

Government boost lifts JQ American Corp. over \$1m in sales

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HAYWARD, Calif. — When Jamal Qureshi came to the United States in the late 1990s and started his export company, JQ American Corp., he had a very tough first year, with only one sale that was for \$950.

But then he did what few do—went to the government for help — and now his yearly sales top \$1 million.

He began his San Francisco Bay-area company in his house with his wife, Akila, in 1998.

The idea was to supply machine parts to oil and gas companies in the Middle East. Since, working closely with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Oakland Export Assistance Center JQ American has begun doing just that.

It has customers in the Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman; is expanding to Turkey, Egypt and Latin America; and has new export offerings in the medical equipment, chemical and health-products industries.

In fact, for his efforts, Qureshi was recently awarded the "President's 'E' Award" for excellence in exporting. The award is given by the president of the United States and the commerce department.

"It is a very prestigious award," said Roderick Hirsch, director of the Oakland Export Assistance Center. "This year only two Californian companies and only 12 across the United States won the award."

Hirsch said that Qureshi was chosen because JQ American successfully entered numerous world markets, increased its customers a significant percentage each year and hired additional employees.

Above all else, he added, Qureshi "has fully used the resources of the U.S. Department of Commerce" and turned this into sales.

Qureshi was also recently named "2002 Minority Enterprise Development Week Regional Minority Exemplary Exporter of the Year" for the San Francisco region and is a candidate for "National Exporter of the Year."

Hirsch credits Qureshi for actively seeking help from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

According to Hirsch, though the U.S. Department of Commerce has numerous avenues to help small-to-mid-range business grow and enter markets in other countries, few businessmen who are eligible come forward.

He said Qureshi's willingness to do so is a reflection of his overall business attitude.

"He is a very involved, very aggressive businessman and he is a great success," Hirsch said.

Though Qureshi heaps the praise back on the U.S. Department of Commerce, his background and ideas on the export business illustrate that success was probably not going to be a long time coming.

Qureshi, a native of Bhopal, India, spent about 15 years in the Middle East working in the oil and gas industry.

He has a master degree in chemistry and a law degree from Bhopal University.

From his time spent in the Middle East, Qureshi deduced that the best place to run an export business for the oil and gas industry was in the United States.

In the United States, he said, there are numerous small-and-mid-range manufacturing companies that can produce machine parts for the oil and gas industry at a low cost. But they don't have the infrastructure and global sales force to compete with larger companies for customers abroad.

Qureshi steps in as the middle-man and connects these smaller companies to foreign customers.

Qureshi said that expansion into exporting other products has arisen as he has seen a market opportunity.

For example, JQ American is currently working with Argentina's Ministry of Health to provide medical equipment ranging from vaccines to dental supplies to pregnancy tests.

JQ American has also begun exporting its own brand of vitamins such as EPA fish oil, Ginko Biloba and ginseng to Switzerland through a Swiss company.

This last venture has Qureshi pondering the manufacturing business as well.

JQ American currently has seven employees in its Hayward headquarters.

Qureshi said that his goal is to eventually bring much of the manufacturing in house by acquiring a manufacturing company.

However, he said, he first wants to get a better control over the global markets he is already in and is eyeing his next expansion for sales — into India.