

UKTI/NW/051/07

29 June 2007

## **INNOVATIVE CHESHIRE COMPANY TURNS IDEAS INTO EXPORT SUCCESS**

A CHESHIRE-BASED innovation consultancy has increased its geographical base by more than 300 per cent - with help from UK Trade & Investment.

Coaching Ideas near Frodsham has increased turnover by more than 530 per cent and has significantly broadened its customer base after signing up for Passport to Export – UKTI’s flagship programme for new and inexperienced exporters.

Ian Walton, Coaching Ideas managing director had already realised that exporting would be the secret of success for his consultancy and that steered him toward Passport to Export and an introduction to one of UKTI’s International Trade Advisors.

In the past two years he has widened his client base from three overseas markets to 20 separate projects in 10 foreign markets across Europe and Asia. Exports now account for almost 70per cent of his annual turnover.

Coaching Ideas provides companies with creativity techniques to generate and develop new ideas and bring them to the market. Its current client base is medium to large global consumer goods companies operating in the home, personal care and food sectors.

Its innovative consultancy includes initial idea generation for new products and services, developing new consumer insights, project planning innovation management, creative team working and coaching.

Dr Walton said: “I now work with some very large companies including Pepsi International, Tesco in Thailand and Unilever. I had a three-year plan and I have reached the third-year target already - in my second year of business – and now have two associates to help on larger international projects.

“Passport to Export helped on a number of levels. My International Trade Advisor Judith Kyle was very supportive and very pragmatic and she always had the best interest of my business at heart.

“It was having that initial step of confidence which was so important – it really is crucial.

“One very early part of the training which I found extremely helpful was the concept of tailoring my initial approach to the interests of potential clients.

“The practical support helped me realise the full importance of my website – it also made aware of the importance of keeping it fresh and up to date and also illustrated ways of making it more prominent.

“The financial help was also extremely important. Being able to attend the relevant, seminars, conferences and trade missions and meet the people I needed to see was crucial in building the network. It is surprising just how those contacts develop.”

Financial support allowed Ian to attend an international conference in Switzerland in October, which directly resulted in a booking for a team-working workshop in Belgium. The corporation tax on profit from this alone will return the UKTI investment.

Dr Walton said that the Passport to Export programme had also made him realise he was not on his own in taking the initial steps toward expanding exports.

“You meet others with the same problems and similar issues. You are able to support each other, share advice and offer your comments on how you approached the problems. And all this is done in a supportive and non-competitive way. People there are not out to look smart and that is encouraging,” he added.

Coaching Ideas is now looking to expand into more European markets with France and Germany on the radar.

UKTI’s International Trade Advisor Judith Kyle said:

“Ian had already realised the importance of exporting for his business and I could immediately tell he was keen to increase his confidence.

“Coaching Ideas target market is medium to large global companies.

“The importance of his web-site is crucial to his business and helping him to improve this key exporting tool was clearly an issue we both wanted to address.

“We have identified a number of seminars and trade missions relevant to his business and he has taken good advantage of the opportunities. Having already surpassed his second year target the future looks very positive for Ian and Coaching Ideas,” she added.

**Notes to editors:**

1. For further information on UK Trade & Investment services, contact the North West International Trade Team Tel: 0845 603 7053 E-mail: [info@uktinorthwest.co.uk](mailto:info@uktinorthwest.co.uk)
2. To interview Ian Walton or Judith Kyle please contact Jo Kingston on 0161 952 4510. The company website can be viewed at [www.coaching-ideas.com/](http://www.coaching-ideas.com/)
3. UK Trade & Investment is the government organisation that provides integrated support services for UK companies engaged in overseas trade and foreign enterprises seeking to locate in the UK. It brings together the work of teams in British embassies and FCO posts overseas and government departments across Whitehall. In England, international trade support is coordinated by nine International Trade Directors working in partnership with each Regional Development Agency. UK Trade & Investment services are delivered locally through a network of International Trade Teams.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF UKTI BY GOVERNMENT NEWS NETWORK  
NORTH WEST.  
CONTACT: JO KINGSTON 0161 952 4510**