EXPORT PROMOTION

A Decision Support Model Approach

Editors

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Foreword

The research, which is reported in the present volume, is the result of a long collaboration between the editors, going back to 2000, with a comparative study of competitive intelligence of South African and Belgian exporters, funded under the Flemish government's research programme for Bilateral Scientific and Technological Cooperation (BSTC) between Flanders and seven priority countries that included South Africa.

It was a little step from competitive intelligence and the involvement of export supporting organisations, to the broader theme of export promotion. This step was also a natural one for two reasons: Prof. Ludo Cuyvers, since the inception of the Flemish export promotion organisation member of the Board of Directors, had designed a decision support model, in collaboration with Proff. Patrick De Pelsmacker, Glenn Rayp and Irene Roozen, as far back as 1991, and Prof. Wilma Viviers had set up at the North-West University in South Africa an Export Promotion Research Group in 2006, where South African export promotion priorities were discussed.

In 2005, the DSM was mentioned in the "Draft National Export Strategy 2006-2009" of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as one of the two pillars on which South Africa aimed to build its export strategy. In 2006, when Prof. Viviers approached senior officials of Trade and Investment, South Africa (TISA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to apply the DSM in South Africa, her proposal evidently met with much interest, which started a close cooperation between the NWU and the DTI. The DSM's methodology was revised and tailored to meet South Africa's unique trade circumstances. It was applied in South Africa in 2007, 2009 and 2010. The endeavour resulted in many research publications and presentations, and the consolidation of the Export Promotion Research Group (EPRG) at NWU, with researchers from Belgium and South Africa being led by Proff. Wilma Viviers and Ludo Cuyvers. Most of the contributions to this publication/book have their origins in the work the EPRG has undertaken since 2006.

As the DSM had been applied to Belgium in the early and mid 1990s, and to Thailand and the Philippines afterwards, during which the methodology had been occasionally modified, a need was arising to take stock of the newest developments of the DSM, as well as to further investigate the many uses of the DSM results. From these the idea of writing the present volume arose.

Following several requests to present the results of the DSM to various government organisations, and as more postgraduate students became interested in undertaking graduate research into export promotion, it was decided the EPRG's research would have greater value if it were to be published. Fellow researchers were invited to contribute to the

publication; the final result being a publication dealing in various topical aspects relating to the development of the DSM, the identification of export opportunities, the application of the model in diverse countries, and the strategic application of results in both public and private sector export promotion activities.

Two of the contributors had already published extended versions of their chapters, or related work, in peer-review journals, and they agreed to re-publication of this work in the book.¹ Some chapters also drew on the work of three doctoral (PhD) theses, completed during the course of the research project.²

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- 1 Cuyvers, L. & Dumont, M. 2008. The assessment of public export activities using DSM results: the case of Belgium. *Review of Business and Economics*, 53(1): 69-92.
Steenkamp, E.A., Rossouw, R., Viviers, W. & Cuyvers, L. 2009. Export market selection methods and the identification of realistic export opportunities for South Africa using a decision support model. [Online.] Available from: <http://www.sadctrade.org/node/281>.
 - 2 Kuhn, M-L. 2010. *Exporters' information requirements: The role of Competitive Intelligence in the export promotion of extruders*. Published PhD thesis. Potchefstroom: NWU.
Grater, S. 2011. *The development of an export opportunities model for South African services*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Potchefstroom: NWU.
Steenkamp, E.A. 2011. *The identification of export opportunities for South African products with special reference to Africa*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Potchefstroom: NWU.