



Wendy Makin Bridal Designs



WENDY MAKIN
Bridal Designs

Company profile

Wendy Makin has been designing gowns for Australia's brides for over 20 years, and in that time has built a reputation as one of the country's leading designers. In 1993 she started her own Brisbane-based company, and Wendy Makin Bridal Designs has progressed to be recognised as one of Australia's largest bridal wear manufacturers.

The Wendy Makin label is now available through over 60 bridal boutiques in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Motivations to export

Due to an increasingly congested domestic market, the company turned to exporting to ensure continued future growth. As a consequence of Wendy Makin Bridal Designs' decision to seek new overseas markets the product range has increased, providing greater choice for domestic and overseas clients.

Activities that contributed to its export success

The company believes that its bridal designs and quality of manufacturing were the main differentiators that led to its export success.

Initially the company pursued opportunities within New Zealand because of the small market size and the close proximity to its Brisbane base. The company built a strong rapport with freight companies, developed the knowledge of customs procedures and became acquainted with dealing in foreign currency. The knowledge gained from exporting to New Zealand allowed it to successfully enter the United Kingdom.

Lessons learnt and mistakes made along the way

Wendy Makin Bridal Designs understands the significance of carrying out research well. The company thought that it thoroughly conducted its research, but looking back it believes it could have carried out further research.

When it entered the United Kingdom, the company felt it would have a multitude of orders and that its production would not be able to handle the workload. In anticipation, it geared up production and ordered additional fabrics. Unfortunately the orders did not reach the level it expected. The company learnt the importance of undertaking thorough research to ensure that realistic expectations were in place.



How exporting has benefited the business

Wendy Makin Bridal Designs has grown from a local Queensland-based organisation into an international business. Exporting has made the company think on a larger scale and think outside the square. Exporting has assisted with problem solving, improved staff morale within the company and helped with the general attitude towards doing business.

Assistance received from the Queensland Government

Wendy Makin Bridal Designs has received valuable assistance from a number of staff within the Queensland Government. This includes the fashion and manufacturing sectoral teams as well as Trade and International Operations.

The company has participated in training seminars, events and fashion awards sponsored by the Queensland Government. Through winning several prestigious awards, the company has been recognised for its designs at a national level which has also enhanced its reputation internationally.

Words of advice for exporters

Wendy Makin Bridal Designs recommends that you seek as much advice as you can and don't be afraid of getting started in exporting, as it is not as difficult as it may seem.

The company advises that a lot of research is required to review the overseas markets, how your product fits within that market, your competitors and how much competition exists within the market. An important step is to identify whether or not there is sufficient market demand for your product.

It is also important not to be afraid of rejection. Your company may be a big fish within the small Australian market, however you will need to perform well in their overseas market before buyers want to deal with you seriously.

This case study was prepared for the Getting Export Smart workshop series. Please contact your local State Development Centre to register for export workshops and training programs.



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If you have any queries about exporting
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