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Sound Bites

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Seattle Trade Mission Report by SSFPA Director Nelson Barsi



Nelson Barsi is currently serving as a Director of the Small Scale Food Processor Association. He recently traveled to Seattle, WA, USA on behalf of the SSFPA to attend a trade mission coordinated by the Marketing and Trade division of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Mr. Barsi is currently a partner in The Barsi Group located in Nanaimo, B.C. The Barsi Group is a Food Distributor, Broker and Processor involved with Quality Gourmet Foods to the retail and food services trade. This group has been active since 1996, established in Saskatchewan and continuing in B.C. Previously, Mr. Barsi was employed by the Government of Saskatchewan since 1979. He was actively involved with domestic and export market development and financial program management in several sectors, including the food and beverage sector. He has extensive experience in serving on boards, committees, and teams both in the public and private domains. He was actively involved in the formation of the Saskatchewan Food Processors Association and planning activities for the membership. The Barsi Group continue to be active in the Association when in Saskatchewan.

Nelson Barsi
The Barsi Group
Director SSFPA

Processor observations – Mission to Seattle Gift Center and Seattle Gift Show By Nelson J Barsi

Everyone in the food and beverage market to-day needs to make a profit! One of the ways to do this is to increase sales of their existing product line and/or determine what new products the marketplace would like to have. This opportunity provided a one-day intensive look at the Pacific Northwest United States potential. When an opportunity is presented, it is easy to look at the pro's and not the con's. This brief summary will present highlights of each. The reader will then need to evaluate to see if they could benefit from this marketplace. By following up on the links provided, the information should provide a basis for the next step.

PRO'S

- Similar market to what we are used to... same basic people and language.
- A potential market of 11 million consumers within a day's travel from your facility, with 6 million in the state of Washington.
- A consumer base that is interested in looking for and trying new products
- Access to regional distribution centers.
- A good base of Canadians living in the market.
- Familiar West Coast lifestyles.
- Our Canadian dollar allows us to offer consistent and competitive pricing.

CON'S

- Requires substantial time and resources to become market ready, including a new label that meets FDA laws.
- Nutritional labeling is expected, but uses a U.S. base that is different than Canada.
- Prices need to be calculated in U.S. dollars.
- Selling in the U.S. requires crossing an international border that is becoming increasingly rigid in enforcement of their laws. The Bio-terrorism Act requires registration of your facility, a U.S. agent and prior notice document for every shipment.
- Wholesale buyers are used to fast delivery. They do not understand that the border can slow deliveries, they want it now.
- Buyers are aggressive. We may be intimidated by this.

Companies that are committed to expanding their markets should consider the opportunity offered by the Pacific Northwest. It requires patience, persistence, aggressiveness, commitment, creativity and flexibility. Small-scale food processors would be encouraged to consider this market once they have established a strong distribution base in their own "backyard" market. If you are, consider this market as your next market opportunity.