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Survey results show opportunities in global marketplace

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POSTED: 6:00 PM, Sep 22, 2014

UPDATED: 5:16 PM, Sep 25, 2014

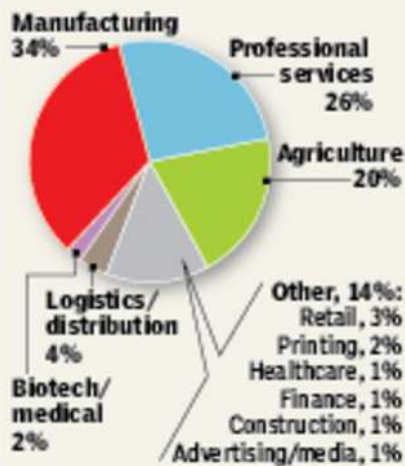
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EXPORTING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Industry sectors



Top 15 export countries by number of firms

Canada	43
Australia	25
Japan	22
China	21
Germany	17
Mexico	12
United Kingdom	15
England	11
France	8
India	7
Singapore	7
Spain	7
Taiwan	7
Italy	5
Brazil	4

Source: Northern California Center of Excellence report

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REDDING, California - The days of all business being local are over.

That was the message Wednesday during a two-hour presentation that revealed the results of an exporting survey of companies in Shasta and nine other counties north of Sacramento.

More than 90 percent of the world's customers live outside the United States and 80 percent of the global purchasing power resides outside this country.

"To survive as a company I think you really have to think global," said Brian Peck, deputy director of international affairs and business development for the governor's office. Peck sat on the panel that discussed the survey at the Redding City Hall Community Room.

Leah Goold-Haws of the California Community Colleges' Doing What Matters for Jobs & the Economy initiative spearheaded the survey, which got responses from 244 businesses, including 46 in Shasta County. Based in Redding, Goold-Haws also is deputy sector navigator for the Global Trade & Logistics Far Northern region.

She said the results of the survey, which she says is the first of its kind, will be used to identify the level of export activity and how to increase it.

"It will provide us a window to what are the skill sets, resources and what businesses are up against and how we can address that and assist them in export activity," Goold-Haws said.

Two out three businesses said they export goods to fewer than five countries. Canada was the top country as nearly 20 percent of the companies surveyed said they do business with Canadian customers. Australia, Japan, China and Germany rounded out the top five.

Each year, businesses from the 10 counties represented in the survey send out \$300 million in products to other countries.

In Redding, companies such as Ted Pella Inc. and Opt-Test compete in the global arena. Ted Pella makes instruments that serve laboratories that use microscopy equipment. Opt-Test builds, among other things, electronic assemblies for people who make semiconductors.

But competing globally has its challenges. Expensive shipping, confusing trade regulations and the time commitment were the top three obstacles, according to the survey.

Shasta College recently started offering an online international business course that helps students gain knowledge in international trade, instructor Scott Gordon said Thursday. Gordon also sat on the panel.

“We used to seek new hires with computer skills,” Gordon said. “But in reality, once you put up that website, you are in the global marketplace.”

Businesses that have the skills to compete locally will prosper, Gordon said, and those that don’t will continue to struggle.

“It’s an opportunity for growth,” Gordon said of exports.

But it’s a balancing act.

While officials work to help local companies grow their market share, they are also wooing foreign companies who want to set up shop here.

Peck of the governor’s office said he has been working with the Economic Development Corp. of Shasta County on two prospects for Stillwater Business Park in Redding. One is a Chinese food company.

“That is the free market and that is how it works,” Peck said. “We are in a global market whether we like it or not and we need to enhance the competitiveness of our companies by exporting more.

“But competition breeds innovation, it breeds the ability to make yourself more able to survive in the business world.”

Goold-Haws added that in her talks with groups about exporting, the topic of the Internet comes up.

“I would guess that 99 percent of time there is not a product or service that anyone here is making locally that I can’t find online and possibly even cheaper elsewhere,” she said. “So the reality is we are already in a global situation. It’s just a matter of how our businesses are positioning themselves so that competition doesn’t seem so direct.”

Innovate North State, Superior California Economic Development Corp., the Port of Humboldt and city of Eureka, Shasta County EDC, Siskiyou County Economic Development Corp., Global Trade & Logistics Deputy Sector Navigator and Northern California Center of Excellence conducted the survey.

For more information about the survey’s results, go to http://www.coeccc.net/documents/GlobalTrade_Survey_KeyFindings.pdf