

Certified Slings & Supply

Doug Worswick, CEO of Certified Slings, Inc., had a balancing act to do: survive the "great recession" of 2009 while continuing the tradition and legacy from Doug's Dad by applying his simple philosophy: "Be humble, take care of your team. Your team will take care of our customers and everything else will take care of itself." Doug was determined to continue to provide quality service and the highest quality products with the team of employees who had helped him build the company.



Certified Slings is a distributor and manufacturer of slings, rigging, overhead lifting, load securement and contractor supplies. In all cases, safety is the highest priority. It counts as its customers the construction, mining, power utilities and theme park industries, as well as the U.S. military.

As he watched many of customers, competitors and partners go out of business during the recession, Doug jumped into action and looked for ways to weather the storm. By doing so, he found and was able to take advantage of the many resources available to businesses in Central Florida, including from the Florida SBDC at UCF.

Although the company had some success internationally, in 2009 Doug went on the offensive and began aggressively pursuing export sales. Despite the perceived risks presented by international markets, Doug invested in the export opportunity and hired a Director of International Sales. The company targeted Latin America and the Caribbean markets and, by uncovering opportunities, building relationships and establishing its brand, it generated positive momentum.

Momentum wasn't enough for Doug, however, and in 2012 he turned to the FSBDC at UCF to help achieve even greater export success. The FSBDC, with support from Enterprise Florida, produced a customized Export Marketing Plan for Certified Slings that identified new markets, recommended marketing strategies and facilitated in-country contacts.

With the Export Marketing Plan in hand, Certified Slings had a game plan. Doug chose to expand his international team and focused them on effective market entry strategies based on the needs and characteristics of each market and each customer. Doug sought assistance from his FSBDC international trade consultant who, as Doug says, "guided them down the path."

Today, Certified Slings has seen a 100% increase in its international business and has a strong foundation for the future. It has 110 team members providing quality service and quality products. And, on the strength of his leadership, business success and team-centered philosophy, Doug has been named Small Business Exporter of the Year for the North Florida District, State of Florida and Southeastern United States (Region iv) by the Small Business Administration.

When asked how the FSBDC has helped him, Doug said, "The FSBDC has been great from Day One. The Export Marketing Plan set the standard and now, as the journey continues, every time we have a question or hit a roadblock, they are there for us. They have been helpful, responsive and provided the resources we need. They have been just a tremendous support."

Providing the tools, strategies, and expertise to help Florida's business community thrive.

State Designated as Florida's Principal Provider of Business Assistance [288.001, Fla. Stat.]

The Florida SBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide service network funded in part through cooperative agreements with the U.S. SBA, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida, and other private and public partners; hosted by the University of West Florida; and nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs.

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MEET DOUG WORSWICK

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