

## Going Global – Route66 International

What is one characteristic that so many successful entrepreneurs have in common? When Monica Lee, Vice President at Route 66 International, Inc., was asked that question, she had an answer ready: “Start by educating yourself. Put in the effort to research all the resources available to you. Look into government programs, business opportunities and pursue local connections. Remember that building critical relationships is one of the important keys to success.” But most of all, she cautioned: start the process early!

In fact, Monica began looking for support for her about-to-be-launched export business before the company even opened its doors! She became aware of the importance of reaching out to the business community and state and national governmental agencies after she attended an event where the [United States Commercial Service \(USCS\)](#), the [Export-Import Bank \(EXIM\)](#), the [Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#), [\(NJ STEP program\)](#), [NJ Economic Development Authority \(NJEDA\)](#), and the [NJ Business Action Center \(BAC\)](#) were all present, to name a few. Immediately she realized she needed to start developing her list of contacts and interacting with those who could provide the most support for her. She went out of her way to keep in touch with Susan Widmer, Director of the Northern NJ USCS and others who offered their support as her company started to take off.

*She knew she could not afford to wait to identify the right partners.*

Instead, she wanted to be ready when the factory opened, researching and preparing early. Monica is continually outreaching and applying for trade missions and trade shows, interacting in a meaningful way with those who could offer Route 66 International the financial support and incentive programs, manufacturer voucher programs, improvement loans and grants, and other investment alternatives that they needed to get off to a solid start.

Reflecting on how far they’ve come since Day One, Monica has one special golden nugget for all the senior leaders, decision makers, and owners of small to mid-size, privately owned businesses: Know all your opportunities!

In other words, Monica concluded with this smart advice: “Assess your potential. Explore how your company may qualify for help. Consistently pursue those options that are best suited to your situation – consider everything and do not delay while expecting to be approached. Take responsibility for your own success - talk to others and let them know what your company does, what successes you are enjoying, what future goals you have set and – most of all – explain how they can help.”