

*" CMTC's exporting services were critical to helping our company strategically enter international markets and increase sales by more than \$600,000. Exporting is now a crucial component of our organization's strategic growth." Abel Garcia, VP of International Sales*

## EXPORTING TO MORE THAN 31 COUNTRIES DUE TO THE EXPORTECH™ PROGRAM

**ABOUT.** Apperson is a national leader providing testing and scoring solutions for the education community. Founded in 1955, the organization offers DataLink test scanners, answer sheets and reporting software for K-12 and higher education. Their products and software immediately captures data from paper assessments and tests, saving educators' time while providing useful, relevant information. The company additionally supports education institutions with a full range of custom services for assessment, survey and other data collection and printing needs. Based in Cerritos, California, Apperson remains family-owned and has 125 employees.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In 2012, the company had reached a crossroads. While their sales were good, they weren't accelerating to new levels. The organization believed they had hit their peak with domestic sales and wanted to develop a new growth strategy. Management was interested in expanding their market share through exporting. The company had engaged in some international business before with a handful of countries such as Mexico, Malaysia and Australia, but there was no official strategy or organized exporting plan. Apperson would simply respond to international inquiries upon request, as opposed to actively pursuing opportunities. The company was seeking strategic guidance to identify new target countries and customers.

**MEP'S ROLE.** Apperson connected with CMTC (a NIST MEP affiliate) and began participating in the ExporTech™ program. ExporTech™ is designed to assist U.S. manufacturers with creating an accelerated and strategic exporting plan. As part of the program, C-level executives from companies attend three workshops over the course of three months with individualized coaching between sessions. All workshops are delivered by multiple exporting experts. Workshops are based on proven methodologies and real-life success stories.

Apperson's management team began attending in December 2012. During the first session, recognized exporting leaders discussed best practices and how manufacturers can overcome the typical challenges and misconceptions associated with exporting. Guidebooks and worksheets were provided to share information about topics such as logistics, regulations, intellectual property and finance.

The second session featured successful exporting executives who came to share their real life experiences. Participants from Apperson found this particularly helpful because it enabled them to ask direct, candid questions to California exporters. This provided a more practical learning experience for the attendees. One presenter discussed specifics about freight issues while another talked about how to navigate possible legal quandaries. Apperson remarked that the experts and featured exporters were very supportive and accessible. This input enabled Apperson to develop their exporting plan.

The final session was a "hands-on workshop" where management presented their exporting plan to a panel of experts for evaluation and assessment. The experts provided specific recommendations for improvement. The program was completed in February 2013 and Apperson left with a validated strategic export plan required to enter new markets.

Upon the conclusion of ExporTech™, Apperson was able to accelerate their international outreach efforts. The company used their plan, new contacts, tools and ideas to improve



## RESULTS



Now working with over **31** countries



**\$233,000** in increased international sales

## NEXT STEPS



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**Creating Solutions**

business with their current international business partners and formulate connections with new countries. For example, the organization decided to re-launch one of their programs in Spanish to make it more marketable overseas.

Apperson now has more than 12 overseas distributors and has expanded to new countries including Guatemala, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines. They are currently speaking with contacts in 10 additional countries and anticipate launching more endeavors. Apperson is also nearing completion of the required certification to conduct business with the European (EU) Market where there is great potential for growth. As a result, Apperson's projected annual international sales have significantly increased.