



midlands world trade forum

www.mwtf.org.uk

Quarterly News Letter - May 2003

Dear Member,

"No-one can know everything, but as a member of the forum you are over 200 steps towards it"! Now with more than 200 member companies, spanning a wide variety of industries – from rare animal foodstuffs to light engineering, and with experience in some 120 countries around the world, the MWTF is becoming *the* organisation to be part of to help you develop your international business.

Working in harmony with International Trade Teams around the West Midlands and experts from a variety of disciplines, the MWTF provides a route to formal and practical help, advice and knowledge – whatever your business need.

The MWTF is being hailed as a success around the UK. As well as continuing to extend the membership and services around the whole of the West Midlands, we continue to work with other organisations to help them develop similar concepts. The net result should be a phenomenal knowledge resource from which all of our members – wherever they are – can draw!

MWTF Chairman

Membership

- General

We are still progressing well towards our target of 300 member companies by the end of the next financial year. Current membership stands at 205 companies.

Remember, our members have a wealth of business experience which they are generally prepared to share to help you

develop. To make contact, go to the members listing pages <http://www.mwtf.org.uk/members.asp>

- Extension of membership and services throughout the West Midlands

The MWTF was represented at the Redditch Business Open Day recently. This was a continuation of our development within the Hereford and Worcester area of the West Midlands. Discussions continue particularly with Shropshire and Coventry and Warwickshire to establish how they can optimise their position(s) through inter-working relationships with the MWTF.

Web site

Re-design of the MWTF web site, www.mwtf.org.uk is now well progressed. Hopefully you will have seen a few minor changes recently, for example we have re-structured our useful links page <http://www.mwtf.org.uk/links.asp> to help make it easier to find useful information. The new site will be available for launch shortly, and we are planning an appropriate event to mark the occasion – please watch this space, and our events page <http://www.mwtf.org.uk/events.asp>!

Member Profile (Carole Whittaker – Gough Mandarin Ltd)

Carole has been involved in marketing / research for 25 years, both in industry and in the services sector. For the last 10 years she has undertaken research for a variety of clients, particularly in the building products and leisure sectors, for some major global brands such as British Airways, Ideal Standard and Haier.

In addition she has managed projects ranging from pan-European studies of 18 different food sectors for the Thai government in their quest to capitalise on growing interest in / taste for Thai food as well as investigating similar opportunities for costume jewellery manufacturers.

"The types of research that we undertake range from investigating market opportunities to how a brand (or organisation) is perceived. We often are able to open new doors for clients and help to determine what are the optimum product / service specifications.

We joined the MWTF following our first contract with an Italian company to provide an independent assessment of how their brand is perceived in the UK. We felt it would enable us to better understand the whole exporting process, when what you're exporting is not a product but a service!

An added dimension is that we're now considering targeting other overseas companies wanting a similar objective assessment.





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Of course we'll continue to provide a service to UK companies wishing to investigate new markets or understand – in an impartial manner – competitors' strengths and weaknesses."

Carole's details can be found at www.goughmandarin.co.uk, or via the MWTF member listing.

Abu Dhabi or bust ! (a non exporters experience)

ENVIROTRADE WM together with Trade Partners UK are helping companies supplying environmental products and services to explore overseas markets.

A recent overseas venture was to support West Midlands companies to visit the United Arab Emirates and to exhibit at the Environment and Energy Show in Abu Dhabi

On the visit was Peter Evans, the Sales and Marketing Director at Strataform, a Midland-based company that makes security storage covers for drinking water supplies. Peter is also a Management Board member of the MWTF.

"Because the security side of the UK water industry is nearing saturation point we decided that we needed to investigate export markets. I wanted to explore the market in Abu Dhabi as the UAE is projected to spend some £12 billion on desalination over the coming years."

Peter used the week to see if his products could find a market in the UAE. His security doors and covers have been designed to withstand at least a 30-minute attack from a variety of tools and he was unsure whether such high-security measures would be appealing to the UAE.

Like many others he found that selling into an unfamiliar market can be daunting.

"The whole experience can be traumatic. But the involvement of ENVIROTRADE WM, TPUK and the various Chambers of Commerce all combine to make it as easy as possible. Guys like Graham Ashmore who have done it all before act very much like mentors. In many ways it is a hand-holding exercise."

Over the course of the seven days Peter was introduced to a number of business networks, exhibited at the environmental trade fair, received a great deal of help from the British Embassy and managed to establish vital intelligence on the local water industry. These factors proved crucial in tapping into the new market.

But in many ways it is the softer benefits that fire Peter's enthusiasm.

"The whole network was very helpful indeed," he said. "I joined the group just a month before the exhibition and the Birmingham

Chamber was able to provide Arabic translations of my brochures. I used my own agencies to design the exhibition panels but turned to TPUK for the travel arrangements.

"You can book your own hotels on the internet but to have it all done for you and heavily subsidised by TPUK makes it a lot easier."

Peter found that going out as a part of a group had some unexpected advantages.

"It brings reassurance. When the airline lost our bags someone in the group said 'I've got a spare jacket' someone else had an extra tie and I was able to borrow double-sided sellotape. There were two guys who missed their connection due to flight delays. When they arrived on the morning of the exhibition they found that we'd all clubbed together to set up their stand."

And after 12-hour days the loneliness of a far-flung hotel room did not await these businessmen.

"The social aspect is another great advantage. In the evenings we went out for meals and then headed to jazz bars. I've got some great photos."

ENVIROTRADE WM and TPUK want to support more companies to explore export markets. Graham Ashmore said "We are planning to support further visits to the Gulf States, Central Europe, China and West Africa but would be pleased to discuss what help we can give to West Midlands companies in any overseas market. Graham can be contacted on the ENVIROTRADE WM stand or on 01384 360464, email grahamashmore@bccbl.com

Events

Our recent workshops and events have proved popular as well as informative – with MWTF members and Trade advisors alike!

We have a number of forthcoming events aimed at helping you increase your export trade <http://www.mwtf.org.uk/events.asp> We are always looking to evolve, add to and develop these. If you have any thoughts or ideas for events, please let me have them info@mwtf.org.uk

The MWTF is Co-sponsoring a major event at the ICC on the 4th June, which focuses on the business issues and **opportunities** arising from the impending EU enlargement.

EU "enlargement" summarises the term for the introduction of further member countries to the European Union.

Currently at 15, this enlargement will extend member countries to 25, and further to 28 over the next 12-18 months or so. The



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enlarged EU represents a consumer base of over half a billion people !

Candidate countries for the enlargement are:

Bulgaria	Cyprus
Lithuania	Hungary
Latvia	Slovak Republic
Poland	Romania
Estonia	Turkey
Czech Republic	Malta
Slovenia	

The event will be organised around short presentations and QA sessions, and networking activities.

A number of "keynote" speakers will include Simon Murphey MEP, Dr Dennis Machshane (UK Minister for Europe) and, hopefully, Professor Danuta Hubner (Polish Minister for Europe).

A series of workshops are also planned, and which will cover such things as:-

- Environmental Management Services
- Automotive Components
- Metal Forming
- JV's (Services/Manufacturing)
- Business Support Services

If you need any help or further information in respect of the forum, please don't hesitate to contact Steve Bryan, MWTF Coordinator, on 0121 607 1759, or email to info@mwtf.org.uk