

Zenith Aviation Flying High With Exports

Zenith Aviation Inc. does business all over the world from its headquarters off Lafayette Boulevard in Fredericksburg.

Exports have played a key role in fueling the impressive growth at Zenith, a privately owned, industry-leading aviation parts supplier to regional airlines and corporate flight departments.

Zenith Aviation buys aviation parts in bulk from flight departments that are upsizing or downsizing their fleets. The company then inventories, sells and ships the parts from its Fredericksburg warehouse.

About two-thirds of Zenith's customers are overseas, said Donald Capwell, the company's vice president of operations. The company ships goods internationally on a daily basis, working with shippers such as UPS, FedEx and DHL.

Capwell encourages businesses getting into exports to hire a consultant, take advantage of the many free resources that are available, build strong relationships with competent and reliable vendors, and not re-invent the wheel.

"More than likely, there are similar companies trying to do what you want to do," he said. "Find out what they are doing, and shorten your learning curve!"



That doesn't mean exporting is easy. Among the challenges Capwell points out are navigating a myriad of federal regulations and getting familiar with diverse international laws.

The challenges are worth the effort, however, Capwell believes. He advises other companies to explore exporting options just as Zenith has done with success.

"The world is shrinking, so I'd definitely encourage all companies to explore international options to increase their sales base," Capwell said.

