed under value proposition (see Section 2b).

For example, if your plan is to sell units in quantity to a developer, the GDP filter or building permits data would be most useful. If your plan is to target wealthy individuals, per capita income of an area will be more helpful than GDP. And if you intend to reach end-consumers through designers, an alternative first filter might be the prevalence of design firms in each city.

Next steps

As you add information and insights to your draft export plan, two likely ‘next steps’ will become apparent.

In the more complete sections of your export plan, you’ll be able to come to some conclusions or decisions as to your best target markets, necessary product or service adjustments, market entry approach, and areas where you’ll need specialist help such as tax or legal advice.

Inevitably, there’ll also be sections where you don’t have enough data to inform your decisions (for example, pricing strategy). So, do some more focused research to fill those knowledge gaps, or to identify the specialists whose help you may need.

But then take your export plan, gaps and all, to a trade advisor at

Global Affairs Canada

<https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/ontario/index.aspx?lang=eng>

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/grow-your-business-here-and-abroad> or

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/wood-exports>

Export Development Canada – market advisors

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tool/export-help-team.html>

These experts will provide further insights into your target market, assess your company’s export readiness, and introduce you to valuable programs and services to support you as you take your business to the USA.

4. Market research basics

- 4a. Getting started
- 4b. Ready-made reports
- 4c. Statistics sources – international
- 4c. Statistics sources – US government agencies

You've probably done secondary research in the past on your domestic market, perhaps without even realizing it. The types of questions needing answers, and types of resources that you used, will not be very different from those you'll use when researching your potential export market. But if you are new to the concept, or those earlier research efforts are a distant memory, Section 4a includes some useful introductions and reminders.

Ready-made reports are available from sources described in Section 4b. These include comprehensive commercial market surveys, and occasionally summaries of commercial research that appear in industry magazines and trade association newsletters. Even if these ready-made reports are too broad for your current needs, or too expensive, the (free) table of contents offers a useful guide to the type of questions you should be asking. Included in this section is also a directory of US market research services that you could engage to complement your own research.

4a. Getting started

Know Your International Market: Building your competitive advantage abroad

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=eBook)

Export Development Canada. Find out how research into new markets will give you an edge over the competition. Contents: Why understanding your market is key, Identifying and screening potential markets, Targeting your market niche, Tailoring your market strategy, Choosing your market entry strategy. 2018 (registration required).

Marketing, Sales and Export

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/marketing-sales-export>

Business Development Bank of Canada. A series of articles on these topics, such as Defining my target market, Developing my sales strategy, and Financing my exports.

Principles of Marketing Tutorials

<https://www.knowthis.com/marketing-tutorials/>

Know This LLC. Tutorials on market research cover planning and primary and secondary research. Under 'Manage and Plan', see also tutorials on preparing a market study, and writing a marketing plan.

4b. Ready-made reports

MarketResearch.com

<http://www.marketresearch.com>

A collection of market intelligence reports from over 350 publishers. Browse by category or search by specific product. Example: 'United States Office Furniture Market – Growth, Trends,

and Forecasts (2020–2025)', Mordor Intelligence LLP, June 2020, US\$3,250. Free abstract and table of contents, and search inside the report; purchase complete report. (\$)

Research and Markets

<https://www.researchandmarkets.com>

Research store, offering commercial reports from 1700 publishers – market reports, company reports, etc. Example: 'The United States: Wooden Bedroom Furniture Market', Williams & Marshall Strategy, Nov. 2020 US\$1999. Table of contents free, purchase complete report. (\$)

FDMC Magazine

<https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/fdmc>

Undertakes an annual housing market study to assess market conditions for secondary woodworking manufacturers involved in construction-based and other related sectors. Example of report: 'Housing's impact on woodworking: sales, trends & investment plans', June 2020.

Woodworking Network

<https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com>

Articles summarize findings of commercial and other research. Example: 'Cabinet & countertop industry drivers, trends & statistics'.

Closets & Organized Storage Magazine

<https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/closets-organized-storage>

Summaries of published research. Example: 'Closets and home storage industry trends, opportunities', Dec. 2019

National Kitchen and Bath Association

<https://nkba.org/research/>

Annual research reports include 'Kitchen & Bath Market Outlook', and 'Design Trends'. (\$)

RICKI Research Institute for Cooking & Kitchen Intelligence

<http://www.kitchentrends.org/>

Undertakes research on behalf of its members; reports are later released for purchase by non-members. Example: 'The Thinking of Affluent Homeowners & High-End Designers'. (\$)

4c. Statistics sources – international

A good first step in D-I-Y research into a foreign market for a product is to find how much Canada already sells to the country, and which other countries also export to the country, using databases of trade statistics. Then check out the economics. Statistics from a single country will have more meaning when compared with data from Canada. For objective comparisons, the data source should be set up with that intention, such as OECD, the United Nations, and the World Bank, below.

Trade Data Online

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/tdo>

Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada. Trade data from Statistics Canada and US Census Bureau. Search for exports from Canada by product Harmonized System (HS) codes, or export to USA ranked by annual value. It has a useful search tool for finding HS codes.

USA Trade Online

<https://usatrade.census.gov/>

The official source of US trade statistics. Search for imports of products by HS code, from competing countries with Canada in the US market. Data are updated monthly from the latest U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services Report.

OECD Data

<https://data.oecd.org/united-states.htm>

<https://data.oecd.org/canada.htm>

OECD. A wide range of statistics allowing comparison between Canada and the United States. The series includes consumer and producer price indices, business statistics by industry classification, and urban economic statistics.

UNdata

<http://data.un.org>

United Nations. 34 databases covering economic and socio-demographic topics, from crime and education to tourism and trade, for countries around the world. Sources include the UN, International Monetary Fund, OECD, World Trade Organization, and other international agencies. Descriptions of the international sources and definitions used in compiling the data are included.

World DataBank

<http://databank.worldbank.org>

World Bank. Development data covering 1157 indicators, such as population, income, social, economic, financial, natural resources, and the environment. Left panel provides search options; right panel displays preview of data.

4d. Statistics – US government agencies

The United States does not have a single federal statistical agency comparable to Statistics Canada. Instead, the responsibility for collecting statistics to be used in policymaking resides with the agencies responsible for those policies. The first step is to find the responsible agency. Once there, you will find a wealth of detail, since the general principle is that data collected with public funds should be freely available to the public.

The core building block of US demographic statistics is the county: metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are defined by the counties that they include. At higher levels, data are usually available by state, and by regions and divisions such as 'Midwest' and 'Mountain' (see table below).

The key US statistical agencies and main surveys are described in this section; statistical series and sources relating to specific industry segments and channels are described in Sections 5 and 6.

Data and Statistics about the U.S.

<https://www.usa.gov/statistics>

Many government agencies in the USA have statistical information on a wide range of topics. Two sections on this page link to federal statistical agencies, and to state and local government sources.

Decennial Census of Population and Housing

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census.html>

US Census Bureau. The US census provides important demographic information, about people and households. The US census is decennial, undertaken in years ending in 0. (Canada's is also decennial, undertaken in years ending in 1.)

County Business Patterns (CBP)

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html>

US Census Bureau. Part of the Economic Census, which provides detailed information on employer businesses, by industry, geography, and more.

American Housing Survey (AHS)

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/about.html>

US Census Bureau. Part of the American Community Survey, the premier source for information about America's changing population, housing, and workforce.

US Census Bureau Regions and Divisions			
Northeast	New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.	Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania	
Midwest	East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin.	West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota.	
South	South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia	East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee	West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas.
West	Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Montana, Utah, Wyoming.	Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington.	

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018.

US Bureau of Economic Analysis

<https://www.bea.gov/data>

US Department of Commerce. Most closely watched statistics, including U.S. gross domestic product (GDP); state and local numbers; foreign trade and investment stats; and industry data.

US Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://stats.bls.gov/>

US Department of Labor. Consumer & producer price indexes; Consumer expenditures, and how Americans spend time; Pay and benefits; Employment and unemployment; Workplace injuries; Occupational requirements; and Productivity.

5. Resources: industry segments

- 5a. Residential construction
- 5b. Home improvement
- 5c. Hospitality sector
- 5d. Retail sector
- 5e. Furniture

For the varied segments of the wood manufacturing industry, this section brings together the resources for statistics and market research; organizations and media that provide sector insights, directories, and promotion opportunities; and tradeshow where companies can meet potential buyers and partners.

Your current line-up of products and services may not all be suitable for export to the target export market, or perhaps not yet. To be successful in the market, products and services will need to be distinctive from the local competition and other imports. Study competing products, for example in trade and consumer journals, or at trade shows, to identify both these distinctive attributes and any adaptations needed to meet local consumer preferences. This insight will also help you to decide how to position and price your product for success in the market.

Participate in trade shows to meet potential buyers, test market acceptance of your product or service, and research competitors. Use the time in-market to also make direct contact with intermediaries and local service providers. From the information gleaned from these in-person meetings, you will be able to establish some sales goals for your exports.

