

## Marketing Arm International, Inc.: Growing Overseas Exports and Local Employment through Earth-friendly Agriculture

Marketing Arm International, Inc. develops and distributes “green” environmentally friendly products that are used by farmers, agronomists, and homeowners around the world for their Pest Management Programs. Many of their impressive products are approved for organic cropping and are manufactured from renewable resources.

### Situation

Jose Lopez has been “green” for quite awhile. After obtaining a degree in agricultural studies at Texas A&M, Mr. Lopez was in charge of products marketed to Latin America by Abbot Laboratory. There he became especially interested in biological insecticides. These insecticides were appealing due to their extraction from natural bacterium as well as their safe final use for both humans and the environment. In 1993 after receiving his MBA, Mr. Lopez founded Marketing Arm International with the mission to develop and market environmentally friendly plant nutrition and plant protector botanical insecticides and fungicides.

Since those origins, Marketing Arm International has grown from a home-based business to a 12,000 ft<sup>2</sup> manufacturing/warehouse facility in Port Charlotte, FL.

While sales have steadily increased since inception, Mr. Lopez is always aware of the inherent risks in a business dependent on the weather and “acts of God.” Marketing Arm International itself was almost devastated when Hurricane Charley hit in 2004, forcing him to rebuild their \$500,000 facility and move operations north temporarily.

So, Mr. Lopez is always looking for ways to minimize risk through expert product forecasting, constant product improvements and diversification. While Marketing Arm International had been exporting to dozens of countries, sales were exclusively focused in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and South America. In looking for expansion opportunities, President Lopez became interested in Southeast Asia. The profile of this region was similar to his current Latin American market with similar climate, crops and pests.

In order to expand to the other side of the globe, Marketing Arm International needed additional lines of credit to accommodate the long cash cycle associated with international sales. Suppliers from Europe and Asia needed to be paid, products needed to be inventoried to meet the two compressed 3-month growing seasons and credit terms were largely dictated by big business suppliers.

### Solution

Mr. Lopez went to the regional SBA office in Miami, FL to inquire about SBA Export financing. The SBA provided a list of Florida SBA lenders and Marketing Arm International began approaching banks. Unfortunately many lenders did not understand overseas receivables, and their inherent credit and collection issues. Mr. Lopez was looking for a bank that could “get” the cash flow realities of export businesses.

Mr. Lopez was relieved when he met with SunTrust Bank. SunTrust was knowledgeable not only regarding the financial flows of export businesses, but also the application process of SBA loans.

### Results

“SunTrust Bank understood our business, our strategy and our marketing process. I was very pleased with their professionalism and service-oriented response. The SBA Export Loan gave us the financial oxygen to not only continue business but to expand as well.”

With this infusion of credit Marketing Arm International has already been able to “breath oxygen” and create growth both locally and overseas:

- Marketing Arm International has hired three additional people, especially important in a state suffering high unemployment.
- The company is expanding exports into Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

And perhaps most importantly Jose Lopez now has the flexibility to concentrate on the future of Marketing Arm International and new natural products to serve our food sources and the planet.

Contact them at <http://marketingarm.com/>