

Podcast Script for BizWiseTV

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There's an upside to the weakening dollar: your products may now be competitively priced for export. How do you become a first-time exporter of retail goods? Find out how, on BizWise.

Welcome to this BizWise podcast on the Cisco Interaction Network, I'm Jess Wells. Our guest today is Mark Henricks, a freelance writer and book author whose work has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, National Geographic World and scores of other publications. He's also written an ongoing column on international business and we're here to speak with him about going global with an internet retail venture.

Mark, welcome.

1. Mark, you've suggested that for an internet retailer, starting to export is pretty straight forward. Give us the first few steps:
 - a. Examine your website: make sure it's clear that you export. Search engine optimization will start bringing you global business.
2. Do you need to translate your web site?
3. What about shipping? Are you limited then to DHL?
 - a. USPS etc.
 - b. Tracking numbers on everything
 - c. Make sure you have a high value to weight ratio: that's key. Don't want to ship furniture
4. What about customs?
 - a. Problematic, however, because you never know how long something is going to take to get through customs, which can be a problem for holiday shopping
5. So I suppose you should put some sort of disclaimer on your web site for international shipping may take up to 4 weeks or something?
6. Seems to me that the upside to that is that you could find out about international holidays and use those to direct your marketing,
 - a. which can reduce the seasonality that dogs so many businesses.
7. I would think you could also change the geography of your Google adword buys to mention those international holidays.
8. Let's talk about getting paid
 - a. PayPal now accepts credit cards; don't have to change that process
9. Should you wait for the payment to clear before shipping?

10. Does shipping individual retail products overseas change your business liability? Will you be sued by a Dutch mother who finds a plastic in your product that the Dutch won't allow? That sort of thing...

So, to summarize:

- Make sure you have a strong value to weight ratio
- Be explicit on your Web site
- Get your customs paperwork and your shipping tracking in order
- Rely on your PayPal and credit card payment systems
- Do what you can to leverage international holidays to smooth out the seasonality of the retail business.

Mark Henricks, thanks so much for being here.

That's been our podcast on the Cisco Interaction Network. Get yourself an RSS feed because we've got new podcasts every week, focused on business opportunities and the technologies behind them. I'm Jess Wells, for BizWise. Thanks for joining us.