

FINDING IT ON THE NET



Small Business Assistance

BY WALTER SHAWLEE 2

In this month's "Finding It on the Net," let's look at some of the problems facing small businesses and where a small business can go for some quick and useful help.

Small Business Administration:

From the U.S. government end, there is the Small Business Administration, which lives here at www.sba.gov. The SBA has a wealth of information on its website and offers various links to many additional resources. The equivalent site for Canada is at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/me00043e.html>.

Small Business Resource Site:

If the somewhat dry and process-oriented nature of the government sites don't suit you, there is a huge index of resource links regarding small business, as well as every possible related topic and service, available at www.sjdccd.cc.ca.us/org/sbdc/startup/netresources.html.

This website offers topics from business name and copyright clearance to employee information and finance. You can spend days here, and likely you will find at least something you can use, as well as some ideas you had not even considered.

Intellectual Property:

Do you need to investigate patents, copyrights and trademarks? This can be tedious to understand and research, but try these sources for help:

- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office: www.uspto.gov
- Free Patents Online: www.freepatentsonline.com
- Canadian Trademark Database: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/app/cipo/trademarks/search/tmSearch.do?language=eng>
- Search "Patent" on Google: www.google.com/patents

Don't forget, if you have thought up a new business name or a trademark, always Google it first — www.google.com — to see if there are obvious conflicts, which saves a lot of time.

Importing and Exporting:

Exporting or importing something? Tour the harmonized tariff code available through the U.S. International Trade Commission website at www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/bychapter/index.htm.

Many people get into serious trouble with customs clearance without this information, so have a peek. You don't have to be a broker to do these things.

Need to know what is restricted for export? Many things (some very surprising) are restricted for export and can land you in real legal trouble.

Find the current information regarding what is restricted on the U.S. Department of Commerce website at these addresses:

- www.bis.doc.gov/complianceand enforcement/index.htm
- www.bis.doc.gov/licensing/exportingbasics.htm

For the Commerce Control List and related documents, visit www.access.gpo.gov/bis/ear/ear_data.html.

In the post-9/11 universe, there are serious ramifications to many high-tech (and some low-tech) materials; be sure you understand all the issues before you ship anything.

Greening your Business:

Thinking of "greening" your business? Have a look at the Energy Star Small Business Program at www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_index.

Energy Star also offers some useful ideas and checklists, as well as available financing resources broken down conveniently by individual states, at www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_join.sb_financeproducts.

The comparable "green" conversion site for Canada is at www.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/dir-ect.nsf/en/uw00952e.html.

Labor Practices and Standards:

Need information on labor practices, laws and obligations?

- Try the U.S. Department of Labor site at www.dol.gov/esa/whd.
- The corresponding site for Canada is at www.hrmanagement.gc.ca/gol/hrmanagement/site.nsf/en/hr10769.html.

Taxes:

Need federal tax information? Not the happiest of topics, but very important nonetheless to your business survival.

- Visit the U.S. Internal Revenue Service site at www.irs.gov.
- The Canada Revenue Agency site is at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-e.html.

Occupational Health and Safety:

Need extensive data on occupational health and safety?

- In the United States, the OSHA site is at www.osha.gov.
- The Canadian Center for Occupational Health & Safety is at www.ccohs.ca.
- There is also an independent site at www.canoshweb.org/en.

General Business Philosophy:

Looking for general business information in terms of organization, strategy, philosophy and development? Having trouble wres-

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ting with the human issues, which often are more complicated than the avionics side? You might find the book "1 Boat" useful. It is available at Sphere's website, and draws heavily on many years of experience in the aviation world. It can be downloaded at www.sphere.bc.ca/download/business7-1.pdf.

An index of these referenced links, as well as an index of other useful technical tidbits, is available at Sphere Research's engineering links at www.sphere.bc.ca/test/data.html, or visit the *Avionics News* archives at www.aea.net/avionicsnews for "Finding It on the Net" links. □

If you have comments or questions about this article, send e-mails to avionics-news@aea.net.