5a. Residential construction

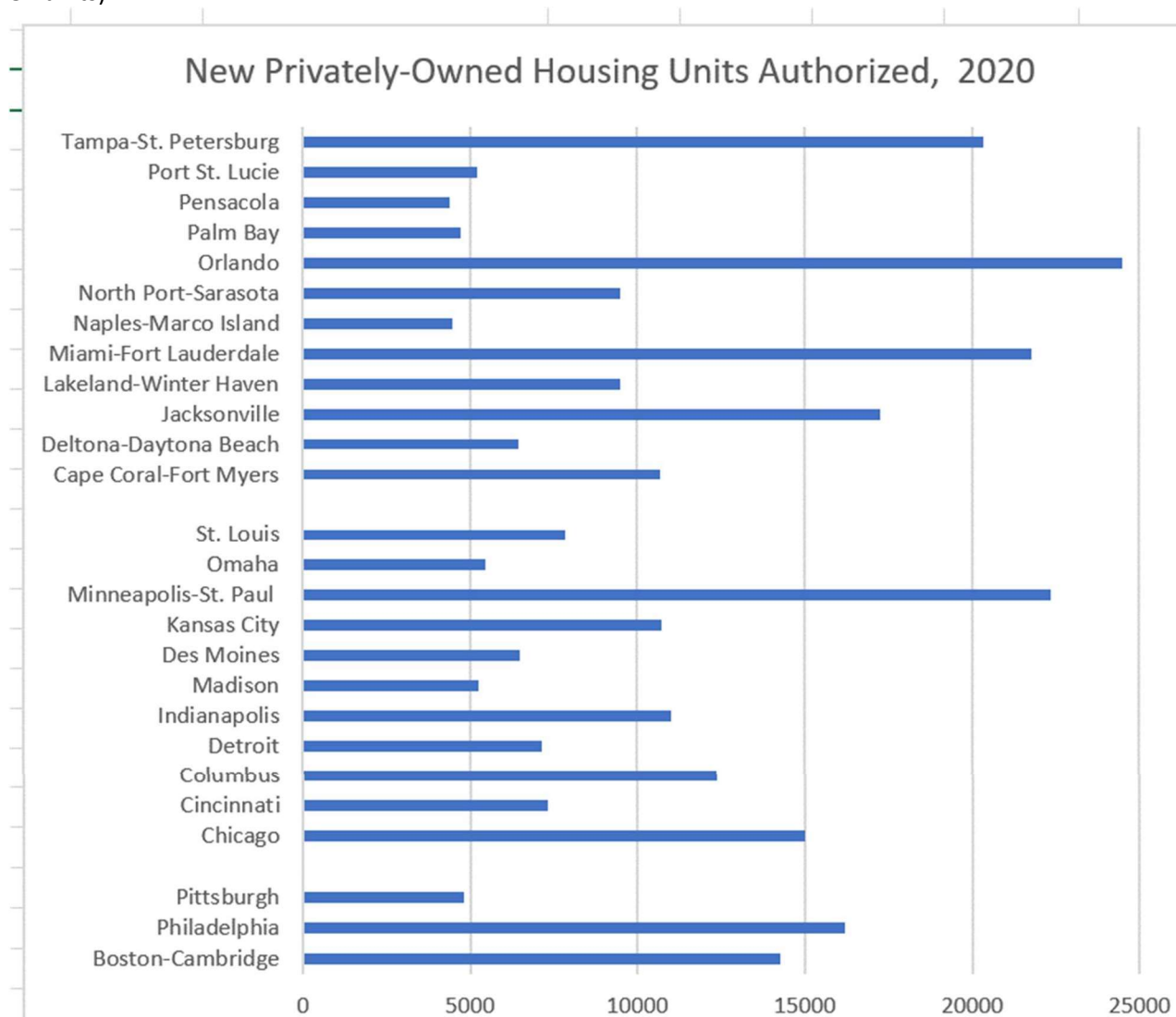
Statistics

New Residential Construction

<https://www.census.gov/construction/nrc/index.html>

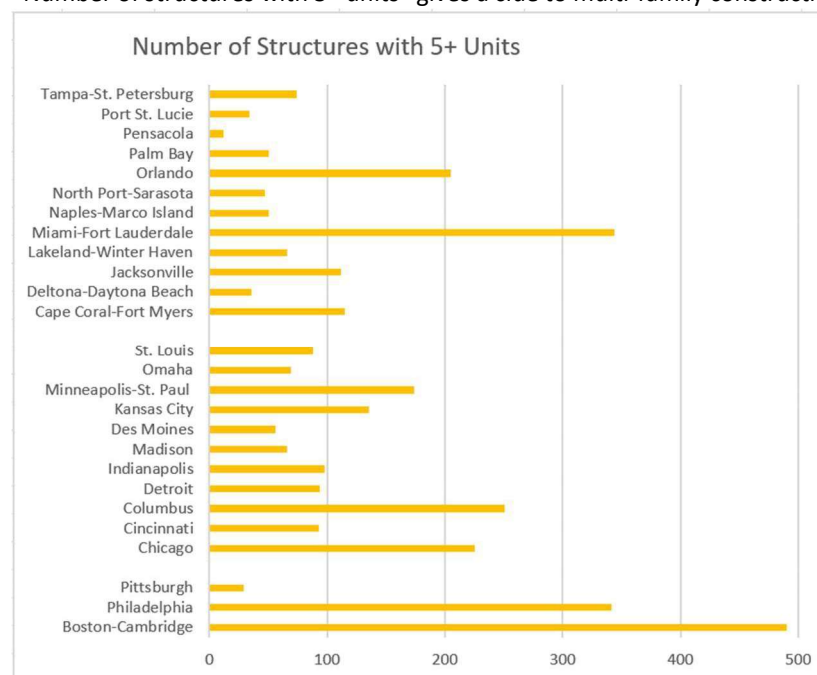
US Census Bureau. Building Permits Survey data are available monthly, year- to- date, and annually at the national, state, selected metropolitan area, county and place levels. Shows total units, as well as data for 1 unit, 2 units, 3 or 4 units, and for 5+ units shows both number of units and number of structures.

“Total Units” data is most useful if your interest is single family homes; I’ve charted MSAs with more 3000+ building permits in 2020, but excluded New York City (54,835 permits, and 1264 structures with 5+ units):



Source: US Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey

“Number of structures with 5+ units” gives a clue to multi-family construction:



Source: US Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey

Organizations and media

National Association of Home Builders

- Forecasts – <https://www.nahb.org/news-and-economics/housing-economics/Forecasts>
free and subscription-based housing and economic forecasts on Housing Economics PLUS. For example, State and metro areas, long-term outlooks, remodeling markets, single-family and multifamily construction, and the Executive-Level forecast. (subscription)
- **HousingEconomics.com** https://www.nahbclassic.org/showpage_details.aspx?showpageID=311
The online economics information source for America’s Housing Industry, published by the NAHB. Provides the latest housing forecasts, market trends, in-depth economic analysis and archival data relating to the housing industry. (\$ subscription)
- **Local Associations** directory (Members Only) <https://www.nahb.org/nahb-community/nahb-directories/local-associations-directory>
- Best in American Living Blog – <https://bestinamericanliving.com/>
Follow the latest in residential design trends and building practices.

Closets & Organized Storage Magazine

<https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/closets-organized-storage>

Summaries of published research. Example: ‘Closets and home storage industry trends, opportunities’, Dec. 2019

National Kitchen and Bath Association

<https://nkba.org/research/>

Annual research reports include *Kitchen & Bath Market Outlook*, and *Design Trends*. (\$)

RICKI Research Institute for Cooking & Kitchen Intelligence

<http://www.kitchentrends.org/>

Undertakes research on behalf of its members; reports are later released for purchase by non-members. Example: The Thinking of Affluent Homeowners & High-End Designers. (\$))

*Tradeshows***NAHB International Builders' Show**

2024 Feb 27 – 29

Las Vegas

<https://www.buildersshow.com/>

National Association of Home Builders. America's largest annual residential housing construction trade event for manufacturers and suppliers of home construction products and services. Includes **Kitchen & Bath Industry Show** (KBIS) see <https://kbis.com/>

National Hardware Show

2024 March 26 - 28

Las Vegas, NV

<https://www.nationalhardwareshow.com/en-us.html>

Reed Exhibitions USA. Exhibitor category "Construction" includes Doors, Flooring and floor coverings, Lumber & wood products, Millwork & moldings, Windows & skylights. In 2019, 2654 exhibitors and 11125 attendees.

Greenbuild International Conference & Expo

2023 September 26-29

Washington, DC

<https://informaconnect.com/greenbuild/>

Informa. Sustainability in the built environment: for professionals in architecture, construction, engineering, planning, and interior design. Exhibitor categories include Building materials/systems – interior, Flooring & floor systems, Lumber & wood products, Window & skylights. In 2019, 265 exhibitors and 10,000 attendees.

JLC LIVE New England

2024 March 22 - 23

Providence, RI

<https://ne.jlclive.com/en/home.html>

Informa Markets. Attracts thousands of builders, remodelers and crews from across New England. The exhibit hall features top manufacturers, distributors and suppliers in the residential construction market. In 2019, 254 exhibitors and 6900 attendees.

Closets Conference & Expo / Wood Pro Expo

2023 Apr. 12 - 14

2024 TBA

San Diego, CA

<https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/events/cabinets-closets-conference-expo>

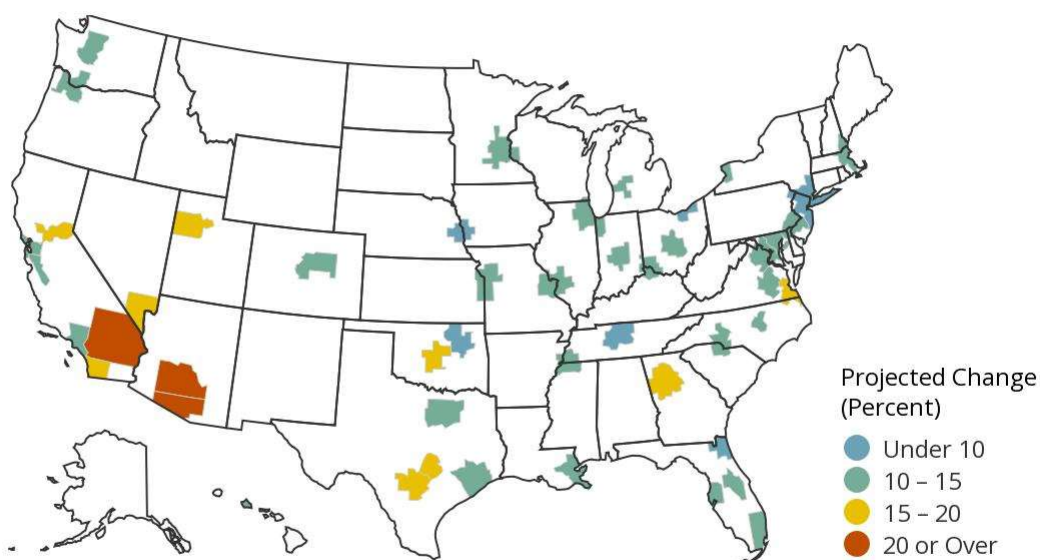
Woodworking Network. National event for closets, garage, and organized storage professionals, plus regional woodworking marketplace featuring suppliers and distributors of woodworking machinery and supplies.

5b. Home improvement

Statistics

Source: JCHS Harvard

Metro Area Home Improvement Projections Annual Change in Spending, 2022Q4



Notes: The projections methodology is described in the JCHS research note, Projecting Home Improvement Spending at the Metropolitan Area Level. Historical data are modeled estimates.
Source: Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies' analysis of Moody's Analytics, US Census Bureau, and BuildFax data.

American Housing Survey

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs.html>

US Census Bureau. The interactive data tool allows users to create custom tables of housing and demographic estimates for the nation, nine states and 25 metropolitan areas, for example 'Top 15 Metropolitan Areas – Home Improvement Costs'.

Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University

<https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/research>

Publishes research on Housing markets & conditions, Homeownership, Demographics & projections, Remodeling, etc. Example: 'Improving America's Housing' – key trends in the remodeling industry, published annually.

National Association of Realtors

<https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics>

Housing statistics on the national, regional, and metro-market level, including home sales, prices, buyers and sellers, etc. Examples: 'Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends,' annual, and 'Home Buyers by Metropolitan Statistical Area' based on the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey – in 2019 a typical homebuyer was 47 years old and earned nearly \$96,500.

Home Improvement Research Institute

<https://www.hiri.org/>

Undertakes research on behalf of members, for example: 'U.S. Size of the Home Improvement Products Market' and 'Contractor Shopping and Purchasing Behavior.' (\$)

Organizations and media

National Association of the Remodeling Industry

Based in Wheeling, IL

<https://www.nari.org/Industry-Partners/Find-a-Partner>

Industry Partners (NARI members) –Search by specialty, incl. cabinets, flooring, millwork, windows/doors

Find a Chapter – 44 chapters, search by zip code <https://www.nari.org/find-a-chapter>

National Association of Home Builders

<https://www.nahb.org/>

Professional Remodelers directory – Members only

Best in American Living Blog –Follow the latest in residential design trends and building practices. <https://bestinamericanliving.com/>

Tradeshows

L & L Exhibition Management

<http://www.homeshowcenter.com/>

Events featuring many of the most experienced and established home improvement firms as well as the latest and most innovative products in the home improvement and home building industries: e.g.

