

# SPEEDING TO NEW GLOBAL MARKETS

by Erin Butler,  
U.S. Commercial Service

Stewart Dahlberg just made the quickest export sale of his life. He's the Export Sales Manager for J.D. Streett & Company, a small auto lubricant and antifreeze manufacturer in Maryland Heights, Missouri.

He had spent months trying to gain a foothold in Southeast Asia, but he closed an \$11,000 deal with a buyer in Vietnam in only 60 days — start to finish.

Dahlberg credits the new e-marketplace BuyUSA.com with finding him his buyer — and accelerating results. He spent \$400 several months ago to list J.D. Streett on the site; he confesses now to a certain skepticism when it comes to online selling. "I was a critic," he says. And now? "It works," he says.

"It was 60 days from when I received the solicitation via BuyUSA to having a confirmed letter of credit on my desk." The sale was conducted entirely online, except for the product catalog Dahlberg shipped to Vietnam. Soon Dahlberg will be able to post his catalog on BuyUSA too.

A joint effort of the U.S. Commercial Service and IBM Corporation, BuyUSA.com is an e-marketplace with advantage — a worldwide network of offices and expertise. The service offers online access to U.S. trade specialists who can assist buyers and sellers with exporting issues.

J.D. Streett & Company has been around for over 100 years. Dahlberg has only been there for 18 months, but in

that time he's seen the company's export sales grow by 40 percent and he now services 11 export markets. He believes that the company's quick turnaround time, expertise in custom design and willingness to supply smaller runs sets them apart in the marketplace.

His counsel to other small exporters? "Take every inquiry seriously and play it for everything its worth. The least-serious looking contact can turn out to be the best one," he says. Although he was initially surprised to receive an inquiry from Vietnam, Dahlberg pursued the lead and was pleased to see it check out. He's after long-term relationships and is confident that this buyer could become an excellent distributor.

Of course, developing markets like Vietnam come with their own set of challenges. Dahlberg says common sense is the best precaution, but also advises small exporters to check out potential buyers and steer clear of any with suspicious backgrounds. He does this with a quick call to Kristi Wiggins at the St. Louis Export Assistance Center, part of the U.S. Commercial Service's network. International trade specialists like Wiggins have colleagues at embassies and consulates worldwide who can quickly determine who's reputable and who may not be saving U.S. exporters time and heartburn. Dahlberg has worked with Wiggins since his first day at J.D. Streett.

More speed to market means more sales for J.D. Streett & Company. With BuyUSA.com, this one-hundred-year-old has never moved faster. ■



Fast friends: Kristi Wiggins and Randall LaBounty of the St. Louis Export Assistance Center with Stewart Dahlberg of J.D. Streett & Company and John Blum of the Small Business Administration.