



EXPORT COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW HELPS BABASLINGS TO CAPITALISE ON OVERSEAS DEMAND

BABASLINGS PRODUCES AND SELLS INNOVATIVE SLINGS FOR CARRYING CHILDREN. THE SLINGS, AVAILABLE IN A RANGE OF COLOURS, ALLOW BABIES OF UP TO TWO YEARS IN AGE TO BE CARRIED IN A NATURAL WAY, CLOSE TO THEIR PARENT OR CARER.

Since its launch in 2005, the company has established a strong presence in the UK, marketing the product primarily to pregnant or very new mothers.

The company has also enjoyed some success overseas – with ad hoc enquiries from wholesalers and distributors from Europe and the USA accounting for around five per cent of total turnover.

Director, Daniel Lucas, was keen to build on overseas interest in BabaSlings' products. However he recognised that taking a planned and strategic approach to export would be vital to success. He sought out expert advice on tackling overseas markets.

"Export has always been part of our long term plan and the unprompted interest from overseas demonstrated that the time was right to take a more proactive approach. But you have to understand how to describe and sell your products in new markets, which is why we wanted a communications health check – to make sure our marketing materials and website were up to the job."

Daniel Lucas –
Director

Following advice from International Trade Adviser, Estelle Dingley, BabaSlings signed up for an Export Communications Review, managed by the British Chambers of Commerce on behalf of UK Trade & Investment.

Hit the world running ^{UK}

BCC-Registered Export Communications Consultant, Sarah Carroll carried out a thorough review of BabaSlings' existing communications, with a particular focus on its website and other marketing materials. Following the review, BabaSlings received a detailed report setting out how the company should go about ensuring its marketing materials would be effective overseas and signposting useful resources such as translation services.

Sarah also recommended that BabaSlings investigate working with local agents in each market – to provide the local market knowledge and native language skills required to position the company and its products correctly in the crucial early stages.

BabaSlings has acted on many of the recommendations set out in Sarah's report, to put in place the resources required to communicate effectively in a range of target markets.

The company's website has been overhauled and internationalised – with the addition of overseas language versions and international contact details. In addition, brochures and other marketing materials have been translated into German and Spanish.

Daniel said: "The ECR report gave us the knowledge we needed to approach these markets in the correct way, starting with our

use of language. As a result, we now have the resources we need to communicate our products effectively in all of our initial target markets."

BabaSlings has also signed up local market agents in Spain and Ireland and expects to launch concerted export marketing operations in those countries in the summer of 2008.

"Working with local agents emerged as a crucial first step in establishing a presence overseas. These people already have the contacts we need and, as native speakers, are the right people to explain the benefits of the product."

Daniel feels that having acted on Sarah's recommendations, BabaSlings has put in the place the foundations required to support export operations with effective communication.

"Rather than trying to go global overnight, we have selected a range of markets, put the foundations in place and are ready to go. The advice we got from Sarah will enable us to approach those markets with confidence, and then replicate the approach over and over again as we expand internationally. I have every confidence that we have the tools in place to reach our overall targets – to have between five and ten per cent of newborn babies in each market using BabaSlings products."

THE EXPORT COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

An Export Communications Review costs £500 + VAT, however SMEs may be eligible for a UK Trade & Investment subsidy of £350 towards the cost of the review.

For more information, please visit www.britishchambers.org.uk/ecr or contact the ECR team at the address below.

You can contact your local ECR Consultant Sarah Carroll who covers London and East Sussex on sarah.carroll@ecrconsultants.org.

UK Trade & Investment is the United Kingdom Government's lead organisation for supporting UK companies in overseas business, and attracting inward investment.

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