Jacksonville FL Home & Garden Show

Greater Cincinnati Remodeling Expo

Fargo Remodeling Expo

Pittsburgh PA Remodeling Expo

Indiana Home & Garden Show

Madison WI Build, Remodel & Landscape Show

Minneapolis Remodeling Expo

Columbus OH Home Improvement Show

Marketplace Events

<https://marketplaceevents.com/our-shows>

KC Remodel & Garden Show

Des Moines Home & Garden Show

Cincinnati Home & Garden Show

Minneapolis Home & Garden Show

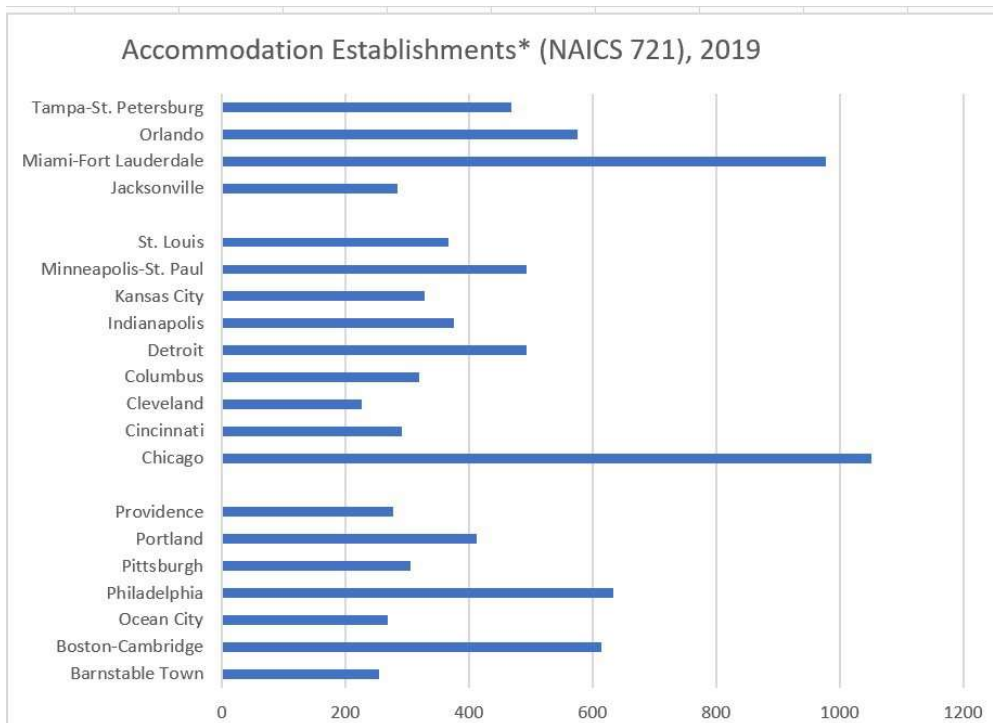
Jacksonville Home & Patio Show

Buffalo Home Show

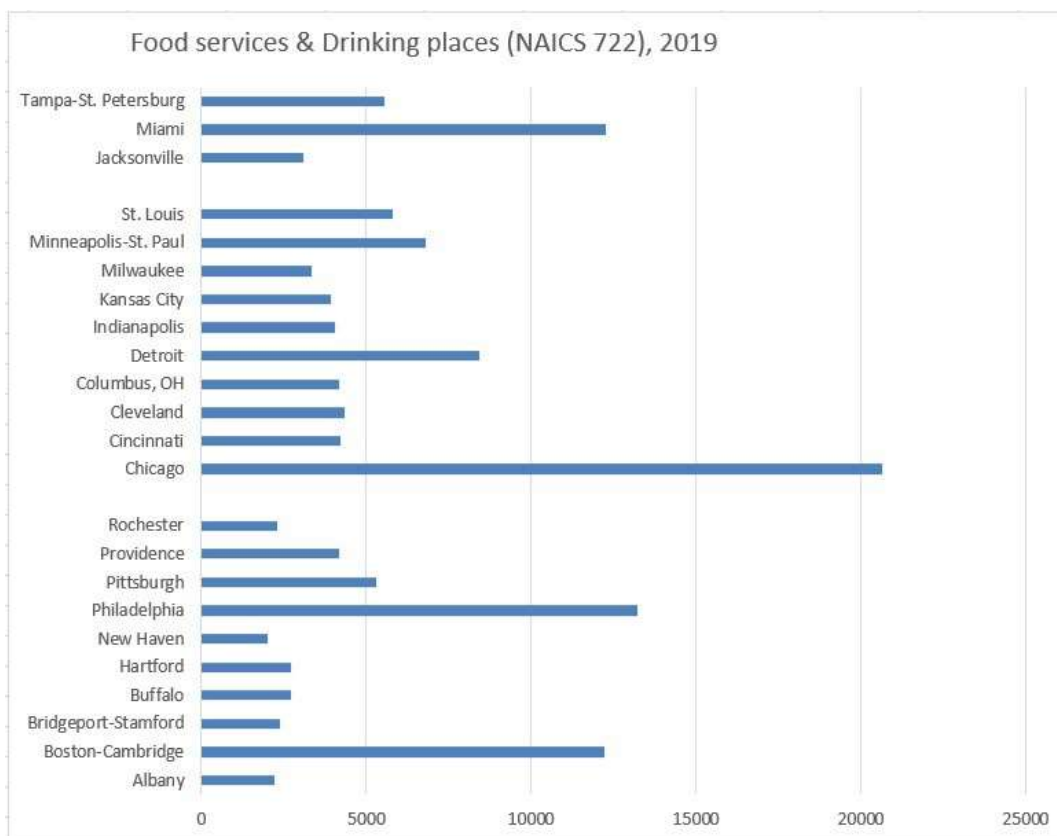
Philly Home & Garden Show

5c. Hospitality sector

Statistics



Source: US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns - excludes New York City: 1,988 establishments
<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/county-business-patterns-by-industry-2019.html>



Source: US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns
 *excludes New York City: 53,027 establishments

Hotel Horizons

<https://pip.cbrehotels.com/publications-data-products/hotel-horizons>

CBRE. Quarterly reports that analyze the expected performance of 65 major U.S. lodging markets, and a national summary report of the entire U.S. lodging industry. Ten years of forecast data and five years of historical market performance information. A variety of economic, demographic, and other benchmarking statistics provide the reader with a deeper understanding of local market conditions. (\$)

U.S. Lodging Industry Overview

<https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/united-states/insights> (click on Hospitality)

Cushman & Wakefield. Eventually renovation and property improvement projects will resurface and allow owners and operators to consider the reconfiguration of existing hotel facilities for working remotely and new amenity concepts. Layouts of food and beverage facilities will also change to support more efficient operation – such as expanding grab-and-go and market pantries as an alternative to the traditional breakfast buffet. (Quarterly report.)

HVS – Publications

<https://www.hvs.com/> (Tab=Publications)

HVS. Global consulting firm focused exclusively on the hospitality industry. HVS Market Pulse series e.g. Buffalo NY, Feb 2021. In-depth research e.g. NEHMER & HVS Design Hotel Cost Estimating Guide is a comprehensive listing of capex construction and FF&E costs for hotel renovations that evaluates costs in a variety of hotel tiers and areas.

Organizations & Media

American Hotel & Lodging Association

<https://www.ahla.com/>

Represents all segments of the lodging industry, including leading hotel brands; hotel owners, real estate investment trusts (REITs), and management companies; branded and independent properties and bed & breakfasts; state hotel associations; and industry partners and suppliers. E.g. State of the Industry Report outlines the forecasted state of the hotel industry in 2021 and into the immediate future. The report examines the high-level economics of the recovery, the specific impact on business travel, and consumer travel sentiments.

Lodging magazine <https://lodgingmagazine.com/>

Hotel Buyers Guide <https://hotelandlodgingguide.com/>

Hotel Business Green Book.

https://togo.hotelbusiness.com/?issue=hotelbusiness_greenbook2021

Hotel Business magazine. Rankings and directories of Architects & designers, construction companies, management companies, owners & developers, purchasing companies, etc. Annual.

Hospitality Design

<https://www.hospitalitydesign.com/>

Hospitality Design magazine. Buyers Guide categories include Building products (doors, millwork etc.), Flooring, Furniture, Seating and Tables. Delivers HD Expo, Las Vegas, April 2022 and HD Elevate, New York City, Oct 2022.

Listing of Lodging Industry Trade Press

<https://www.ahla.com/listing-lodging-industry-trade-press>

American Hotel & Lodging Association. Links to publications in foodservice/restaurants, hospitality e.g. casinos, lodging industry, meetings & conventions, etc.

*Tradeshows***BD/NY – Boutique Design New York**

2023 Nov 12-13

New York, NY

<https://bdny.com/>

9,500+ designers, architects, purchasing agents, hoteliers, owners and developers together with 750+ inventive manufacturers of design elements for hospitality interiors.

Hotec Design North America

2023 June 19-22

Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.hotecdesign.com/>

Buyer-supplier matchmaking event. Invited buyers are senior decision-makers from major hotels, resorts, casinos, cruise lines, purchasing and management companies. Suppliers represent a range of categories, including Architectural & construction materials, Bathroom equipment & Accessories, Flooring, Furniture, etc.

HD Expo

2023 May 2-4

2024 TBD

Las Vegas, NV

<https://hdexpo.com/>

Emerald X. Tradeshow and conference for the hospitality industry, with 10,600 attendees and more than 875 exhibitors (2018).

National Restaurant Association Show

2023 May 20-23

Chicago, IL

<https://www.nationalrestaurantshow.com/>

National Restaurant Association. The largest annual gathering of foodservice professionals. In 2019, 2350+ exhibiting companies representing 900+ product categories, 42500 industry attendees.

International Restaurant & Foodservice Show

2024 March 3-5

New York, NY

<https://www.internationalrestaurantny.com/>

Comprehensive event devoted to the Eastern U.S. restaurant, foodservice and hospitality market. In previous years, 18000 registered attendees from across USA, 370+ exhibitors including furniture manufacturers

Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show

2023 Nov. 8-9

Orlando, FL

<https://www.flrestaurantandlodgingshow.com/>

Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association. The only comprehensive industry event devoted to the Southeast U.S. restaurant, foodservice and hospitality market. In 2019, 4800 attendees from across USA, 314 exhibitors.

5d. Retail sector

Statistics



Source: US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (excluding New York City: 58,591)

Organizations and media

Shop!

Based in Chicago, IL. Members include store fixture suppliers, retail design firms, suppliers of visual merchandising products, and suppliers of materials and equipment for the retail environments industry.

- **Shop! Buyers' Guide** – <https://shopassociation.org/buyersguide/>
Online version at <http://supplierconnect.shopassociation.org/>

Products, capabilities, and services of nearly 850 (member) providers of store fixtures, POP displays, retail design services, visual presentation products, signage, materials, installation, and more. Search by name, location, size, and materials, products and services.

