

International Trade Assistance Center (ITAC) Success Story **EZ Grout**



Damian Lang
President/Owner of EZ
Grout Corporation

Masonry business owner, Damian Lang recognized a need to reduce fatigue on labor-intensive jobs in his company. He began by looking for a better way to fill masonry block. After several ergonomically designed prototypes and extensive field-testing, Lang introduced the Grout Hog Delivery System.

In 1998, Lang started a new company called the EZ Grout Corporation to develop, produce and market new manufactured products. EZ Grout

has rapidly become a leading equipment manufacturer for the masonry and concrete industries. EZ Grout is continuously looking for ways to increase employee productivity and reduce physical exhaustion.

EZ Grout is located in southeast Ohio with lots of room for growth on the 75-acre facility with production currently taking place in their 6,600-square-foot building. All of the products are built on location using innovative state-of-the-art technology, including a laser-cutting capacity, a robot and powder coating station for durable paint application. They also use a green process application to recycle their own water.

To explore additional opportunities abroad, EZ Grout, Sales Manager, Thad Skinner met with Kelly O'Bryant, Director of the International Trade Assistance Center. O'Bryant helped Skinner apply for an International Market Access Grant for Exporters (IMAGE) Grant to assist in attending an international trade show.

Skinner said, "Working with Kelly was really helpful. She introduced us to the IMAGE Grant program, where companies get reimbursed for some international trade show expenses. Tradeshows are very expensive, transportation for staff as well as product freight to and from the show, and booth space is very costly. The grant helped us recover some of the money we put into the show. The Las Vegas show put us in touch with companies across the world, where otherwise we wouldn't be able to reach them. As a result, we get a lot of our international sales business from those contacts. Business is really starting to pick up steam...our name is really getting out there."

Skinner reflects, "We have picked up business in Canada, Mexico, Europe, India, Caribbean and South America. We are gaining in our international market and a lot of that is because of the exposure we get at the international trade shows. We continue to look at ways to expand our international trade business."