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selling products and goods in the international supply chains that connect all corners of the world.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Apr. 17, 2024



The U.S. middle market continues to increase revenue through purchasing and selling products and goods in the international supply chains that connect all corners of the world.

A new research report, released today by the National Center for the Middle Market ([NCMM](#)) in collaboration with the Center for International Business Education and Research ([CIBER](#)) at The Ohio State University Max M. Fisher College of Business,

reveals that middle market companies of all sizes and industry segments are firmly

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expanded into new international markets. That number is expected to grow in 2024, with 45% of sellers indicating they are looking to expand their international supply chain presence, while 37% of purchasers look to do the same.

“This research offers a unique look at an important segment of middle market business,” said Doug Farren, managing director of the NCMM. “While many enterprise organizations participate internationally and often times have well-defined processes, teams and partnerships, we wanted to explore the latest trends and implications for mid-size companies that sell products outside the U.S. as well as source raw materials and supplies from partners in other countries.”

While middle market businesses that have international supply chains are largely satisfied with their experiences and acknowledge the importance of diversification, business beyond domestic borders is not without challenges and risk. While 37% of responding purchasers cited longer lead times as their top challenge, sellers cited quality control as their primary hurdle within their international supply chains.

Risk mitigation for international supply chains also remains a top priority for these middle market companies — 47% of sellers cited insurance as their primary action for mitigating risk, while 40% of purchasers cited a diversified supplier base as their go-to tactic. Regardless of whether these mid-size companies purchased or sold products internationally, purchasers and sellers each felt that supply chain disruptions were minor (74% and 80%, respectively) and felt overwhelmingly confident in their international supply chains (77% and 89%, respectively).

Another challenge revealed by the research is the struggle to hire domestic employees with international supply chain expertise. Mid-size companies that purchase or sell internationally have a clear need for domestic employees with international supply chain experience, with language proficiency cited as being particularly critical, along with international awareness and cultural competence.

“What was particularly interesting about the research was just how much work was

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resources to increase and promote the nation's capacity for international understanding and competitiveness.

“We were proud to collaborate with NCMM on this very important exploration of global supply chain,” said Dominic DiCamillo, executive director of Fisher's Office of Global Business, which houses its CIBER. “When we talk about the power of partnerships and driving real impact and understanding of today's international business environment, it's projects like this one that highlight the unique role that the NCMM, Fisher and CIBER can have when working together.”

The research report can be found at <http://www.middlemarketcenter.org>.

Small Business

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