Retail Design Institute

<https://retaildesigninstitute.org/>

Based in Cincinnati, OH. Chapters in New England (Needham MA), Cincinnati, New York City, Chicago, Minneapolis & St. Louis.

International Council of Shopping Centers

<https://www.icsc.com/>

Based in New York NY. Members include owners and developers, managers and brokers, architects and designers. Member services include membership directory and networking events, e.g. ICSC Connect Local Talks: Philadelphia, Dec.15, 2021.

ICSC Products & Services Showcase <https://tradeshowsicsc.balluun.com/en-us/shop>

Virtual tradeshow, includes 41 companies offering “design and construction services”.

Design:Retail

<https://www.designretailonline.com/>

Design:Retail online magazine. Products covered include architectural materials, fixtures, flooring and furniture.

- **design:retail Forum** annual event brings together the retail design industry, including store design, architecture and visual merchandising retail executives, and design/architecture firms.

VMSD [Visual Merchandising & Store Design]

<https://vmsd.com/>

VMSD magazine. Buyers guide categories include Architectural/facade components, Fixture components. Fixture, Flooring, Furniture and 170+ Retail Design Firms.

Tradeshows

NRF Retail's BIG Show

2024 Jan. 14-16

New York, NY

<https://virtualbigshow.nrf.com/>

National Retail Federation. The world's largest retail trade show, with membership that comprises all retail formats and channels of distribution including department, specialty, discount, catalog, Internet, independent stores, chain restaurants, drug stores and grocery stores as well as the industry's key trading partners of retail goods and service. In 2019, 821 exhibitors incl. store fixtures, and 19300 attendees.

ICSC+CENTERBUILD

2023 Dec. 6-7

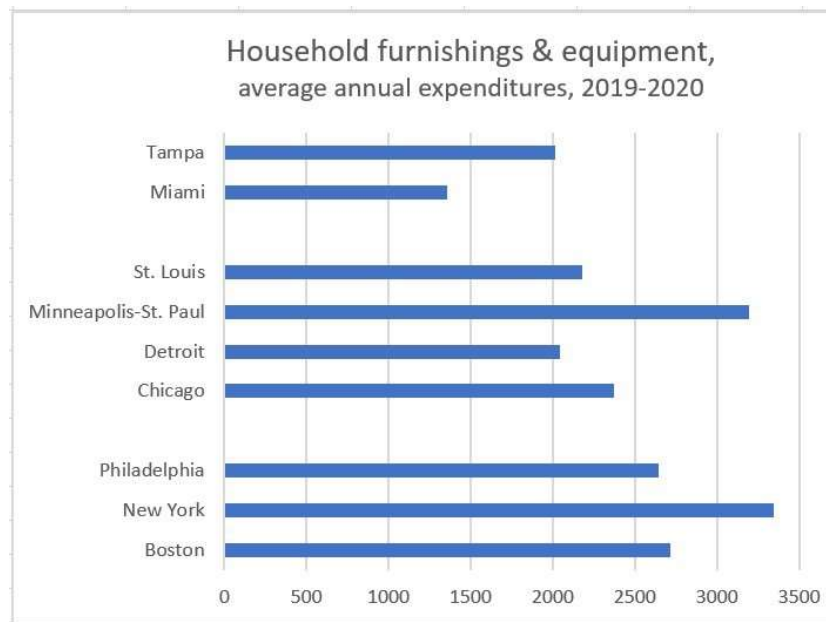
New York, NY

<https://www.icsc.com/attend-and-learn/events/details>

Premier event for retail and real estate professionals dedicated to the planning, development, design and construction of shopping centers, retail stores and retail-focused developments.

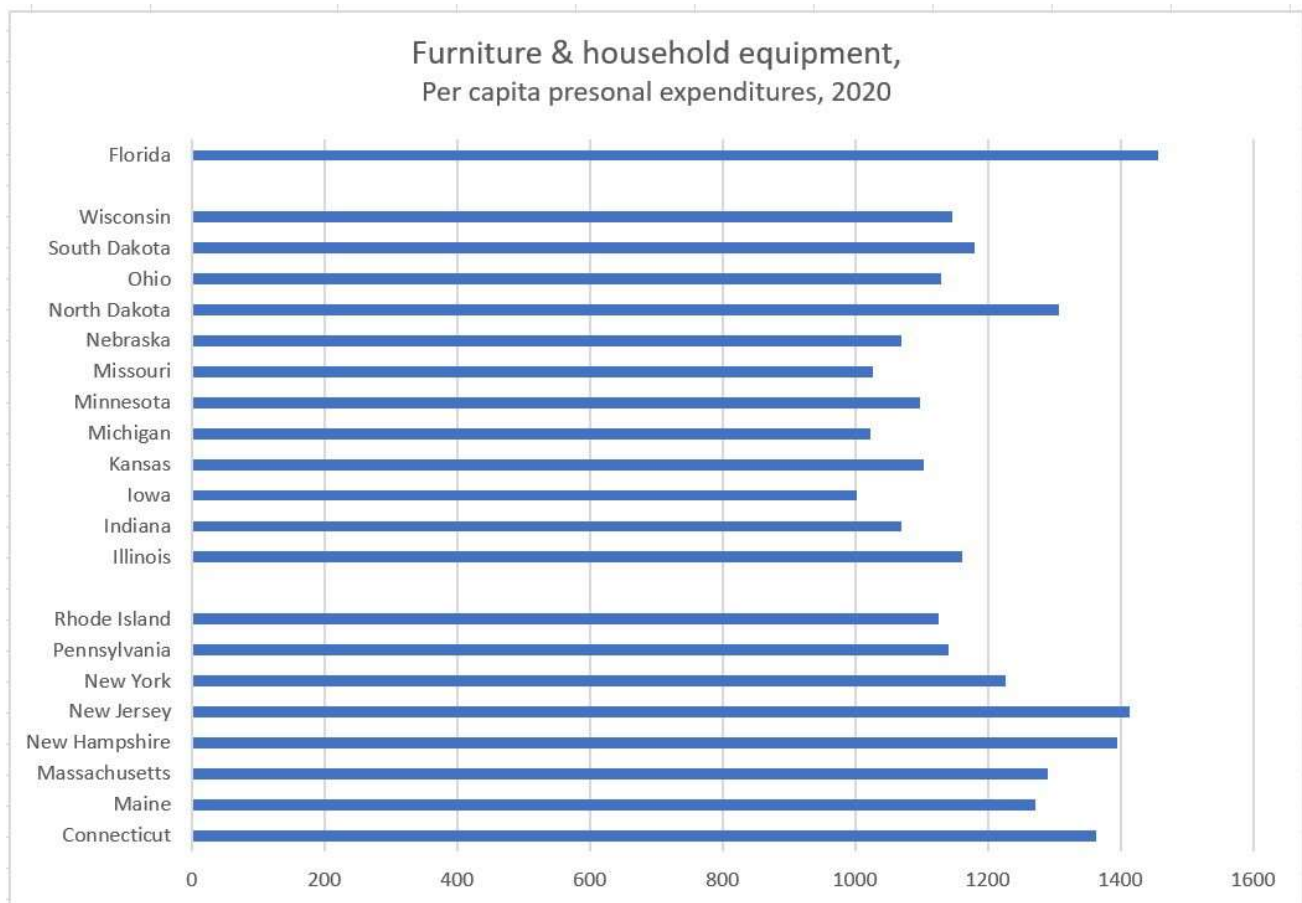
5e. Furniture

Statistics



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm#geo>

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



Consumer Spending by State

<https://www.bea.gov/data/consumer-spending/state>

Bureau of Economic Analysis. The goods and services purchased by, or on behalf of, people living in the US. Also known as personal consumption expenditures, these monthly statistics are a popular way to gauge the economy's strength. More detailed data on what people buy is released annually.

Consumer Expenditure Surveys

<https://stats.bls.gov/cex/>

US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Annual survey. CE data are primarily used to revise the relative importance of goods and services in the market basket of the Consumer Price Index.

Organizations

Business & Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association

<https://www.bifma.org/>

- Statistics program: Office furniture products & specialty (non-office furniture) products sales data. Industry overview summaries are available to all BIFMA members.
- Standards overview
- **Navigating Now – Market Webinar Series**, separate webinars on furniture market segments including education, healthcare and hospitality.

American Home Furnishings Alliance

<https://www.ahfa.us/>

- Regulatory compliance section covers Flame retardants, flammability, formaldehyde and furniture stability esp. clothing storage units.
- Environmental Guide for the furniture and cabinet industry – members only.
- **Member directory** http://icfanet.org/sites/default/files/ahfa_directory.pdf
- **Specialized Furniture Carriers** directory <http://www.furniture-carriers.org/>

Tradeshows

High Point Market

2023 Oct. 14-18

High Point, NC

<https://www.highpointmarket.org/>

The largest furnishings industry trade show in the world, bringing more than 75,000 retail home furnishings buyers, interior designers, architects, etc. Semi-annual.

International Contemporary Furniture Fair

2023 April 24

New York

<https://icff.com/>

North America's major platform for global design. Furniture, seating, carpet and flooring, outdoor furniture, accessories, kitchen and bath, fabricators, contract furniture, etc. Includes Boutique Design New York.

6. Resources: partners & distribution channels

- 6a. General resources
- 6b. Cabinetry, millwork – Contacts
- 6c. Furniture & furnishings – Contacts

If opportunities for new business currently arise from your existing partners and distribution channels, you might also try to find links between them and potential partners in the US market.

6a. General resources

Finding Distributors for Export Markets

https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/209596/file-27367225-pdf/docs/finding_distributors_for_export_markets.pdf

IBT Partners. Subtitled 'Strategies for Identifying, Engaging & Optimizing International Distributors, this is a useful overview on finding distributors, contracts and due diligence, and optimizing your distributor network. (Written for companies entering the European market.)

Finding, Training and Managing International Agents and Distributors

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (choose Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. Contents: Types of Intermediaries; Finding International Intermediaries; Qualifying International Intermediaries; The Legal Perspective; Motivating Your Intermediaries. 15 pages, 2016 (registration required).

Making the connection: How to find global partners and suppliers

<https://www.edc.ca/en/events.html>

Export Development Canada. Webinar given Jan.2020, available on demand. Topics include How to assess and conduct due diligence on your preferred partner or supplier; and How to evaluate which type of partnership agreement works best. (Registration required.)

How to Qualify as a Preferred Vendor

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. Contents: Know what you're good at; Make a shortlist of primes; Understand their corporate culture; Research your competition; Make the initial contact; Complete the application; Present your case; Submit to a qualifying evaluation; Information needed for a qualifying evaluation. 7 pages, 2017, registration required.

Commercial Contract Terms

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (choose Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. Tips on the key terms and structural elements you need in your next contract. Contents: Basic commercial contract principles; Typical clauses. 19 pages, 2010 (registration required).

International Contracts & Partnership Agreements

<https://fittfortrade.com/fittskills-lite-series>

Forum for International Trade Training. Free download from the FITT skills training course: How each party's rights and obligations are defined, what international rules govern your contracts, and how to settle disputes if they arise.

