

**School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
Office of Career Services**

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN
TRADE POLICY/PROMOTION**

Description of the Field

Trade policy/promotion includes a variety of activities including analysis of markets, increasing attendance at trade events such as trade missions, identification of agents and distributors, dissemination of information on export financing. Additional activities include representing business interests with officials of foreign governments and international organizations, identifying joint venture partners, researching development projects, and understanding foreign standards, testing and certification requirements.

Career Paths and Entry Salaries

Entry level titles include project coordinator, research assistant, government relations assistant, economic analyst, public relations specialist, trade policy associate, etc. A student completing his/her Bachelor of Arts without experience in the federal government or legislative branch is likely to start in the low \$20,000s. If a person has his/her Bachelor of Arts and a couple years of Capitol Hill experience, (s)he would probably start in the low to mid \$30,000s. A graduate degree can enhance both of these figures, but professionals in the field emphasize the experience referred to below.

Business-government relations activity is critical because US Government policies directly affect a company's international business. Government policies and legislation affect, for example, international tariffs, non-tariff trade barriers, export financing, export license and control requirements, counter-trade and technology transfer. Thus, people who have held positions in the public sector have experience critical to a firm's international activities. Export promotion at the Commerce Department, export licensing at the State Department, trade finance at the Treasury Department are but a few examples of public sector work which would be considered desirable. The legislative branch also provides a setting for graduates seeking to develop knowledge valuable to global corporations. An individual who understands how government works and, therefore, how to influence policy to the business sector's advantage is potentially an attractive candidate.

Demand

Increased foreign competition has caused American industry to take a closer look at its operations. In a more competitive international market, firms cannot afford inefficiency and wasted resources or else they risk losing their share of the market. Job opportunities are expected to be best for those with a graduate degree or industry expertise. The creation of large trading blocs like the European Community, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the ASEAN group, as well as political shifts in Eastern Europe creates opportunities for individuals who can provide insight and expert analysis on how to take advantage of this evolutionary trend. Thus, the demand will continue to increase as a result of an increasingly interdependent world where the prosperity of a nation depends upon its abilities to regulate its exports and imports.

Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field

- Demonstrated interest in an international career: This can best be achieved by integrating one's educational experience with some work experience in the field of international trade or other business related activities.
- Functional expertise: an international affairs generalist is less desirable than someone who has specific competence in areas such as international finance, political risk management, economics, strategic planning or marketing.
- Area expertise and foreign language proficiency: An individual who understands the culture of a country in which a company is doing business is an asset. Experience living abroad is a plus. Foreign language proficiency is another

plus. The ability to speak the language of the customer may set one company apart from its competitors. Moreover, the ability to analyze foreign information may open the door to new technologies and opportunities for developing trade policy, which can give a company a competitive advantage.

• Flexibility - The ability to recognize that one must first learn the needs of the company before being able to help promote it internationally is essential. Patience and the eagerness to learn will enable an individual to gain the proper background for a career in trade policy and promotion.

Sample Group of Employers

- Federal Government:
 - Department of Commerce
 - Department of the Treasury
 - Department of Transportation
 - Private Sector:
 - American Express
 - AT&T
 - Eastman Kodak
 - Associations:
 - US Chamber of Commerce
 - International Economic Policy Association
 - National Foreign Trade Council
- Office of the US Trade Representative
Trade and Development Program
- Exxon
IBM
- Trade Relations Council of the US
US Council for International Business
World Trade Center

Future Challenges of the Profession

International trade has continued to become increasingly important to virtually all countries. As multinational firms expand their activities throughout the world, they will continue to dominate and orchestrate most international trade. At the same time, however, smaller firms can be expected to increase their involvement in international trade due to increased world demand for products and services and in order to survive and expand because of stiffer competition worldwide.

The consolidation of unified trading blocks and markets means that exporting to that market will become increasingly difficult. The emergence of formidable foreign competition is challenging the once predominant market position of many US industries. US companies are developing strategies and implementing plans to protect their positions and capitalize on new opportunities. Some are joining with foreign firms to pool resources and create global business alliances. Such joint ventures and partnerships are leading to the internationalization of business.

To Obtain More Information

- Professional Organizations:
Washington International Trade Association
International Trade Association
Academy of International Business.
- International Directories:
International Trade Names Dictionary: Company Index
Directory of International Trade
Directory of Export and Trade Assistance
Washington International Trade Association Directory
- Database:
Trade Opportunities (ITA - Department of Commerce)
- Books:
Careers in International Affairs,
International Business Career Planner
Guide to Careers in World Affairs.

*For more information, visit: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/OCS/Resources/LINKS/itradelinks.html>.