

Overcoming Challenges to Exporting for Small Businesses

I am Andres Pascual Castano, Business Advisor for the New York Small Business Development Center (NYSBDC) located at City College of Technology in Brooklyn. We are a non for profit organization funded mainly by the Small business Administration (SBA), the New York State and New York City College of Technology and part of an extensive network of centers all around the US following the same model. Thanks to our partners in the public and private sectors, our services are free of charge.

Through a network of 24 regional centers, the New York Small Business Development Center (NYSBDC) provides customized solutions through advisement, education, research and advocacy for Entrepreneurs, Innovators and the Small & Medium Enterprise community. We bring world class business expertise to the SME community.

Since 1984, we have worked with 414,998 businesses, helping them to invest \$5,703,510,148 in New York's economy and create or save 183,637 jobs.

We are the "Go to" Network!

The SBDC emphasizes our services to women, veterans, people with special needs, and minority clients.

We work closely with other economic development agencies, faculty and students at host institutions, and representatives from private industry and business to focus resources on assisting small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Key areas of focus with our particular SBDC are: **MWBE** certification and mentoring once certification has been achieved, **International Trade** basic assistance, **Veteran Entrepreneurship** and **New American** empowerment as is evidenced by our Organization of Latino entrepreneurs (OLE). As needs arrive in the communities, stakeholders come to us in order to facilitate solutions in the Business Community: "911", Hurricane Irene", "Hurricane Sandy" are but a few.

We also offer assistance with issues related to:

Technology & innovation, selling to the government, Regulatory compliance, and Disaster Recovery.

On a daily basis, most of our clients come in asking for Grants, or loans for their respective projects. It is vital that we as advisors gently probe with qualifying questions to determine what is at the root of their concepts, business, or reason that they THINK they need money. We at the SBDC do not lend money but rather help our clients understand what they truly need to be successful in their start up or to improve upon the course of action they are currently on.

The ideal outcome is to get each client to see their market, customer base, process and organization for what it is and what it should be. We help to increase business intelligence whether that involves, financial planning, marketing, sourcing or HR issues. Once a fair diagnosis is made of any one of these areas may become prioritized and a course of action is agreed upon.

Central to how we do our jobs is to be a mentor for "life", (or as long as the client feels necessary)

In relation to **exporting** as it is a truly important component for the expansion and job creation in our economy and 95 % of costumers are located beyond U.S borders. When clients reach to us for export assistance, they usually come as accidental exporters without the necessary knowledge to take over big and continues orders from overseas. We at SBDC help our clients understand and demystify the exporting process. We provide the tools for them to assess their export readiness and set a plan of action. We educate them on how to create an exporting plan that includes market research, market entry, legal aspects, compliance, transportation, finance and cultural aspects of the process.

If businesses are doing as well as possible, SBDCs may not be required. However.... if improvement can be made in a business...the SBDC is "**The GO TO Network**"!

If you want more information or want to have access to our services, you can reach SBDC by visiting our website <http://www.nyssbdc.org/>, calling our office at 718 707 0187 or email at Pcastano@citytech.cuny.edu.

Pascual Castano