Forum on Construction Law – Membership Directory 2019

<https://www.americanbar.org/membership/>

American Bar Association. Directory of construction lawyers, by state and city, including business contact information. (Members only.)

6b. Cabinetry, millwork – Contacts

National Association of the Remodeling Industry

Industry Partners – <https://www.nari.org/Industry-Partners/Find-a-Partner> Search by specialty, incl. cabinets, flooring, millwork, windows/doors

Find a Chapter – <https://www.nari.org/find-a-chapter> 44 chapters, search by zip code or map.

Cabinet Makers Association

<https://www.cabinetmakers.org/>

Small to medium cabinet shops, millworkers, furniture makers, and suppliers.

ShopFinder <https://www.cabinetmakers.org/shop-finder.html>

Composite Panel Association

Surface and Panel Buyers Guide

<https://www.compositepanel.org/resources/buyers-guide/>

Woodwork Institute

Affiliate Roster and Resource Guide

<https://woodworkinstitute.com/publications/membership-roster-and-resource-guide/>

Accredited millwork companies are listed in alphabetical order and by county and state.

Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association

<https://www.kcma.org/>

Find a Cabinet Manufacturer KCMA Certified cabinet manufacturers by certification, location, style, distributor, cabinet type, materials or brand. Members Only.

National Kitchen & Bath Association

Find a Member – <https://nkba.org/search/members/>.

Designers, distributors, retailers, remodelers, manufacturers, fabricators, and installers. Nearly 5,000 members.

70 chapters across 10 regions in the United States and Canada <https://nkba.org/info/chapters/>

Global Connect Business Summit

2022 May 12

Virtual

<https://nkba.org/globalconnect/access/events/north-american-market-outlook-update-q1-2022/?gcm>

Kitchen & Bath Market Index review as well as a recap of KBIS 2022, previews of NKBA Global Connect programs in 2022 and a high level preview of KBIS 2023 in Las Vegas.

6c. Furniture & furnishings – Contacts

American Home Furnishings Alliance

Industry Resource Guide – database of AHFA Solution Partners, i.e. suppliers of equipment, materials and professional services. Search by keyword or category and sub-category index. Members Only

Specialized Furniture Carriers Coverage Map and Directory

<https://ahfa.us/member-resources/sfc-directory>

Office Furniture Dealers Alliance

2019 OFDA Dealers' Choice Survey Report – <https://www.ofdanet.org/benchmarking-reports>

Survey provides product-category-level feedback from dealers of all sizes on their primary non-aligned suppliers, in each of six product categories: Case goods, filing, seating, storage, tables and workstations/systems.

Manufacturers Representative.com

<https://www.manufacturers-representatives.com/index.cfm?Page=Find-Sales-Reps>

Connecting high quality Manufacturers and Service Provider companies with qualified Independent Sales Reps from virtually every industry throughout the United States, Canada, & Around the World.

7. In-market contacts

- 7a. Influencers: Architectural services
- 7b. Influencers: Interior design services
- 7c. Promotion
- 7d. In-market government & business contacts

The resources in this section cover the channels and media for promoting your business and brand in the US market, and network opportunities for continuing to build your business.

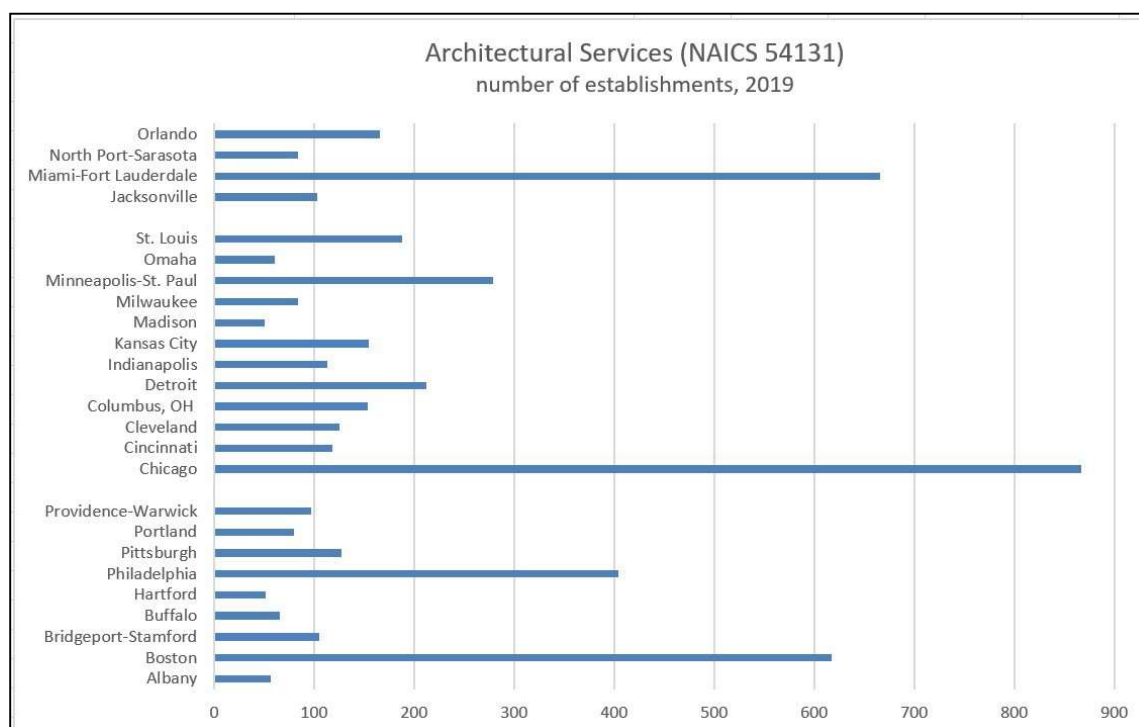
Developing a global competitive advantage through international networks

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (choose Format=eBook)

Export Development Canada. Contents: International networks in context; How to develop a solid international network; Resources for business networking. 2018 (registration required).

7a. Influencers: Architectural services

Statistics



Source: Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (excl. New York: 2437 establishments)

County Business Patterns (CBP)

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html>

US Census Bureau. Part of the Economic Census, which provides detailed information on employer businesses, by industry, geography, and more.

Organizations and media

American Institute of Architects

<https://www.aia.org/firm-directory>

Firm directory – 22,500 companies, can be restricted by state and by zip code

<https://www.aia.org/find-chapter>

Chapters – 260 chapters in USA, mainly cities, from Abilene to Youngstown; some have their own website, and local affiliates

ENR Top 500 Design Firms

<https://www.enr.com/toplists/2020-Top-500-Design-Firms-Preview>

Engineering News-Record. List, published annually in April, ranks the 500 largest U.S.-based designs firms, both publicly and privately held, based on design-specific revenue. Covers architects, engineers, engineer-contractors, planners etc. Also **Top Design Firms Sourcebook** – market analysis and rankings of the largest US-based architectural and engineering firms in the eight major industry sectors (\$).

Tradeshows

AIA Conference on Architecture

2023 June 7-10

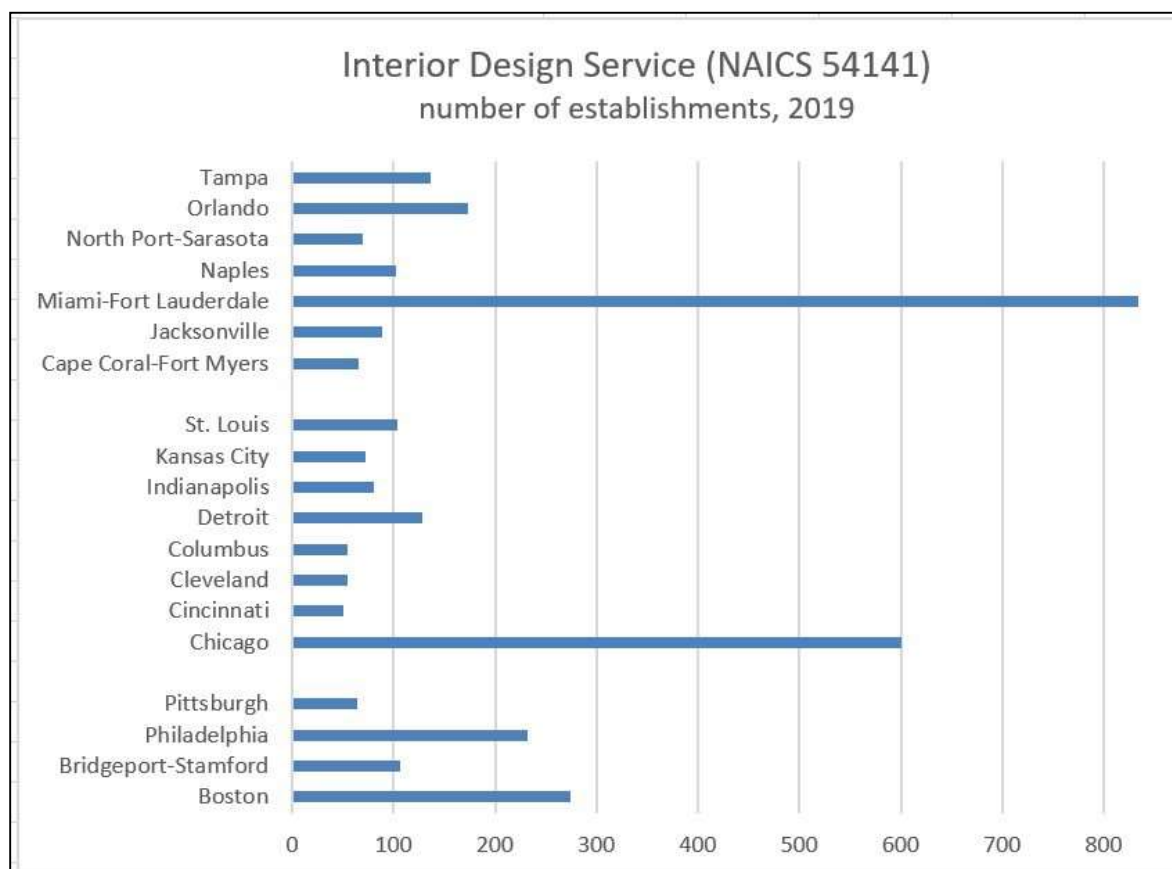
San Francisco, CA

<https://conferenceonarchitecture.com/>

American Institute of Architects. The premier event in the architecture and design industry. Architects and design professionals come from all over the US and abroad to network with fellow industry professionals and to see the latest product and service innovations. 599 exhibitors and 12800 attendees (2019).

7b. Influencers: Interior design services

Statistics



Source: Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (excl. New York: 1608 establishments))

Organizations and media

American Society of Interior Designers

Find An Industry Partner – <https://www.asid.org/find-an-ip>

Connects designers with Industry Partners (ASID members) in their chapter or region: Specialties include Cabinetry/millwork; Doors/windows/building materials; Furniture/upholstery/case goods.

Membership search – Find A Pro <https://www.asid.org/find-a-pro>

Chapter Map/Info – https://www.asid.org/chapter_sites/listing websites, some with their own membership lists, magazines, events etc.

