

SUCCESS STORY: Dr. John's Candies



Unique Candies Sweeten Export Markets

Dr. John's Candies located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, develops unique, great-tasting health-based sugar free products that deliver valuable preventative health benefits for all. Dr. John Bruinsma, a dentist for over thirty years, and his wife Debra, a dental hygienist, are passionate about crafting innovative sugar free sweets with no artificial sweeteners that are good for you. Twenty years ago Dr. John shared his first sugar free lollipop with other dental professionals and soon after he developed his first product line, Sweet Originals™ which still exists today.

Today that product is shared internationally through their export sales. In July of 2014 Dr. John's Candies participated in Food Export's Midwest Buyers Mission. At the mission they met with international buyers from Latvia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Brazil, Malaysia, India, Philippines, China, Canada, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, Costa Rica, Colombia, Taiwan and South Korea. Post event evaluations reported that the Michigan supplier was very successful, making 15 new buyer contacts and initiating 4 new distributorships. Actual sales of \$10,000 were reported and projected sales of over \$30,000 were noted. Their distribution to Japan has been highly successful and sales for 2015 are projected at \$100,000+. Dr. John's Japan Ltd. plans to open a retail store in Tokyo in the next few months and has utilized its connection with the film industry to produce three movies with storylines centered around the Dr. John's lollipops.

Dr. John's Candies continues to grow and expand their export sales and utilize Food Export's education services, the Food Export Helpline and the Online Product Catalog, to continue to enhance and expand their export success.

Food Export uses funding from the Market Access Program (MAP) to help America's small businesses increase their exports of food and agricultural products; as these exports increase, these small businesses are creating jobs and improving the strength and stability of our agricultural economy. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast are non-profit organizations that work in collaboration with their member state departments of agriculture and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. They offer a wide range of programs and services that help boost America's agricultural exports.

