



Export Team: Communication & Customer Relationships

Standard = An artisan enterprise has a person or team responsible for export sales and customer service and they communicate in a timely and thorough manner.

A person or team responsible for export sales with excellent communication and customer relationship management skills is critical for developing sustainable and profitable export sales.

What is good communication?

- ✓ Timely: respond in 24-48 hours
- ✓ Thorough: answers all questions
- ✓ Proactive: communicates problems or delays quickly
- ✓ Problem-Solving: collaborates to find solution to problems or delays

Good customer relationship management will cultivate customers through the three phases of developing a relationship with an export customer:

Three Phases	Objective	What happens?
1. Get to Know You	Establish good communication & determine you are a good match to work together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet customer (trade show, online, showroom); - Present export catalogue - Learn about the customers' business - Ensure customer matches your target profile in terms of price, volume, design and terms - Fulfill sample orders or initiate custom designs
2. Prove the Product	First order is successfully fulfilled and sells well to end consumer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First order ships on time; quality is consistent with original samples and consistent within the order; any delays or problems are communicated quickly and solutions are found; shipping costs are reasonable and as expected; buyer pays on time. - Products sell to end-consumer successfully - New products developed
3. Reach Profitability	Repeat orders reach optimal volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeat orders continue to grow in size/volume - Communication continues to go well - Relationships becomes profitable for both buyer & seller

Timeline for Three Phases = 6-18 months

Activity

- 1 Who is responsible for export sales at your company?
- 2 What are their strengths? What are their weaknesses?
- 3 How many customers do they manage?