Association of Closet and Storage Professionals

<https://closets.org/>

Publication – Closets & Organized Storage magazine

Find a Local Professional - <https://www.closets.org/directory.html#!directory/map> (search map)

International Furnishings and Design Association

<https://ifda.com/>

Executives and companies professionally engaged in the design, production, distribution, promotion, communication or education in the furnishings and design and/or related industries.

Chapters <https://ifda.com/chapters/>

Tradeshows

NeoCon

2023 June 12-14

Chicago

<https://neocon.com/>

Commercial design industry's launch pad for innovation. Exhibits: Furniture, Flooring, Interior building products, Interior finishes, etc. Attendees: 50,000 design professionals from workplace, healthcare, hospitality, retail, education, and government.

BD/NY – Boutique Design New York

2023 Nov. 12-13

New York

<https://bdny.com/>

9,500+ designers, architects, purchasing agents, hoteliers, owners and developers together with 750+ inventive manufacturers of design elements for hospitality interiors.

7c. Promotion**Marketing Plan Template**

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/templates-business-guides/marketing-plan-template>

Business Development Bank of Canada. The marketing plan template will help you to: Define your brand; Identify your customers; Understand your competitors; Identify your company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; Define what makes your business different; Map your customers' purchase journey; Create your marketing action plan; Monitor, measure and improve your marketing tactics. (Registration required.)

Marketing: Create a successful marketing strategy to grow your business

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/marketing-sales-export/marketing>

Business Development Bank of Canada. Series of brief articles on: Conducting market research, defining my target market, Developing my marketing plan, Creating my marketing budget, Branding and positioning my business, Choosing the right distribution channels, Implementing traditional marketing strategies, Implementing digital marketing strategies, Improving customer loyalty, Measuring ROI, Optimizing my strategies and tactics.

Mondo Times – USA Local News Media

<https://www.mondotimes.com/1/world/us>

Mondo Code LLC. Find local newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations by state or major city.

Mondo Times – USA National News Media

<https://www.mondotimes.com/topic/index.html>

Mondo Code LLC. Find USA national media by topic, including Home decorating & design, Architecture, Construction, Retailing, Lifestyles, Travel, etc.

Protecting your IP in the United States

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-Internetopic.nsf/eng/wr04353.html>

Canadian Intellectual Property Office. A guide to protecting your intellectual property, including trademarks. 12 pages, 2018. [For more on this topic, see section 8c, below.]

Researcher SourceBook™ Directory of Market Research Companies

<https://www.quirks.com/directories/sourcebook>

Quirks. Many US market research firms are listed in this directory, which is searchable by industry, such as Home Improvement, and by research activity, such as market feasibility studies.

GreenBook Directory

<https://www.greenbook.org/find-company-by-location/>

GreenBook. Find market research firms, consultants, etc. by location (e.g. state), as well as by market research specialty.

Business Trip Planning

http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2008/exportsource/EE4-3-2005E.pdf

Team Canada Inc. In particular, Chapter 5 Planning your travel, Chapter 6 Preparing to leave, and Chapter 7 Final details are still useful. 25 pages, 2005.

Trade shows and you: How to get the most from your trade show investment

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. a compact, practical guide to the major stages of a trade show: planning your show strategy, preparing for a show, working the show itself and following up after the show. So no matter whether you're an experienced exporter or an aspiring one, don't overlook the promise and potential of these events. 21 pages, 2016 (registration required).

Trade shows: 6 tips for finding potential customers

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/marketing-sales-export/marketing/6-steps-finding-new-customers>

Business Development Bank of Canada. Short article covers 1. Calculate what it costs; 2. Find the right shows; 3. Design your booth for maximum impact; 4. Make sure you have enough staff; 5. Staff your booth with experienced people; 6. Always follow up.

Sales Tax Nuances of Trade Show Attendance

<https://www.salestaxinstitute.com/resources/sales-tax-nuances-of-trade-show-attendance>

Sales Tax Institute.

Successful International Trade Show Marketing

<http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/EE4-6-2003E.pdf>

Team Canada Inc. In particular, section 3 Planning for an international trade fair, section 4 Successful trade fair strategies and section 5 Post-trade fair activities are still useful. 42 pages, 2003.

7d. In-market government & business contacts

Government organizations

The Canadian **Trade Commissioner Service** has offices across USA, including:

Florida – Miami

The Consulate General of Canada, Miami
 200 South Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 1600,
 Miami, 33131
miamiinfocentre@international.gc.ca
<http://www.Miami.gc.ca> Region: Florida, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands

Illinois – Chicago

The Consulate General of Canada, Chicago
 (incl. Export Development Canada representative)
 180 North Stetson Avenue, Suite 2400,
 Chicago, 60601
chcgo-td@international.gc.ca
<http://www.Chicago.gc.ca> Region: Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin

Massachusetts – Boston

The Consulate General of Canada, Boston
 3 Copley Place, Suite 400,
 Boston, 02116
boston.commerce@international.gc.ca
<http://www.Boston.gc.ca>
 Region: Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Michigan – Detroit

The Consulate General of Canada, Detroit
 Suite 1100, 600 Renaissance Center,
 Detroit, 48243-1798
DTROTDD@international.gc.ca
<https://www.Detroit.gc.ca> Region: Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio

Minnesota – Minneapolis

The Consulate General of Canada, Minneapolis
 701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 900,
 Minneapolis, 55415-1899
mnpls-td@international.gc.ca
<http://www.Minneapolis.gc.ca>
 Region: Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

New York – New York

The Consulate General of Canada, New York
 466 Lexington Avenue, 20th Floor
 New York, 10017

cngnytd@international.gc.ca

<http://www.NewYork.gc.ca>

Region: New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware (& Bermuda)

EDC Market Entry Advisors

<https://www.edc.ca/en/guide/market-entry-advisors/country-info-united-states.html>

Export Development Canada. Register with EDC to get profiles and contact info of leading advisors in the USA, who can provide answers to market-related questions in their area of expertise. (Registration required.)

Export Help Hub

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tool/export-help-hub.html>

Export Development Canada. Online service answers to frequently asked questions about USA, Mexico and EU.

The Government of Ontario operates a network of International Trade and Investment Offices, to

- Profile Ontario products and services to foreign buyers and intermediaries;
- Provide data and intelligence on the economy, business environment and opportunities in key global markets;
- Organize pre-qualified meetings for Ontario companies with foreign business contacts and companies;
- Collaborate with Ontario and international partners to deliver incoming and outgoing export related missions.

More info at <https://www.investontario.ca/international-trade-and-investment-offices>

Illinois – Chicago

Mr. Earl Provost, Agent-General

earl.provost@international.gc.ca

Region: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin

New York – New York

Mr. Stefano Sanguigni, Senior Manager, Ontario Trade & Investment Office Headquarters

stefano.sanguigni@ontario.ca

Region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

Business organizations

Chamber of Commerce Directory

<https://www.uschamber.com/co/chambers>

US Chamber of Commerce. Links to local chambers of commerce by state and city.

AmCham Canada

<https://amchamcanada.ca/>

Webinars include e.g. 'Cross-Border Supply Chain and Shipping Challenges'

Canadian American Business Council [Washington DC]

info@cabc.co

<https://cabc.co/>

Canada Arizona Business Council

<https://canaz.net/>

Canada California Business Council

info@CABusinessCouncil.com

<http://cabusinesscouncil.com/>

MAPLE Business Council [Southern California]

info@maplecouncil.org

<https://www.maplecouncil.org/>

Canada-Colorado Association

info@canadacolorado.com

<https://www.canadacolorado.com/>

Canada-Florida Chamber of Commerce

info@canadafloridachamber.com

<https://canadafloridachamber.com/>

Canada US Business Council Chicago

office@cusbc.org

<https://www.cusbc.org/>

New England-Canada Business Council [Massachusetts]

necbc@comcast.net

<https://necbc.org/>

Canada – United States Business Association [Michigan]

info@cusbaonline.com

<https://www.cusbaonline.com/>

Business Council of Canada and Nevada

Richard@CanadaNevada.org

<http://www.canadanevada.org/>

Canadian Association of New York

info@canadanyc.com

<https://www.canadanyc.com/>

Canada-Texas Chamber of Commerce

info@canada-texas.com

<https://canada-texas.com/>

8. Regulations and standards

- 8a. Canadian export regulations
- 8b. Standards, non-tariff trade barriers
- 8. Intellectual property
- 8d. State business regulations & taxes

In this section are resources that cover a range of regulatory and standards requirements, from Canadian export paperwork to selected US tax obligations.

8a. Canadian export regulations

Exports must be reported to the Canadian government. Certain products require Canadian certification, inspection or export permits (for example, heat treated wood products require certification).

Exporting requirements – Checklist for exporting commercial goods from Canada

<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/export/checklist-controle-eng.html>

Canada Border Services Agency.

Guide to exporting commercial goods from Canada

<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/export/guide-eng.html>

Canada Border Services Agency. Contents: Exporting goods from Canada: Roles and responsibilities; Preparing to export; Determining if you need an export declaration and/or a permit/certificate/license; Classifying your exports; How to submit an export declaration; Examining your documents and goods prior to export; After your goods are exported.

Canadian Export Classification

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/65-209-X>

Statistics Canada. Canadian exporters or their agents must assign an Export HS Number on all export transactions; the manual lists all Export HS Numbers and their accompanying description.

Essentials of Exporting

<https://ciffa.com/virtual-workshops/>

Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association. This interactive workshop, intended for freight forwarders, provides an overview of the regulations, procedures, and documentary and data requirements governing exports from Canada, and highlights the current conditions for compliance.

8b. Standards, non-tariff trade barriers

Your product or service must meet US standards requirements. This section includes guides published by industry associations and national standards organizations. See also Section 9, below, which includes guides to customs obligations at the border, and business immigration regulations.

“Some trade barriers are evident across services industries. In most cases the restrictions are ostensibly legitimate but may have unintentional adverse effects on foreign services trade. Examples of

such barriers include... restrictions on the movement of personnel, including visa, work permit, and immigration restrictions; ... "buy national" requirements in government procurement; ...local employment and sourcing requirements...

Construction and Related Services

This category includes firms that are involved in the construction of both residential and commercial buildings; ... firms that install prefabricated structures; and firms that provide finishing work to structures. ...

...Firms that provide services in foreign markets usually require a presence in the country either temporarily or through foreign direct investment often in the form of a partnership with a local firm that has knowledge of local laws and other requirements. Because these firms compete by offering specialized skills, they frequently must be able to move highly skilled workers across borders.

... For quality control and safety reasons, governments require construction firms to meet technical standards and may also require developers to adhere to land use and environmental controls. Some restrictions might be applied ostensibly on a non-discriminatory basis but may be a greater burden to foreign suppliers, e.g., a requirement that a certain percentage of labor be locally sourced....

[Source: US Congressional Research Service, April 2009

[https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31579.html#_Toc226887289\]](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31579.html#_Toc226887289)

I-Codes

<https://www.iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/the-i-codes/>

International Code Council. Virtually all residential construction must adhere to comprehensive building codes and standards governed by local and state laws. Most US communities adopt the I-Codes for this purpose, amending them to reflect local construction practices, climate and geography.

