

Case Study

Cheshire Commonwealth Association

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TELL US ABOUT ICC SOLUTIONS

In 1996 ICC Solutions was incorporated. Back then it was a small business in Cheshire comprising three employees. Today it is a globally recognised company within the payments industry, employing over forty people and exporting worldwide.

During the early 1990s, the hot topic of Chip & PIN replacing magnetic stripe payment cards was gaining speed. Dave Maisey, our CEO, identified a gap in the market for a software based test tool and created the company. 22 years later it is as strong as ever, exporting to over 100 countries globally and being renowned in the industry as the global leader in test tool provision.

HOW DID YOUR EXPORTING JOURNEY BEGIN AND WHEN DID YOU FIRST TRADE WITH THE COMMONWEALTH?

Our first Commonwealth customers were actually based in the UK, with the most significant being Visa and American Express. I'm proud to say that the UK was the first country globally to use Chip & PIN - launching with the memorable Love Your PIN campaign on Valentine's Day in 2002.

Exporting was always on the roadmap for the company but was firmly dictated by the migration of EMV (Chip & PIN) around the globe. One huge milestone for the company came in 2006 when it became apparent that Canada was gearing up to switch to Chip & PIN in 2008. It was identified as a country with huge opportunity for us, and we began to plan accordingly.

Our export skills have grown from strength to strength and in 2018 exporting accounted for 75% of our turnover. Since 1996 we have traded with 20 Commonwealth countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Canada, Cyprus, The Dominican Republic, Ghana, Grenada, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Zambia.

FOCUSSING ON CANADA, HOW DID YOU BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN THAT COUNTRY?

Keeping up to date with Chip & PIN migration across the globe has been vital for our growth and, as mentioned earlier, Canada switching in 2008 was the biggest opportunity to date.

Initially we identified prominent companies that we would like to do business with and made regular visits to see them. In 2007 we invested in office space in Toronto – the hub for Canadian banks and financial institutions. Having a local base gave us the edge over our competitors and meant that we were much closer to potential customers for meetings. In the two years before Canadians switched to Chip & PIN we spent a lot of time becoming a visible presence and recognised brand.

We also looked for authoritative bodies within the Canadian payments industry to assist us. Becoming a member of ACT Canada (a none profit organisation) gave us access to clients within the sector that would be potential customers. Wendy Maisey, our Director, became a board member for ACT Canada and held the advisory position for many years.

Thirteen years since we first went to Canada we have customers that are not only clients but also firm friends. It's not just a one way thing either as many have made the trip over to the UK to spend time with us, with a few large clients celebrating with us when we won the Queen's Awards for Enterprise.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELVES IN 5 YEARS?

We have learnt such a lot from exporting to the many diverse countries around the world and we continue to build on this as we expand our exporting further. Being part of the Cheshire Commonwealth Association and working closely with the DIT is providing us with even more support and helping to open doors to countries that we would otherwise find challenging. We are looking forward to the next 20 years and the journey that it takes us on.

Doing Business in the Commonwealth

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You don't have to be a large, well established company to be an exporter. With drive, commitment and tenacity you too can be a successful exporter and enhance ties with our Commonwealth family.

”



*Dave Maisey, CEO, ICC Solutions Ltd
and Chairman of the Cheshire
Commonwealth Association*

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