

Spotlighting Business Success

State Designated as Florida's Principal Provider of Business Assistance [§ 288.001, Fla. Stat.]

Tampa, FL

Congressional District 14

Senate District 19

House of Representatives District 62



SBDC Helps Sunbelt Valve Body Builders Expand into Latin America

Sunbelt Valve Body Builders is a Florida manufacturer of valve bodies located in Tampa. The company's recent experience in exporting to Mexico has opened a whole range of possibilities for expansion to other places in Latin America.

Most people do not know what a valve body is, but every car with an automatic transmission has one. As you may imagine, car's transmissions and their valve bodies break once in a while, and this creates a demand for new, used or re-manufactured parts. After being in the automotive transmission repair business for 20 years, Fabian Romo and his business partners decided to open a business to re-manufacture valve bodies and meet the growing demand in the United States.

So far, the business has been flourishing with plenty of domestic demand; but recently, as the number of automatic cars expands in Latin America, the company has been receiving a multitude of requests. Fabian decided to look into it and found huge potential, not just for the valve bodies but for technical education. Fabian, who is originally from Ecuador, first targeted the Mexican market. Last year, the company held one technical seminar in that country, which in turn generated demand for their products. Now, Sunbelt Valve Body Builders has an official distributor in Mexico and is growing its sales in that market.

Based on his success in Mexico, Fabian decided that he would expand to other Latin American countries. Currently, the company is working with the Florida Small Business Development Center at the University of South Florida to assist Fabian in choosing his next markets and prepare the company for that expansion. Sunbelt Valve Body Builders received an in-depth export marketing plan funded in part by Enterprise Florida, Inc. through the Small Business Administration's State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant. In addition and as part of the same grant, the company will receive a scholarship to pay for a Gold Key Service from the U.S. Commercial Service.

By working with Federal, State and local government agencies and benefiting from the grant, Fabian will receive a jump start to his expansion efforts into South America where a potential of approximately 77 million registered vehicles awaits him. Paired with Fabian's vision and determination and the company's competitive advantages we have a recipe for success!

Ready for New Markets? We Can Help. Our Export Marketing Plan Services will position your company for GROWTH. In partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Enterprise Florida, Inc. and the U.S. Commercial Service, the Florida SBDC Network assists qualified manufacturing small businesses in Florida who are "new-to-export" to identify growth strategies through the development of customized Export Marketing Plans.

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Helping Business Start, Grow & Succeed

SBDC expertise helps businesses grow strategically through no-cost consulting and low-cost seminars in areas including:

- Starting a business
- Business planning
- International trade
- Marketing, web strategy and sales
- Accounting and taxes
- Financing, banking and lending
- Government contracting
- New product launches
- Market research
- Healthcare practice management
- Minority certifications

The Florida SBDC Network's 35 centers serve EVERY county in Florida. The West Central region covers:

- Desoto
- Hardee
- Hernando
- Highlands
- Hillsborough
- Manatee
- Pasco
- Pinellas
- Polk
- Sarasota

The Florida SBDC Network is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (www.SBA.gov)

Learn more at www.SBDCtampabay.com