AWI Standards Overview

<https://www.awinet.org/standards/standards-overview>

Architectural Woodwork Institute. Standards for care and storage, materials, finish carpentry/installation, and casework. Also **Architectural Wood Casework Standard** (ANSI/AWI 0641-2019) effective June 2020, updating Section 10 of North American Architectural Woodwork Standards.

A Guide to United States Furniture Compliance Requirements

<https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/ir/2016/NIST.IR.8119.pdf>

National Institute of Standards & Technology, US Department of Commerce. This Guide includes a broad range of mandatory and voluntary requirements for selling furniture in the United States. 34 pages, rev. June 2016.

Wood Standards

<https://www.astm.org/catalogsearch/result/?q=standards+for+wood+products>

American Society for Testing and Materials. Page includes standards for panel products and wood assemblies.

Forum on Construction Law – Membership Directory 2019

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/construction_industry_knowledge_base/2020/2019_directory_4_9_20.pdf

American Bar Association. Directory of construction lawyers, by state and city, including business contact information.

Design Professional's Guide to Construction Law

<https://www.americanbar.org/products/inv/book/411382127/>

American Bar Association, Forum on Construction Law. This book covers construction issues of any project and examines new issues in the design and construction industries. (\$)

8c. Intellectual property

Intellectual property rights are national in scope. This section includes guides to intellectual property (IP), such as designs, and resources for registering IP in the USA. Check also the US trademark database (TESS) to ensure that your current brand is not already registered to a competitor in the USA – checking first means you will avoid possibly costly lawsuits.

Protect IP Outside Canada

https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr04890.html

Canadian Intellectual Property Office.

Protecting Your IP in the United States

<https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/wr04353.html>

Canadian Intellectual Property Office. Covers Where is IP registered? Trademarks, patents, copyright; IP enforcement; Tips. 12 pages.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=eBook)

Export Development Canada. Contents: Understanding intellectual property – What IP is, benefits of protecting your IP, types of IP, where to get help; IP protection abroad – IP and your international business, free trade agreements and IP, dealing with IP infringement, do's and don'ts of international IP protection; and Profiting from IP assets – licensing your IP, due diligence and confidentiality, types of licensing agreements, finding licensing partners, elements of a licensing agreement, and selling your IP ownership. April 2021. Registration required.

Intellectual Property Protection

<https://fittfortrade.com/fittskills-lite-series>

Forum for International Trade Training. Free download from the FITTskills training course: What intellectual property (IP) risks exist in global markets, how to protect your IP in other countries, and how to identify the latest IP trends. (Registration required.)

Trademark Process [US]

<https://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/basics/trademark-process>

US Patent & Trademark Office. Written for US businesses. Topics include Get ready to apply; Prepare and submit your application; Work with the assigned USPTO examining attorney; Receive approval/denial of your application; Maintain your registration..

Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS)

<https://www.uspto.gov/trademarks-application-process/search-trademark-database>

US Patent and Trademark Office. Database of registered trademarks and designs, and prior pending applications, to find marks that may prevent registration due to a “likelihood of confusion” refusal. Read “TESS Tips” before searching.

Design Patent Application Guide

<https://www.uspto.gov/patents/basics/types-patent-applications/design-patent-application-guide>

US Patent and Trademark Office. In the USA, the IP protection for an industrial design (the Canadian term) is a Design Patent.

8d. State business regulations & taxes

Every US state requires that a company doing business within the state's borders but incorporated in another jurisdiction, state or country (e.g. Canada), must register with the state as a "foreign corporation". What "doing business" means will depend on each state's specific regulations. Mailing goods to a state may not be considered as doing business in the state, but taking orders or earning revenue in the state, or having a physical presence such as having an employee or an office there, are likely to require foreign registration in that state.

In addition to registering to transact business in the state, you must designate a registered agent who resides in the state to receive legal documents on your company's behalf. Once registered, you must report and pay state income and sales taxes, as well as comply with state employment tax filings.

Register Your Business

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/register-your-business>

US Small Business Administration. Part of a Business Guide written for US small businesses. How and where you need to register depends on your business structure and business location. Link from this section to business registration pages for each State, and to a separate section on getting federal and state tax ID numbers.

Registered Agent FAQs

<https://nprra.org/registered-agent-faqs>

National Public Records Research Association. See also **NPRRA – Member Company Search** at <https://nprra.memberclicks.net/member-company-search#/>. Search options include local county or city, services provided such as Business licensing and Registered agent services.

The resources described below focusses on US **income** and **sales** taxes as they affect small businesses.

Center for State Tax Policy

<https://taxfoundation.org/center/state-tax-policy/> Tax Foundation. Tax rates, ranks, and measures detailing each state's income tax, business tax, sales tax, and property tax systems.

Get Federal and State Tax ID Numbers

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/get-federal-state-tax-id-numbers>

US Small Business Administration. Part of a Business Guide written for US small businesses. Federal tax ID — also known as an Employer Identification Number (EIN) — is necessary for paying federal taxes. Visit the state's website to identify whether you need to get a state tax ID.

Definitive Guide to Sales and Use Tax

<https://www.avalara.com/learn/whitepapers/definitive-guide-to-sales-and-use-tax/>

Avalara Inc. Sections include: Overview of the sales and use tax landscape. Who owes it? Who collects it? Discussion of the complexities in sales and use tax laws. Who is exempt? Information about complying with sales and use tax. What steps can a company take? General sales tax rules by state. (Registration required.)

State and Local Sales Tax Rates, 2023

<https://taxfoundation.org/2022-sales-taxes/>

Tax Foundation. Table shows for each state, state sales tax rate and average local sales tax rates (city, county and municipal rates).

State-by-state guide to economic nexus laws

<https://www.avalara.com/us/en/learn/guides/state-by-state-click-through-nexus-guide.html>

Avalara Inc. Sales tax nexus determines whether a seller must collect and remit sales tax in the state. Originally about having a physical “presence” in the state, since 2018 states may also require sales tax to be collected based on sales or transaction volume, i.e. including e-commerce sales.

Sales Tax Nuances of Trade Show Attendance

<https://www.salestaxinstitute.com/resources/sales-tax-nuances-of-trade-show-attendance>

Sales Tax Institute. Trade show attendance in another state can create physical nexus and trigger sales tax obligations. Each state has its own rules that you should investigate well in advance, but despite varying rules, there are some common nuances across the states.

By state

Connecticut – Manage or Grow Your Business

<https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Business-Development/Manage-or-Grow-Your-Business> Connecticut

Dept of Economic & Community Development. Topics include CT Business registration requirements, Labor laws & legislation, Paying your business taxes, Review licensing requirements.

Vendors at Flea Markets, Craft Shows, Fairs, Etc. ... [Connecticut]

<https://portal.ct.gov/DRS/Sales-Tax/Vendors-at-Flea-Markets>

Connecticut Dept of Revenue Services.

Florida – Manufacturing: Furniture & Cabinets

<http://openmyfloridabusiness.gov/business/33/manufacturing-furniture-and-cabinets/>

State of Florida. This industry includes businesses primarily engaged in manufacturing or assembling furniture, kitchen and other cabinets, and furniture-related products. Page provides a checklist of the specific licenses, permits or registrations that may be required. See also

Foreign Corporation Forms at <https://dos.myflorida.com/sunbiz/forms/corporations/>

Sales and Use Tax on Trade Show and Convention Exhibitor [Florida]

https://floridarevenue.com/Forms_library/current/gt800040.pdf

Florida Dept of Revenue.

Illinois – Step By Step Guide

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/BeginHere/pages/stepbystepguide.aspx>

Illinois Dept of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. Topics include Business registration, Business tax registration, etc. See also **Guide for Qualifying Foreign Corporations** at https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/c216.pdf

Use Tax – Trade Show Appearances [Illinois]

<https://www2.illinois.gov/rev/research/legalinformation/regs/Documents/part150/150-802.pdf>

Illinois Dept of Revenue.

Indiana – Register a New Business

<https://www.in.gov/dor/business-tax/register-a-new-business/>

Indiana Dept of Revenue.

Sales tax [Indiana]

<https://www.in.gov/dor/files/new-small-business-handbook.pdf>

Indiana Dept of Revenue. Page 34 of Indiana Tax Handbook for New and Small Business Owners.

Iowa – Search Business Resources

<https://sos.iowa.gov/business/StartingABusiness/search.aspx>

Iowa Secretary of State & IASourceLink

Special Events – Sales/Use Tax Permits [Iowa]

<https://tax.iowa.gov/special-events-tax-permits>

Iowa Dept of Revenue.

Kansas – Business Entity FAQ

<https://sos.ks.gov/business/faq-business-entity.html>

Kansas Secretary of State.

Special Events, Craft Shows, Trade Shows [Kansas]

<https://www.ksrevenue.org/specialsalesevents.html>

Kansas Dept of Revenue.

Maine – Business

<https://www.maine.gov/portal/business/>

State of Maine. See also **Foreign Entities** at <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/foreign.html>

Business Guide to Sales, Use and Service Provider Tax [Maine]

<https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/sales-use-service-provider-tax/guidance-documents>

Maine Dept of Revenue.

Massachusetts – Business Resources

<https://www.mass.gov/topics/business-resources>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Topics include Business taxes, Starting your business, Businesses licenses & permits, Business laws & regulations. See also **Foreign Corporation Forms** at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cor/corpweb/corfor/forinf.htm>

Michigan – Business

<https://www.michiganbusiness.org/services/business-assistance/>

State of Michigan. Topics include Start a business, Licenses & permits, Taxes, Standards & regulations. See also **Foreign Corporation** at from Michigan Dept of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs.

<https://www.michigan.gov/lara/bureau-list/cscl/corps/corporations/types/foreign-corporation>

Sales and Use Tax FAQs [Michigan]

https://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0,4676,7-238-43519_43529-154427--,00.html

Michigan Dept of Treasury.

Minnesota – Business

<https://mn.gov/portal/business/>

State of Minnesota. Topics include Starting a business, Legal resources, Licenses & regulation.

See also **Foreign Corporation... Forms** at <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/business-liens/business-forms-fees/foreign-corporation-nonprofit-or-cooperative-forms/>

Physical Presence Nexus Standards [Minnesota]

<https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-09/RN%2019-03.pdf>

Minnesota Dept Revenue.

Missouri – 24/7 Missouri Business

<https://openforbiz.mo.gov/>

State of Missouri. Topics include Registration, Permits, Taxes.

Sales Tax at Special Events FAQs [Missouri]

<https://dor.mo.gov/faq/business/special.php>

Missouri Dept of Revenue.

Nebraska – How to Start Your Business in Nebraska

<https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/start-your-business/how-to-start-your-business-in-nebraska/>

Nebraska Dept of Economic Development.

Sales at Special Events [Nebraska]

<https://revenue.nebraska.gov/sites/revenue.nebraska.gov/files/doc/info/6-515.pdf>

Nebraska Dept of Revenue.

New Hampshire – Business

<https://www.nh.gov/business/>

State of New Hampshire. Topics include Starting a business, Business taxes, Licenses & permits.

New Hampshire does not have a general sales tax and does not allow sales tax at the local level.

