

Good show in Riyadh!

The British Embassy in Saudi Arabia will soon be opening its own, showcase for British products and technology. In the belief that nothing impresses like a good show, this all-British shop window in the heart of Riyadh will be a place for British firms to make their mark in Britain's biggest market in the Middle East.

100 square metres on the ground floor of the British Embassy is being converted into an Export Service Centre and exhibition hall. Visitors will find displays of UK products, trade catalogues, a facility to view promotional videos, a full set of UK trade directories and UK trade databases on CD Rom. Arabic and English-speaking staff will be on hand to help with enquiries. It will be open between 8.30 and 2.30 Saturday to Wednesday. Entry is through the Commercial Section.

The project was designed with all types of British firms and institutions in mind. British household-name firms are being invited to take advantage of the extensive wall space to mount large area displays, creating windows into Britain and the British way of life. These will give visitors an all-around feel of British quality and expertise and create a stimulating environment for the product exhibits.

Saudi Arabia is one of Britain's top twenty markets - exports to the Kingdom in 1996 were worth £2.5 billion. The key to holding on to this market position and improving it is to increase the two-way contact between UK suppliers and Saudi customers. The Embassy Showcase was designed with this uppermost in mind.

Four new services will be offered and the Embassy will make no charge other than recovering administrative expenses incurred. So how can British firms take advantage of this new venture?

PRODUCT EXHIBITS

UK firms can arrange with the Commercial Section of the Embassy to exhibit products in the Export Showcase, for an agreed period, on one of the eight exhibition plinths provided. Business visitors and members of trade missions can send items in advance of their visit and invite prospective agents and customers to view them at the Embassy before their arrival. When in Riyadh they can arrange to meet customers in the exhibition area during Embassy opening hours, avoiding the need to carry samples and brochures around town. UK firms taking part in local trade exhibitions can arrange to put part of their exhibit on display in the Embassy after the exhibition is over, thus expanding the number of people who may see it and maximising the value derived from their exhibition investment. Bids for Embassy exhibition space will be dealt with on a first come, first served basis.

PERMANENT CATALOGUE EXHIBITION

A catalogue display rack will be positioned close to the product exhibition area with space for up to 48 sets of UK trade catalogues. UK firms may reserve space to display their catalogues for an agreed period. They will be expected to up-date and replenish the stock of their literature on display.

SOURCE OF SUPPLY SERVICE

UK firms can ask for their details to be added to the database kept at the Commercial Reception counter which is used to provide source of supply information to local business enquiries.

PRODUCT PROMOTION BY VIDEO

UK firms may send copies of their product promotion videos to be stored in the commercial reference library. They may then invite local contacts to visit the Embassy Commercial Exhibition Area to view the video on the audio-visual equipment provided.

We hope these services will prove popular with British exporters and that they will generate a lot of new interest and demand for British products. The concept of a one-stop-shop for exporters has already been tried successfully in Britain through the creation of Business Links across the country. The Riyadh Export Showcase is a natural extension to the Business Links network. As our experiment develops we plan to add more services including, ultimately, a video conferencing terminal to link Saudi customers direct with British suppliers via UK Business Links.

If you would like to know more about this project or how to make use of the services please contact Ted Cole, First Secretary Commercial at the British Embassy, Telephone 01-488-0077 Extension 242.

Star Spot

Did anyone see the fantastic picture of the Hale Bopp comet published in all the English Language Newspapers recently. If you looked closely (in the newspapers that is) you'd have seen that it was taken by our very own dishy diplomat, Ted Cole, First Trade Secretary at the British Embassy, who apparently spends many of his nights gazing at the stars with a high-tech motorised telescope.

Although that may come as a surprise to many people, we say congratulations Ted.