

Press release: Northamptonshire business boosting health abroad

The company, which exports internationally, has also recently secured two export contracts with Sweden and Kenya, and sights are now set on Portugal.

Established in 1999, the Daventry-based company produces a range of more than 200 ethical speciality health supplements including vitamins, minerals, herbs and more. The business exports to countries from Iceland and South Africa, to Ireland and Kuwait, and is now exporting to more than 26 countries in all.

And the results are substantial, with 35% of the business's turnover in 2018 attributed to exports. Demand is particularly high in markets where there is no free national health service and where the demand for nutritional supplements in preventative care is so important, such as Ireland, Italy and South Africa.

Manufacturing standards in the United Kingdom are recognised and respected worldwide, and with overall exports of vitamins from the UK to non-EU countries totalling £28.79 million in 2018, a 4.3% rise from £27.61 million in 2017, the scope for demand is set to increase.

Initially exporting directly to Ireland and South Africa, the company's Managing Director Cheryl Thallon was approached by countless enthusiasts with shared ethical values who wished to help distribute the range, but she soon realised the need to refocus on appointing expert distribution partners that were able to operate with a more structured approach.

Thallon recruited Sally Ann Marsh into the company, and she enlisted the help of DIT, which provided OMIS reports and took the company to various training opportunities and events. These included Gateway to Global Growth and Passport to Export. DIT was also able to help draw up contracts, offer information and expertise in key administrative areas, and introduce Viridian to useful contacts in different markets.

Some of the considerations Marsh found particularly important included trademark registration, setting brand guidelines and formalising the procedures for appointing the most appropriate distribution partner.

Sally Ann Marsh, International Business Manager, said:

"In the UK, our primary distribution is through specialist health food stores, where we provide extensive training programmes to support guided purchase in-store. Overseas, the market is a mix of health stores, pharmacies and doctors – finding the right distributor who understands the local requirements is essential.

"The Department for International Trade has the resources to help you succeed with a huge network of trade advisors around the world. Our specialist advisor continues to be a key part of our exporting success, keeping us fully

informed of trade priorities that might affect our business as well reducing any anxieties over trading with specific countries.”

Managing Director Cheryl Thallon, Viridian Nutrition said:

“My advice to others considering exporting is to be bold. It’s important to have a plan, but don’t think you’ll ever be prepared for all eventualities. You often learn more from mistakes than from successes.”

Ian Harrison, Head of Exports – Midlands Regions at the Department for International Trade, said:

“Viridian Nutrition is an example of a business that has maintained its values and found customers in a hugely diverse range of countries. Joining our Export Champion community is a testament to the work the company has put in to share their success story and show other small businesses in the health industry that the demand is out there.

“At DIT, we have around 20 International Trade Advisers in the East Midlands to support businesses like Viridian Nutrition to start or to increase exports. We provide advice, workshops and seminars, and can also help businesses put together a comprehensive exporting strategy and introduce them to international contacts.”