New Jersey – Register Your Business

<https://business.nj.gov/pages/register-your-business>

New Jersey Office of Innovation. Form your business; Develop an alternate name (DBA); Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN); Register for New Jersey tax and employer purposes.

Promoter/Event Organizer & Vendor Q & A [New Jersey]

<https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/vendorpromoter.shtml>

New Jersey Treasury.

New York – Business Express

<https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/app/home>

State of New York. Use the Business Wizard to create a Custom Business Checklist to determine which New York State, as well as federal and local, requirements apply to your business.

Do I Need to Register for Sales Tax? [New York]

https://www.tax.ny.gov/pubs_and_bulls/tg_bulletins/st/do_i_need_to_register_for_sales_tax.htm

New York Dept of Taxation & Finance.

North Dakota – New Business Registration

<http://www.nd.gov/businessreg/>

State of North Dakota.

Special Events [North Dakota]

<https://www.nd.gov/tax/specialevents>

North Dakota Tax Commissioner.

Ohio – Business Road Map

<https://www.ohiosos.gov/businesses/information-on-starting-and-maintaining-a-business/starting-a-business/>

Ohio Secretary of State. Topics include Business registration, Obtaining a federal Employer Identification Number, Registering with the Ohio Department of Taxation.

Vendors: Sales Tax Laws in Ohio

https://tax.ohio.gov/static/sales_and_use/vendors_sales_tax_laws.pdf

Ohio Dept of Taxation.

Pennsylvania – PA Business One-Stop Shop

<https://business.pa.gov/>

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Registering Your Business pages include Local registration, permits & zoning as well as Home Improvement Contractor (HIC) registration.

See also **Foreign Business Corporations** at

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/BusinessCharities/Business/Resources/Pages/Foreign-Business-Corporations-.aspx%20>

Retailers Information [Pennsylvania]

<https://www.revenue.pa.gov/FormsandPublications/FormsforBusinesses/SUT/Documents/rev-717.pdf>

Pennsylvania Dept of Revenue.

Rhode Island – Information for Foreign Businesses

<https://www.sos.ri.gov/divisions/business-services/foreign-business>

Rhode Island Dept of State.

Promoters/Promotion of Shows [Rhode Island]

<http://www.tax.ri.gov/regulations/salestax/89-128.php>

Rhode Island Division of Taxation.

South Dakota – Business

<https://sd.gov/business.aspx>

State of South Dakota.

Sales & Use Tax [South Dakota]

<https://dor.sd.gov/businesses/taxes/sales-use-tax>

South Dakota Dept of Revenue.

Vermont – Business Resources

<https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/resources/business>

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development.

Sales and Use Tax: Getting Started [Vermont]

<https://tax.vermont.gov/business-and-corp/sales-and-use-tax/getting-started>

Vermont Dept of Taxes.

Wisconsin – Business

<https://www.wisconsin.gov/Pages/business.aspx>

State of Wisconsin.

Temporary Events [Wisconsin]

<https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/HTML/temevent.aspx>

Wisconsin Dept of Revenue.

9. Customs and logistics

9a. Customs

9b. Logistics

Customs and logistics are important topics at the culmination of your export venture – your logistics team is essential to the physical movement of your products to their destination.

9a. Customs

Importing Into the United States – A guide for commercial importers

<https://www.cbp.gov/document/publications/importing-united-states>

US Customs & Border Protection. Covers entry of goods, informed compliance, invoices, assessment of duty, classification and value, and special requirements. 211 pages.

HTS Search

<https://hts.usitc.gov/>

US International Trade Commission. Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the USA, provides the 8-digit tariff code for specific products. Search box provides access by keyword; click the View tab to browse for the full text of chapters e.g., Chapter 44 wood products and Chapter 94 includes furniture.

Find a Broker

<https://www.cbp.gov/contact/find-broker-by-port>

US Customs & Border Protection. Search for custom brokers by state, or click on a port to see a list of brokers for that port.

ATA Carnet

<https://www.e-ata.ca/default.aspx>

Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Internationally recognized customs document for the temporary importation of goods. The carnet is commonly used to bring commercial samples to commercial customers or trade shows, and by service companies to travel with their professional equipment.

ATA Carnet Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/programs-administration/entry-summary/ata-carnet-faqs>

US Customs & Border Protection.

Customs Rulings Online Search System (CROSS)

<https://rulings.cbp.gov/home>

US Customs & Border Protection. The binding ruling program enables importers to get binding pre-entry classification decisions, and guidance on marking of country-of-origin requirements, prior to importing a product. CROSS is a database of such rulings, searched by keyword. Examples: 'The tariff classification of a speaker cabinet from Canada' and 'The tariff classification of hardwood stair nosing and stair treads from Canada'.

Crossing Borders & Managing Customs

<https://fittfortrade.com/fittskills-lite-series>

Forum for International Trade Training. Free download from the FITT skills training course: How customs and border security agencies function, what steps you need to follow to comply with all customs regulations, protocols and programs, and how customs brokers can help.

9b. Logistics

Entering the U.S. Market: Logistics and Best Practices

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (choose Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. The white paper includes an overview of the rules of doing business with the United States, from compliance to trade agreements; how to use customs brokers and freight forwarders; how to set up a presence in the U.S.; various ways to obtain financing; and how using credit insurance can help your business. 22 pages, 2016 (registration required).

Incoterms® Rules

<https://iccwbo.org/resources-for-business/incoterms-rules/>

International Chamber of Commerce. Incoterms® are rules that define the responsibilities of sellers and buyers for the delivery of goods under sales contracts and provide a common terminology and descriptions for international shipments. They indicate where the exporter's responsibility ends and the importer's responsibility begins with respect to ownership and insurance of the goods. Summary charts are available from many customs brokers.

Understanding Incoterms

<https://www.edc.ca/en/tradeinsights.html> (click on Format=Guide)

Export Development Canada. Why Incoterms are important to understand and use; What Incoterms do and don't cover; The most up-to-date Incoterms; How to reduce your export risk; A short history of Incoterms; and Resources to help you use Incoterms effectively. April 2021 (registration required).

ATA Carnet

<https://chamber.ca/programs-services/>

Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Internationally recognized customs document for the temporary importation of goods. The carnet is commonly used to bring commercial samples to potential customers or trade fairs and also by service companies to travel with their professional equipment.

CIFFA – Virtual Workshops

<https://ciffa.com/virtual-workshops/>

Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association. CIFFA offers web-based training on a regular basis throughout the year, on topics such as Incoterms® 2020, Letters of Credit, and The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

CIFFA – Membership Directory [Canada]

<https://ciffa.com/member-directory/>

Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association. Directory of 250+ freight forwarders who are members of CIFFA. Click on the Toolbox tab for CIFFA **Standard Trading Conditions** to see the typical clauses in a contract between a freight forward and their customer.

Warehousing Service Providers Directory [USA]

<https://www.joc.com/special-topics/directories>

Journal of Commerce. Directory of nearly 200 warehousing service providers across the United States to help beneficial cargo owners find warehousing capacity as needed. Annual.

Cross Border Movement of Business Persons

<https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/nafta-alena/fta-ale/temp05-1.aspx?lang=eng>

Global Affairs Canada. Subtitle: Temporary Entry into the United States and Mexico under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, A guide for Canadian business persons. Sections: Business visitors, Professionals, Intra-company transferees, Traders and investors, Non-CUSMA Temporary Entry Visas in the United States.

Temporary Entry Provisions between the United States, Canada, and Mexico in USMCA

<https://eiglaw.com/news/temporary-entry-provisions-between-the-united-states-canada-and-mexico-in-usmca/>

Erickson Immigration Group. Few changes appear in Chapter 16 (Temporary Entry), which replace the same chapter of NAFTA. Reportedly, US negotiators sought to restrict or eliminate Chapter 16, while Canadian negotiators sought to expand and modernize the list of qualifying professionals. Ultimately, the status quo emerged as the compromise.

Find a Business Immigration Lawyer

<https://lawyers.usnews.com/lawyers/business-immigration>

US News & World Report. 86 lawyers, can be filtered by US city.

Communitech Outposts

<https://www.communitech.ca/how-we-help/outposts.html>

Communitech. An “employer-of-record” service assisting Canadian companies across all sectors looking to hire talent located in major foreign markets including the US.

New Exporters to Border States

<https://www.ontario.ca/tradecalendar/exporton-new-exporters-border-states-nebs-program>

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. A half-day seminar, providing expert briefings on practical issues such as U.S. customs procedures and documentation requirements, the identification and management of agents and distributors; warehouse distribution fulfillment options, banking, corporate and other legal considerations, federal and state tax as well as business immigration requirements. (\$)

Appendix: Tradeshows by date

Global Connect Business Summit

2023 May 11

Virtual

<https://nkba.org/globalconnect/events/>

International Contemporary Furniture Fair

2023 April 24

New York

<https://icff.com/>

2023 May 20-23

National Restaurant Association Show

Chicago, IL

<https://www.nationalrestaurantshow.com/>

NeoCon

2023 June 12-14

Chicago

<https://neocon.com/>

Hotec Design North America

2023 June 19-22

Scottsdale, AZ

<https://www.hotecdesign.com/>

AIA Conference on Architecture

2023 June 7-10

San Francisco, CA

<https://conferenceonarchitecture.com/>

High Point Market

2023 Oct. 14-18

High Point, NC

<https://www.highpointmarket.org/>

Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show

2023 Nov. 8-9

Orlando, FL

<https://www.flrestaurantandlodgingshow.com/>

Greenbuild International Conference & Expo

2023 September 26-29

Washington, DC

<https://informaconnect.com/greenbuild/>

BD/NY – Boutique Design New York

2023 Nov 12-13

New York, NY <https://bdny.com/>

ArchitectureBoston Expo (ABX)

2023 - Cancelled

Boston, MA

<https://www.abexpo.com/en/home.html>

The Buildings Show

2023 Nov. 29 – Dec. 1

Toronto, ON

<https://www.thebuildingsshow.com/en/home.html>**ICSC+CENTERBUILD**

2023 May 11

Virtual

<https://https://www.icsc.com/attend-and-learn/events/details/las-vegas-know-before-you-go-webinar-2023>**NRF Retail's BIG Show**

2024 Jan. 14-16

New York, NY

<https://virtualbigshow.nrf.com/>**National Hardware Show**

2024 Mar. 26-28

Las Vegas, NV

<https://www.nationalhardwareshow.com/en-us.html>**Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS)**

2024 Feb. 27-29

Las Vegas, NV

<https://https://kbis.com/show/about-the-show/>**NAHB International Builders' Show**

2024 Feb. 27-29

Las Vegas, NV

<https://www.buildersshow.com/>**International Restaurant & Foodservice Show**

2024 March 3-5

New York, NY

<https://www.internationalrestaurantny.com/>**JLC LIVE New England**

2023 March 24-25

Providence, RI

<https://ne.jlclive.com/en/home.html>**HD Expo**

2024 May 2-4

2025 TBD

Las Vegas, NV

<https://hdexpo.com/>**Closets Conference & Expo / Wood Pro Expo**

2023 April 12 - 14

West Palm Beach, CA

<https://www.woodworkingnetwork.com/events/cabinets-closets-conference-expo>

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