



Driving on the Right Side of the Road

Ambulance Maker Uses ExporTech™ to Expand Markets and Profits Overseas

If your life has ever been saved by an ambulance, you can probably thank American Emergency Vehicles (AEV) for the ride. Consistently rated the number one producer of ambulances in North America by the industry organization the Ambulance Manufacturers Division, AEV manufactures 25 percent of all domestic ambulances, nearly 1,000 per year.

Recently, AEV decided to expand its reach beyond US shores by exporting. With that decision emerged the need for a partner with a solid reputation who could explain the intricacies of exporting. AEV turned to NC State University, the Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) and ExporTech™.

On The Verge of Shutdown

“A couple of years ago when the market started dropping down 30 percent, finding buyers for our products was difficult,” says AEV sales manager, Randy Barr. “We were literally to the point of having to shut some of our lines down due to a lack of activity.”

Then, an IES ExporTech™ flyer found its way into management’s hands, presenting the company with a new way to increase business.

“Our goal with ExporTech™ was to try to become comfortable with export, to create contacts in foreign markets and for our representation in those markets to become stronger,” says Barr. “Companies like ours cannot survive without downsizing if they’re not exporting.”

American Emergency Vehicles Challenge

At a time when domestic demand was declining, management was determined to preserve jobs on current production lines. To do that, AEV needed to break into new markets.

IES Solution ExporTech™

Benefits

Millions of dollars in new global sales has allowed AEV not only to preserve jobs, but to expand by creating an outside sales group.

AEV hopes to increase export market share by 10 to 20 percent in the next three years.

The ExporTech™ Way

ExporTech™ is a “how to” program designed to help companies enter or expand in global markets. Manufacturers use it to develop a customized international growth plan, moving quickly beyond planning into actual export sales.

Barr says that his company not only gained the new contacts it sought, but it also discovered state resources that facilitated meetings overseas.

“We came out with a comfort level we didn’t have before in how to ship, how to get paid, all things vital to understand when exporting,” says Barr.

For AEV, the benefits of ExporTech™ were both immediate and far reaching.

“The business we gained from expanding into export allows us to keep the people we have. That’s 25 to 30 jobs we’re able to save per line,” says Barr. “And if business continues to grow, and we open a new production line, that’s another 30 jobs created.”

Through its network of international representatives, AEV now exports to Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Switzerland and Kuwait. Agreements in these countries have netted the company millions in additional sales.

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—Randy Barr, Sales Manager,
American Emergency Vehicles

This market expansion has resulted in AEV developing an outside sales group to handle the ongoing move into overseas markets. Barr foresees AEV increasing its export market share by 10 to 20 percent in the next three years.

Barr is optimistic about AEV’s future in ambulance export, and he offers a message to other companies seeking to go where his company has gone.

“To succeed in export, you have to broaden your mind,” he says. “You can’t go into it thinking about products you build now. You have to look and see what’s out there and fill that need.”

NC STATE

Industry Expansion Solutions

Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) is the engineering-based, solutions-driven, client-focused unit of NC State University. Our broad portfolio and deep industry expertise help organizations grow, innovate and prosper. Our extensive partnerships with business, industry, education and government generate a unique culture of collaboration that provides access to cutting-edge expertise, research, and technology.

Grow Your Business With Confidence. Contact Us Today.

Visit our website: www.ies.ncsu.edu to find the IES Regional Manager nearest you. Contact us by phone: 1.800.227.0264 or email: iesservices@ncsu.edu

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