

Grow Factor Export



W. Leonhard Poley, consultant focussing on export

The return of the year are good times to set the basics to develop your business for the next decade. The global economy is now stabilizing or growing on a low level (except China and few new industrial countries).

Several uncertain factors may influence your future business opportunities.

My proposal: Use the actual period to prepare your export business for the next economic upswing

To be ready for the next boom of your export business

- Check chances and risks of the export markets
- Reorganize the ranking of your export countries
- Develop your export sales organisation according the new export market ranking

Do not wait for the boom, prepare your export business now according to the long-term structural changes

Companies tend to overestimate the sales opportunities in recent boom markets like China and the oil-producing countries. Experience teaches us that only very few newcomers benefit from boom phase. The business in the boom period is often in the hands of companies which started to establish contacts and to build their sales organisations in a very early phase.

My proposal: Go with the Mega-Trend - recognize the medium and long-term structural changes in world trade at an early stage and be ready early enough for the boom.

Do not leave the competitive comparison to competitors or customers

Although this is already more than a decade ago, I remember an industrial plant which my client offered to a company in an emerging market. The potential customer wrote: I very much appreciate the German quality work, but the extra cost of 18 % compared to a competitor from Far East, I don't want to pay, especially since both offers are very similar. Opposite to Far East products many European manufacturers of investment goods may face this situation.

The detailed analysis showed very well that there were differences in the construction:

So e.g. the German manufacturer used high-quality steels, the propulsion engine was more powerful, the safety factors were higher etc. etc.

But those factors were not adequately presented by the offer nor in the negotiations. The experts of the manufacturer told that this is the "state of art" and therefore it was not highlighted. Following the local agent was informed and trained to sell these benefits.

My proposal: Check your proposal from the perspective of the customer. Do not sell only products and equipment, but also low operating costs, low material/energy consumption, high availability of equipment, reliability, design, etc.

New spirit of your sales team

Success is closely linked with the sales team: Good sellers increase the success. Changing or re-motivate the sellers? Develop new ideas together with the sales team or hire new sales representatives or agents?

My proposal: If the renewal of the motivation by training and salary benefits does not give any impulses to boost sales results/turnover, change your sales team. Do not necessarily recruit the same profile, but fit the profile into the current situation, maybe by new customers, new products, new applications etc.

by W. Leonhard Poley