

UKTI East Midlands International Business Awards 2006



FA-ST Ltd joined the Passport to Export programme and attended the 2 day course and received valuable advice and information from several presentations and experienced speakers.

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it's good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through the Passport to Export programme UKTI offer new and inexperienced exporters free capability assessments, support in visiting potential markets, mentoring from a local export professional, free action plans, customised and subsidised training, and ongoing support once you're up and running. The programme puts together in one simple responsive process all the tools that exporting companies need to grow their business. So if you're looking to export, be sure to make the UKTI your first port of call.....it certainly helped our business.

We entered the business awards and won the Passport to Export category for Derbyshire. For further details from UKTI visit www.uktradeinvest.co.uk

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China Focus: DNCC's David Hood talks to FA-ST Ltd

David Hood, head of international trade and information at Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce, talks to Derbyshire businessman Andy Fraser, who has got to grips with trading in China's market.

The spectacular opening to the Beijing Olympics was a powerful statement to the world - we are here and we mean business.



One of our Derbyshire firms that have managed to crack this huge market is FA-ST Filtration Analysis Services Technology, headed by Andy Fraser.

The secret to his success, in what he calls a daunting arena, has been to keep it simple.

He said: "To communicate is very, very difficult. Right from the beginning you have to use very simple language and avoid technical terms because your contact may not be the person you end up dealing with. Don't attempt to learn Chinese at the outset - the same word can mean different things depending on your intonation. For instance, ma, meaning mother, can also mean horse if you get it wrong."

Mr Fraser is a veteran of at least 10 trips to China. His company won the Derbyshire section of UK Trade and Investment's Passport to Export Awards 2006 for its success, including winning an order to supply oil filtration systems to China's biggest coal mining company.

He has found travelling difficult at times, though. While buses and taxis are clean and cheap, there are few English directions on the trains, particularly away from the big cities.

However, he found little sign of a totalitarian state. "Communism has been all but dropped and you never get the feeling Big Brother is watching you. I've never had any problems at customs or with the police when travelling," he said.

Mr Fraser first travelled with a friend so that he would have someone to speak English with. Now, he has a Chinese wife, Zhou Xia, who speaks Cantonese, Japanese, English and Mandarin, the language used most widely in China.

His second piece of advice is to get to know the company inside out - in particular, who owns it - and recommends Yahoo China as a good place to start.

He said: "The Chinese are very, very friendly, courteous and polite. They want to get to know you as a person. They will spend months courting a company and when you do meet, it could be two hours before they even mention business."

The Chinese are renowned for being tough negotiators, their chief aim being to win concessions. They are formal and professional in their business dealings and they are unhurried. Shows of emotion such as anger are looked upon as weaknesses.

Good tips for doing business in China include accepting a business card with both hands then placing it on the table rather than pocketing it.

Take a small gift, preferably something beautiful - not a bribe and not a clock, which signifies death and is bad luck.

The Chinese hate to say no, so getting the right answer to a question may take a little ingenuity. Learning to use chopsticks well enough to pick up a cocktail stick from a glass surface is impressive.

Sources of help for companies wishing to do business in China include the China Britain Business Council and the Export Marketing Research Scheme, managed by the British Chambers of Commerce on behalf of UK Trade and Investment which aids overseas marketing research prior to market entry.

The East Midlands Chinese Business Bureau also develops opportunities.

For the past 20 years we have heard about opportunities that China offers. Perhaps the Olympics will spur others to follow in Mr Fraser's footsteps.

Winners of each category at the 2006 awards received a Certificate and a unique trophy designed by Nottinghamshire glassware creator, **Ingrid Pears**, who has also used Passport to Export to help boost her own export sales.

