

# Chilling in the US

Thermasolutions International Ltd, manufacturers of commercial nightblinds and motorised blinds for supermarket cabinets, is breaking into the US with support from UK Trade & Investment



## Fast facts

**Company:** Thermasolutions International Ltd

**Industry:** Refrigeration Manufacturing

**Target Market:** US

**UKTI Service:** Gateway to Global Growth

[www.thermasolutions.co.uk](http://www.thermasolutions.co.uk)

In recent years, international regulations have been put in place to encourage us all to reduce our energy consumption and lower emissions. Refrigeration alone accounts for 14 per cent of UK electricity use, but efficiencies can be created in the way these systems are designed, serviced, set up and operated.

Recognising this, Thermasolutions International Ltd has developed a range of blinds for commercial refrigeration cabinets, which it manufactures at its factory premises in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. Blinds are made to customers' individual specifications, and, as well as producing new blinds, the company also recycles and upgrades old blinds, to make them more energy efficient.

"We've been in the refrigeration business for over 20 years, and have always sold products that have energy saving benefits," says Ken Patel, Managing Director of Thermasolutions International.

"There's been an increasing trend for businesses to reduce energy consumption, both from an environmental and a cost standpoint. Slowly over the last two or three years, the market has become aware of how a simple blind can help to achieve this. In the UK, most supermarkets still close for several hours at night time. Using our blinds after trading hours can reduce their electricity bill by around 20 per cent. And because our blinds are listed by the Government's Enhanced Capital Allowance Scheme (ECA), they can save even more by claiming ECA on their tax return."

## Experienced exporter

Thermasolutions' blinds are used by major supermarkets across the UK. The company has used its connections with these multinationals to develop its own export business. For example, the Co-op sources its cabinets in Europe, so Thermasolutions looked

at those manufacturers and began to supply them with its blinds directly. The company also supplies a Turkish company that makes refrigeration cases for supermarket giants like Carrefour.

It was through this connection in Turkey that Thermasolutions came across UK Trade & Investment. A contact at the factoring agency helping the company with its Turkish customers mentioned the type of support that UK Trade & Investment offers to UK businesses.

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Ken got in touch and was soon benefitting from Gateway to Global Growth, a free service offering experienced exporters a strategic review, planning and support to help grow their business overseas.

“We had exporting experience, but were thinking of tackling the US, a much bigger market than any we had exported to before,” says Ken. “The US is catching up with the UK in terms of energy saving policies, with government subsidies for energy saving products. It is a very lucrative market. Three years ago, we exhibited at an event in Las Vegas, at a cost of £30,000. There was a lot of interest in our products, but nothing developed because we had no prominent presence in the US. We realised we needed some advice and support if we were going to turn the interest into concrete business.”

## Ongoing support

A UK Trade & Investment International Trade Adviser (ITA), invited Ken to join the Gateway to Global Growth programme. Ken took part in the International Business Strategy Review, a powerful tool used by UK Trade & Investment to test and develop a robust international

strategy. Together, Ken and his ITA reviewed his plan, identifying the critical success factors that would ensure that Thermasolutions' strategy for breaking into the US market had an enhanced chance of success. The ITA offered tactical and strategic advice about what approach to take.

In the meantime, Thermasolutions had found a UK based company with a major connection in New York, already supplying equipment to supermarkets there. This was the local connection the company needed to establish its credentials in the US. UK Trade & Investment arranged a free British Airways flight to New York for Ken to meet a supermarket chain there and discuss a trial roll out of Thermasolutions' blinds in six of its stores.

“The US is so big that it can be a tough market to crack,” says Ken. “The key is to approach it confidently, and find local partners to work with. It's good to know that there is advice and financial support for UK companies like ours. Our Gateway adviser is on hand to accompany me to meet potential customers and partners, and give advice. UK Trade & Investment can guide you in the right direction.”

## Helping you develop your international business potential

International business is complex even for the most experienced of exporters. Markets change; opportunities come and go - especially in the current climate. Nothing stays the same except your need to maximise your proven potential in global markets.

Through a range of unique services, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

Gateway to Global Growth is UK Trade & Investment's free service to experienced exporters which offers a programme of strategic support tailored to your needs. Solutions could be complex, requiring both UK Trade & Investment services and those offered by other public or private sector organisations. Gateway is designed to help grow your company's business overseas.

For further information please visit [www.ukti.gov.uk](http://www.ukti.gov.uk)

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## The UK and the US

The US has the largest and most technologically powerful economy in the world and is Britain's largest single export destination, with £71 billion (18 per cent) of goods and services exported in 2009. Overall, Britain is the fifth biggest exporter to the US, after Canada, Mexico, China and Japan. The US is also the leading overseas destination for British investment, with the stock

investment in each other's countries estimated at £1,500 billion.

The US economy is integrated and largely self-contained, with every major industry represented. The sheer size of the US means it should be treated as a series of regional markets with varying characteristics.

For further information about business opportunities in the US, please go to [www.ukti.gov.uk](http://www.ukti.gov.uk)



UK Trade & Investment is the Government department that helps UK based companies succeed in international markets. We assist overseas companies to bring high quality investment to the UK's dynamic economy. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.

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