

**From:** BusinessUSA <business@subscriptions.usa.gov>  
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Just because it's hot doesn't mean it's time to put down the books! Check out these online courses and make the most of the dog days of summer, from learning about content marketing to writing an export plan.

Let's get cracking, shall we?

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### **Transition to Being a Content-First Business**

Is your business model working for you, or do you need to make a change? Being a content-first business means that you first build your brand and your audience – then come up with products to sell. If done correctly, according to proponents, it provides a better understanding of what products make the most sense for your business.

Your assignment: Attend this SCORE-sponsored webinar scheduled for July 30 on what it takes to [build a "content-first" business](#).

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### **Write an Export Plan**

So, you think you want to begin exporting, but you're not sure where to begin?

Writing a solid export plan can help you anticipate future goals, assemble facts, identify potential challenges and create an action statement. It also includes timetables and milestones to gauge success.

Your assignment: Check out [the U.S. Commercial Service's guide](#) to what goes into a good export plan, which includes a list of resources that can help. This [online webinar on creating a plan](#) is a big help, too.

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### **Get to Know Your Customers Better**

Do you really know your customer base, or are you merely guessing? Knowing your customer demographics and what they want is critical to growing a business and increasing sales.

Your assignment: [Watch this Small Business Administration \(SBA\) webinar](#) on building better customer relationships.

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## Sell to the Government

Okay, so you're a vendor with great products and services, and you'd like to sell to the federal government, which awards millions in contracts every year. Now what? The General Services Administration (GSA), the contracting arm of the government, has a huge range of resources to help you get started.

Your assignment: [Watch the GSA's six webinars](#) on doing business with the federal government, from partnering options to understanding what drives GSA procurement decisions. Looking for more? Be sure and check out [the SBA's video](#).

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## Learn from Gert

Lots of people know about Columbia Sportswear Company and the commercials that made its former president, the uber-gruff (in her TV spots, anyway) Gert Boyle, famous. But few know about Columbia's remarkable small-business-to-giant-killer story, or that Gert's favorite saying is, "early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise."

Your assignment: Learn more about Gert [in this short video](#), just one part of BusinessUSA's extensive [library of online videos and instructional tools](#).

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