It isn’t all that often that a North American wall and ceiling contractor casts a business hunting look overseas.

But when and if a contractor does want to have a look at the international market, where does he go for assistance and, more important, for information?

Where would he get a validated export license, for example, or get details on Middle East import controls, or get figures on construction equipment spending in Greece?

The answer is: the newly realigned Industry and Trade Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce.

A wall and ceiling contractor—with construction services to offer or a manufactured product to sell—might never want or need to reach for sales in the international market, but it is nice to know that he can obtain vital help quickly and reliably if he wants.

The new changes in the revamped ITA represent a determination by the government to shorten the path, figuratively speaking, between the doors that open to business services. Many of the doors are familiar to clients of the former Domestic and International Business Administration. Many, though, are new.

There are now six operating divisions in the Industry and Trade Administration, whose function is to assist businesses and businessmen in the promotion of import and export trade. The ITA mission includes not only information but direct aid to businesses, especially in exports.

The reason for the change now is that ITA has not been that useful and effective in building trade for U.S. firms largely because many companies did not even know of its existence or how to take best advantage of the bureaus’ available services.

Consequently, the trade and industry unit was shifted around. Furthermore, anyone can obtain detailed answers to questions about the agency’s range of services from an Ombudsman (see box items) for the entire unit or even the individual sections.

The six services now include:

The Bureau of Export Development, formerly the Bureau of In-

March, 1979

(Continued on page 21)
OVERSEAS:
(Continued from page 15)

International Commerce, has three branches: the Office of Export Development, the Office of International Marketing, and the Office of Market Planning.

A useful distinction between the first two offices—which have important direct services for business—is that one operates primarily within the United States, the other largely abroad.

The Office of Export Development acts in an export-stimulus role across the entire domestic economy. Through conferences and seminars, discussions with advisory groups, and awards for export achievement, it builds government-to-business links that increase national awareness of the benefits and potential profits in exporting.

It also provides practical assistance to individuals: information on overseas agents, distributors and other export services, specific leads on export sales, construction or engineering projects abroad, licensing and investment opportunities in the U.S. and other countries.

It helps foreign buyers arrange purchasing itineraries in the U.S., including stops at major trade shows. It assists U.S. firms in bidding on large-scale developments projects around the world.

The Office of International Marketing, working mainly abroad through a variety of promotional and informational vehicles, provides market assistance to individual firms.

It also conducts exhibitions, trade missions, sales seminars and catalog displays in all of the world’s principle commercial centers.

The Bureau of East-West Trade is a unit designed to meet the special situation of doing business with the communist centrally-planned economies in which purchasing or negotiating is done by state officials.

Most attention naturally centers on the Soviet Union, nations in Eastern Europe, and the People’s Republic of China.

The Office of East-West Trade Development provides individual marketing counsel, supplies information on available commercial representation in host countries, makes market studies, and conducts trade exhibitions, sales seminars and trade missions.

The Bureau of Trade Regulations, through its Office of Export Administration, handles export controls and, along with the bureau director’s office itself, issues and enforces U.S. rules concerning foreign boycotts.

The Bureau of International Economic Policy and Research houses the specialists who assemble, analyze and interpret U.S. and foreign trade and economic data while working to improve the overall international economic climate in which U.S. business operates.

In this bureau the Office of International Finance and Investment follows international activity in such fields as taxation, technology transfer, antitrust, standardization, patent and copyright protection, settlement of investment disputes and the competitive position abroad of U.S. service industries, and works to resolve U.S. business problems in these areas.

The Bureau of Domestic Business Development, which can be generally described as the result of a merger between two other agencies, is the focal point in the Commerce Department for assistance and consultation on domestic business matters, although it also has significant duties in areas that involve international interests.

The bureau’s Office of Business Programs administers programs to aid import-injured industries, and works to include business expansion or new industrial opportunities in Federal regional recovery funding or large-scale construction projects.

Also, the Office of Basic Industries covers construction matters along with metals, minerals, forest products and engineering.

The Bureau of Field Operations brings the Commerce Department’s international and domestic business programs into local business communities, working principally through a network of 43 District Offices.

This is essentially a two-way activity, conveying export marketing assistance, for example, to an individual client, and receiving and reporting back to the Department practical appraisals of such assistance from the end-users.

For More Information

For further information on the business services of the Industry and Trade Administration call:

Bureau of Export Development—377-5261.
Bureau of East-West Trade—377-5251.
Bureau of Trade Regulation—377-5491.
Bureau of Field Operations—377-3641.

March, 1979