

Complete Guide To Import/Export

How To Start Your Own Import/Export Business

Week #4

Choosing Your Product

“When the product is right, you don’t have to be a great marketer.”

— Lee Iacocca

Read Chapter Eight before you begin this week’s tasks.

Task 1: Choose the right product

Choosing the right products will be the key to your success in the import/export business. The following checklist highlights seven things to consider, when identifying products that you can successfully import.

1. Identify marketable items that were made overseas and have not previously been sold in the U.S.
2. Contact trade associations in other countries to get information about possible import products.
3. Look for new and innovative items made in other countries by visiting those countries or reading advertisements in their magazines.
4. Join import/export associations, read their newsletters, and, if possible, attend their meetings.
5. Identify products that have been successfully imported to other countries but have not been imported to the U.S.
6. Ask well-traveled friends and family about products they have come across that could be successful in the U.S. market.
7. Ask potential customers whether they would consider buying the type of goods you wish to import.

Task 2: Pick five products

Now is the time to finalize your research and pick five products that you plan to import or export.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

At this stage you should fill out the Product Information Sheet on the next page.

Task: Critical questions

Choosing your products is a crucial step in the process of setting up an import/export business. Make sure to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each product to ensure that the products you choose will work for you. The following questions are designed to help you with this thought process.

- Can your product be imported/exported?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- Do you have the necessary cash to buy the products outright or are you using borrowed money to acquire the inventory?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- How much will it cost to ship these products? If you add on the costs of shipping and a sizable profit, will they be at a marketable price?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- Will there be any additional expenses, such as repairs, if the goods are not in salable condition/working order?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- Does the product work outside its country of origin? (If you import an electrical item, it may need a new plug or adapter to run. Other relevant questions could be, is it compatible with other U.S. accessories and products? And are the instructions in the right language?)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- Do you have room to store the merchandise while you are waiting for customers to purchase the products?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now that you have decided on the product(s) you are going to import/export, plug this information into the business plan template that you created in Week 2.

It's also a good time now to apply for permits and the other documentation you'll need to bring back the products you've chosen. Keep a record of these permits and documentation in the space provided below.

Now that you have finally chosen your product, it's time to find a source. Next week we'll discuss the essential steps for finding products, and give you valuable resources to help you find products in Ecuador, Thailand, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, and more.

Read **Chapter Nine** of *How To Start Your Own Import/Export Business* to prepare for next week's tasks.

Sincerely,



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Import/Export Correspondent, *International Living*