

# Business Interview Guide 5

## Assessment- Manufacturing Sector

**These questions are skewed to manufacturers but also adaptable to other industry sectors.**

*Use in conjunction with other interview guides, specifically Guides 1 & 2, to obtain basic information on the business and assess the potential for cluster participation.*

1. Compared to 2 years ago, have any of the following aspects changed?

Not Applicable/ Decreased/ Stayed the same/ Increased

- Production Volume
- Prices
- Supplier Prices
- Profits
- Productivity
- Exports

2. Do you compete for business against sister plants within your corporate organization?

Yes/No If no, move to question 5.

3. Are these sister plant(s)? (select all the apply)

- About the same / little difference
- Newer Larger
- More efficient
- More flexible

4. Where are they located?

- In Saskatchewan
- In Canada
- Outside of Canada

5. Where is your primary product at in its life cycle?

- Emerging
- Growing
- Maturing
- Declining

6. When did your company last introduce a new product to the market?

- New product this year
- 1 - 3 years
- 3+ years
- Currently in development



7. What percentage of your products' components is outsourced from another manufacturer?
  - ⚙ 0 - 9%
  - ⚙ 10 - 24%
  - ⚙ 25 - 49%
  - ⚙ 50% +
8. What products do you outsource to manufacturers outside of the area? (List three)
9. Is there a new technology emerging that will change your primary product or how it is produced? If yes, describe.

## Research and Development

1. As a percent of sales, how much does the company spend on research and development (R&D)?
  - ⚙ 0%
  - ⚙ Under 3%
  - ⚙ 3 - 6%
  - ⚙ Over 6%
2. In the next three years, do you see this amount of R&D:
  - ⚙ Increasing
  - ⚙ Remaining the same
  - ⚙ Decreasing
3. Do you conduct R&D at: (select all that apply)
  - ⚙ This location
  - ⚙ Other branch
  - ⚙ Head office
  - ⚙ Other location--- If other, please specify
4. As a percentage, how is the R&D budget divided among the following categories?
  - ⚙ New product development \_\_\_\_%
  - ⚙ Product improvement\_\_\_\_%
  - ⚙ Process improvement\_\_\_\_%
5. What are the challenges your business faces when bringing new products to the market? (select all that apply)
  - ⚙ Marketing
  - ⚙ Regulations
  - ⚙ Pricing
  - ⚙ Trade barriers
  - ⚙ Competition



- ⚙ Labour availability
- ⚙ Capacity
- ⚙ Other If other, please specify

## Facility

1. Is your business focused on implementing any of the following process improvements?
  - ⚙ Productivity improvement (i.e. lean manufacturing)
  - ⚙ Six sigma & quality
  - ⚙ Waste product recovery
  - ⚙ Health & safety recovery
  - ⚙ Admin. support toward ISO Certification
  - ⚙ Vendor/supplier network for continuous product improvement
2. When was the last time your business made a major investment in equipment or machinery?
  - ⚙ 0 - 2 years
  - ⚙ 2 - 4 years
  - ⚙ 4 - 6 years
  - ⚙ 6+ years
3. Is your facility or equipment: (select one)
  - ⚙ At capacity
  - ⚙ In need of modernizing
  - ⚙ Underutilized
4. If your plant and / or equipment is / are underutilized, are you interested in cooperating with another business to bring the plant or equipment to full capacity?  
Yes/ No

## Exporting

1. Does your business export? Yes/No
2. Is your manufacturing firm a:
  - ⚙ Potential exporter
  - ⚙ Single market exporter
  - ⚙ First time exporter
  - ⚙ Multi-market exporter
3. What are the barriers to expanding your business in global markets? (select all that apply)
  - ⚙ Capacity constraints
  - ⚙ Inadequate support from municipality
  - ⚙ Inadequate support from provincial government



- ⚙ Trade barriers
  - ⚙ Uncompetitive due to currency issues (e.g. value of CAD)
  - ⚙ Inadequate support from federal government
  - ⚙ Lack of knowledge of markets
  - ⚙ Other. If other, please specify:
4. Where do you currently export to? (Select all that apply)
- ⚙ USA
  - ⚙ Europe
  - ⚙ Asia
  - ⚙ Central / South America
  - ⚙ Other
  - ⚙ If other, please specify:
5. What percentage of your business sales is related to exports?
- ⚙ 0 - 9%
  - ⚙ 10 - 24%
  - ⚙ 25 - 49%
  - ⚙ Greater than 50%
6. Are you currently looking at any new export markets? Yes/No If yes, specify where.
7. A number of government programs and services are available. Would you like information related to exporting programs and services? Yes/No
- If yes, what type of information are you looking for? (select all that apply)
- ⚙ Exporting fundamentals training
  - ⚙ Mentorship opportunities
  - ⚙ Funding options
  - ⚙ Industry research
  - ⚙ Best practices information
  - ⚙ Other Network / event opportunities If other, please specify

