



Expanding into a new country requires understanding potential customers, competitors, industry demand, regulatory requirements, distribution options, and the most appropriate market-entry strategy. Conducting that level of research across multiple potential markets can require significant time and resources. Nevco needed market intelligence that could help the company evaluate opportunities and begin developing a more focused strategy for its international division.

Nevco Partners with the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center and SIUE Students to Advance Its Global Strategy

For more than 90 years, Greenville, IL based Nevco Sports has helped shape the way athletes and fans experience game day. Founded in 1934, Nevco has grown from a scoreboard pioneer into the largest privately held scoreboard manufacturer in the world. Today, Nevco is a complete sports technology solutions provider, delivering LED video displays, electronic scoreboards, scoring technology, sound systems, and integrated game-day systems that connect every part of the fan experience.

Nevco expanded its technology portfolio in 2022 through the acquisition of Lynx System Developers, creator of FinishLynx photo-finish technology, adding advanced timing and results capabilities to its product offering.

Already an experienced exporter with products present in more than 10 countries, Nevco is now looking to build on that international footprint and identify additional opportunities for global growth.

The Challenge: Identifying the Right Markets for Continued International Expansion

For an experienced exporter like Nevco, the challenge was not simply how to export. It was determining where to focus next.

That need created an opportunity for the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center (ITC) at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville to combine export assistance with one of SIUE's strongest resources: its students and faculty.

THE SOLUTION: COMBINING STUDENT RESEARCH WITH ITC EXPORT ASSISTANCE

The ITC connected Nevco with Laura Wolff, instructor of economics and finance in the School of Business, and her students for a hands-on international market research project. Two five-student teams, worked on Nevco's international expansion project. The teams evaluated potential international opportunities by analyzing market potential, customer segments, competitors, industry trends, regulatory considerations, and potential market-entry strategies. The objective was to provide Nevco with research that management could use to compare opportunities and inform future international expansion decisions.

"My role is to guide students in applying the concepts and analytical tools they learn in the classroom to real business decisions," Wolff said. "Working with companies like Nevco challenges students to analyze complex market information, think strategically, and develop recommendations that businesses can actually use."

The students' final reports were only one part of the assistance. After the research was completed, the ITC reviewed the findings with Nevco, helped the company interpret the recommendations, evaluated additional international opportunities and international opportunities and discussed practical next steps for its international growth strategy.

"Working with the SBDC has been a game changer for Nevco," said Marc Fritsche Jr., sales consultant at Nevco. "Schneidine has been great to work with throughout the process, and the students delivered thorough research that helped us begin developing a strategy for building our international division. Their market research gave us a strong foundation to build on. I would recommend the SBDC to any business without hesitation."

The ITC also connected Nevco with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Office of Trade and Investment (OTI), giving the company access to additional state export resources and international market-development support.

As Nevco evaluates its next markets, the ITC is identifying relevant international trade shows and helping the company assess opportunities that may qualify for financial assistance through the Illinois State Trade and Export Promotion (ISTEP) program. Depending on the eligible activity, ISTEP can reimburse 25%-75% of certain international travel expenses, including up to \$10,000 for two company representatives through Individual Foreign Market Sales Missions. Eligible businesses may also receive 50% assistance, up to \$10,000, for qualifying product-compliance certifications and up to \$10,000 for eligible website localization and e-commerce activities.

"Our work with Nevco is about moving from information to execution," said Schneidine Louis, director of the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center at SIUE. "The students provided market intelligence, and the ITC helps Nevco determine what comes next, whether that is evaluating a market-entry strategy, identifying the right international trade show, buyers' identification, connecting with the Office of Trade and Investment, or exploring ISTEP resources that could reduce the cost of international expansion."



The Impact: Building a Stronger Foundation for Global Growth

The collaboration has provided Nevco with more than a market report. Ten SIUE students conducted dedicated international market research for the company. Nevco received analysis of potential markets and recommendations to support its international strategy. The ITC then helped translate that research into practical next steps while connecting the company with state export resources, potential trade-show opportunities, and export-development funding programs.

"The partnership between Nevco and SIUE benefitted both parties. For SIUE students, the project provided direct experience working on an international expansion challenge for an established Illinois manufacturer. For Nevco, the work provides a stronger foundation for determining where and how to expand beyond the more than 10 countries it already serves."

"International expansion requires more than identifying a promising country," Louis said. "Companies need to understand the opportunity and determine whether it makes sense for their business. Our role is to help companies like Nevco use market intelligence to make those decisions, connect them with the resources available to support expansion, and help turn international opportunities into an actionable strategy."

WHY UNIVERSITY AND EXPORT PARTNERSHIPS MATTER FOR ILLINOIS COMPANIES

International market development can require expertise and resources that companies may not have internally, even when they already have export experience.

The partnership between Nevco, the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center, and SIUE demonstrates how university resources can directly support Illinois economic development. Businesses gain access to market research, export counseling, and state and federal resources, while students gain experience applying their education to real international business decisions.

Already present in more than 10 countries, Nevco is not beginning its export journey. It is preparing for its next phase.

With more than 90 years of Illinois innovation behind it, the company is using research, strategy, and export resources to evaluate where its technology can go next.

