



Local Business, Global Following

Small companies are exporting more than ever before. Here's how that benefits American communities.

Think you have to be a big company to be a global brand? Think again. In Solon, Ohio, Chagrin Valley Soap & Salve makes small-batch, handmade skincare products with a staff of 20 people. But to date, the family-run company has sold products to customers in nearly 200 countries—a global reach that its owners never imagined possible. Until recently, only large businesses had the resources to sell overseas. Today, digital tools like Google Ads and Analytics have leveled the playing field. As a result, small businesses comprise the vast majority of American exporters.

“Technology creates a boundaryless marketplace,” says Julie Stitzel, the vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness. “It allows a business of one to compete with a business of 500, both in the U.S. and internationally.” That’s good news for the economy: according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, businesses that export create more jobs and grow sales faster than non-exporters. Initially, Chagrin Valley Soap & Salve didn’t set out to attract international customers. But brand director Sam Friedman says that growing the company’s global market share has become an imperative. His goal, he says, is not just to keep customers abroad happy, but also to make a greater impact on the lives of friends and neighbors in Solon. “There’s something very special about growing a community like we are and supporting the people around you like we are,” he says.

What We Learned

Small businesses are creating local jobs by attracting global customers. Here's how.

Businesses don't have to be big to go global.

Google’s digital marketing tools like Google Ads and Market Finder help small business owners reach international customers through targeted advertising and market insights. Today, 35% of all Google ad clicks to American businesses are from overseas.

Exporting is on the rise, and small businesses are leading the way.

Small businesses comprise the vast majority of American exporters, which sold a record \$2.5 trillion of goods and services abroad in 2018.

Businesses benefit from exporting.

American businesses that export grow employment 2 to 4 percent faster than those that don't export.

Small businesses could export even more.

With only 1 percent of U.S. small businesses currently exporting, there is lots of room for growth. In Germany and Switzerland, the share of small businesses that export is five to ten times greater.

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