



Exploding onto the International Scene

U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE MATCHES SOFTWARE COMPANY WITH POTENTIAL RESELLERS IN MORE THAN A HALF-DOZEN GLOBAL MARKETS

It was the dawn of widespread campus networking, and Dartmouth College network manager Richard Brown realized he needed a product that would give him an at-a-glance view of his network. Instead of using slow, reactive diagnostic tools to find what was broken, he wanted a faster, more proactive way of pinpointing network bottlenecks and other problems before they caused lengthy network downtime.

When he realized there were no commercial network products available, he and Bill Fisher, a Dartmouth undergraduate, developed their own product. By April 2000, the product was so popular, Richard, Bill and Stuart Pompian, a local businessman, founded Dartware, LLC, and went to market with their innovative solution.

The ingenuity behind the birth of Dartware, LLC and its InterMapper software products still drives the company's rapid success more than eight years later.

InterMapper products have been available via Internet download for a number of years. "In theory we were worldwide," said John Sutton, Director of Sales and Partner Development. "But we weren't, really, because of cultural barriers."

Network managers and administrators want to work with tech support personnel that speak their language, and they usually want to buy from domestic companies. "To operate internationally, we needed to establish partnerships with resellers in the countries we wished to sell to."

Sutton and the co-founders knew that reseller agreements would enable Dartware to establish a local footprint with tech support, avoid language barriers, and gain the ingrained cultural knowledge one only achieves by living in and experiencing a culture.

That's just where the U.S. Commercial Service stepped in. Portsmouth Director Justin Osowski and the State of New Hampshire's International Trade Resource Center "came in and had a chat with us about what they could do," Sutton said. "Based on those meetings, we made a conscious decision to start by expanding into English-speaking international markets. Since Canada is only about 100 miles away from our headquarters (West Lebanon, New Hampshire), we did Gold Keys [business matchmaking services] with them first."

On the scheduled day, though, it seemed the fates were lining up against Dartware. Poor weather prevented travel into Canada. "We had meetings set up back-to-back for Montreal and Toronto, but we couldn't get up there. We tried everything, but nothing worked out," Sutton said.

To overcome the problem, Montreal and Toronto Commercial Service trade specialists Connie Irrera and Viktoria Palfi arranged for teleconferences with Dartware's Gold Key matches. They set up the teleconferences and obtained the Dartware presentation in advance.

Sutton said he delivered two days worth of one-hour Webinars to potential partners. "I said, 'I'm going to Canada,' and walked into my office."

As a result of those February 2008 meetings, Dartware established partner relationships with resellers in both Montreal and Toronto.

From there, "rapid-fire" best describes Dartware's 2008 global success. Using various U.S.

Commercial Service offerings, including Gold Keys, the Trade Winds Trade Mission, and a Single Company Promotion event, Dartware has made contact with possible resellers in South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Osowski said, "The reason it's gone so well is we had a very dedicated company in Dartware, and we had the tools to help them. John has really made this happen. That's why he's exploded onto the international scene."

To establish reseller relationships, Dartware has to professionally present itself to potential resellers. That's not always as easy as it sounds. Like in the United States, every nation has unwritten codes and rules of proper business behavior.

"When I was planning a trip to the Middle East, I called the U.S. Commercial Service to see if they could provide any information for doing business over there," Sutton said. "They sent over tons of information. You can look at their Web site. They have reams and reams of information explaining potential cultural situations."

The U.S. Commercial Service also helped Sutton and Dartware untangle a difficult situation in 2008 involving taxation.

"We had a reseller in India tell us there is a 15 percent sales withholding tax. Right away I was on the phone with the U.S. Commercial Service asking, 'Is this right?' Within a week, we had the information we needed to eliminate that tax. That was a phenomenal service."

By continuing to use the tools offered by the U.S. Commercial Service, Dartware hopes to diversify further in 2009, including to the Middle East and Australia. They also plan to do something many think will be impossible in today's economy: grow.

"We're growing," Sutton said. "We plan to add programmers. We've already added a Marketing Director to increase our exposure, and we're confident that using the Gold Key services will help increase our sales. It's fair to say the U.S. Commercial Service is key to our success." ▶

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