

# Rich Rayner, Co-founder, Rayner Equipment Systems

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Rayner Equipment Systems, a Sacramento-based designer and manufacturer of paving equipment, won an award this month for its exporting business from the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Rayner has been involved in international trade since 1984 and now exports to 34 countries.

Last year saw 36 percent of Rayner Equipment's sales coming from exports.



[Enlarge](#)

Gordon and Richard Rayner of Rayner Equipment Systems.

## **How did you first become interested in foreign markets?**

“We started building paving equipment for our own use to give our construction company a competitive advantage. In late 1984, (a Canadian firm) came knocking on our door and said we have been watching your crews and want to know how we can buy those. ...We started manufacturing to sell. A major oil company helped us sell the equipment to Argentina, then Chile and Brazil. We had very little international marketing during that time.”

## **What changed?**

“In 1996 we sold over 50 machines to Thailand and started marketing around the world. We became known as a manufacturer and a systems educator — we teach our customers all the rock and asphalt technology. The key thing we have learned is to go slow with customers. Our industry requires lots of technical knowledge. If you go too fast and leave a customer high and dry, you will get a bad name and fail.”

## **What is the most difficult hurdle you have experienced in exporting, and how do you navigate it?**

“You have to be careful in understanding the person on the other side of the fence. Do they truly understand what you are doing? For example, when the Chinese say ‘yeah,’ that actually means no. Understanding responses can only come from spending time in the country and dealing with the people one-on-one.”

## **What are the different ways you market your export business?**

“We market in a print trade magazine, but everything else is online. We focus on our website and ad positioning on Google. When someone does a search we pop up pretty early. We also have lots of YouTube videos so people can watch a real-life application of the machines and materials. This does most of the selling for us.”

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/print-edition/2016/05/27/rich-rayner-co-founder-rayner-equipment-systems.html>