

Press release: Bottles of success for water filter business

It's World Environment Day and as countries around the world look for ways to tackle some of our biggest environmental issues, one company is leading the way in clean drinking water. Water-to-Go, a Bedfordshire-based filtered water bottle manufacturer has secured new distributors in New Zealand and Australia for its water filtration bottles.

Founder Dave Shanks created new nano technology filters, after advancing technology that was originally developed for NASA, which can filter out in excess of 99.9% of microbiological contaminants. The filter sits beneath the drinking spout of the reusable, recyclable BPA free bottles. He then saw the opportunity to export the technology globally, starting with Sweden and France.

The company now exports to 55 countries, including Mexico and India. The business plans to launch in the USA this year and already has had all materials approved by the FDA. In 2018, the company launched in China, where the demand is high and the distributor in Shanghai, HH (Shanghai) Environment Technology Co., Ltd., continues to grow the business across China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

This came about with help from an International Trade Adviser from the Department for International Trade (DIT) who was able to make in-market introductions to help with a launch event.

The business formed relationships with partners in China, which is making a big push for environmental change, particularly as it hosts the Beijing Expo 2019 where DIT is leading the UK's participation. The UK is showcasing its capabilities in the green technology space, focusing on climate management and building a more sustainable future at the expo.

Exporting is a significant part of the company's success and was considered from the very beginning when Shanks realised there was an opportunity to replace single-use plastic water bottles around the world, and find a way to ensure clean quality water.

Looking to the future, the business is searching out partners in sub-Saharan Africa where the need and demand for technology like this is high.

Dave Shanks, director and founder of Water-to-Go said:

If you can talk to distributors regularly, build the relationships in the same way as you would a UK client, and think of them as an extension of your salesforce, then you will find success.

Our trade adviser has been invaluable and stays in constant contact with us, offering support and expertise when we are looking at new

markets. When we first went to China, DIT put us in contact with CBBC for our launch event, and this has helped our business grow in market.

We'll continue to work with regions where the need and demand is highest and will work closely with our International Trade Advisor to reach into those new markets.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

DIT helps businesses export, drives inward and outward investment, negotiates market access and trade deals, and champions free trade.

We are an international economic department, responsible for:

- supporting and encouraging UK businesses to drive sustainable international growth
- ensuring the UK remains a leading destination for international investment and maintains its number one position for international investment stock in Europe
- opening markets, building a trade framework with new and existing partners which is free and fair
- using trade and investment to underpin the government's agenda for a Global Britain and its ambitions for prosperity, stability and security worldwide.

Latest statistics from the ONS show UK firms sold more overseas in the 2018/19 financial year, £639.9 billion, than at any time since records began. The UK has now achieved 36 consecutive months of export growth on an annual rolling basis.

Separate OECD data shows UK exports grew faster than Germany, France and Italy between 2016 and 2018. Export Strategy

- The Export Strategy sets out how the government will support businesses of all sizes to make the most of the opportunities presented by markets around the world.
- A government-led collaboration with business, developed after extensive engagement with a range of UK firms – the Strategy sets a new ambition from government to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%.

- It presents a streamlined and targeted offer for businesses of all sizes, set to raise productivity, boost wages and protect employment across the UK.
- This is just the start – in the months ahead DIT will lead work across government to assess what more we can do to support UK business to achieve a step change in their exporting performance.