

Exporter Profile

Jamie Laird, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise

Wellington born Jamie Laird moved to Palmerston North at the age of 2. After leaving Palmerston North Boys High, he went on to Massey University where he studied for a Degree in Business Management and following graduation, began his career with BNZ. After a year in the bank's contact centre, he headed off to Europe for his big OE and worked for a year at Nat West Private Bank in London.

Having returned to New Zealand, Jamie successfully applied to New Zealand Trade and Enterprise for the post of Regional Co-ordinator based in Palmerston North, where he works closely with NZTE Regional Manager, Mark Hargreaves – his colleague and mentor. Whilst Mark focuses on the higher growth clients, Jamie works with regional exporting companies who he says are "on their way to achieving export success".

Much of Jamie's time is spent disseminating information and matching companies with those agencies and individuals that can best assist them. If relevant, Jamie can also facilitate communication and acquire information with NZTE offices offshore.

Jamie's key role however, is to ensure that companies have the right plans and processes in place in order to get the most out of export opportunities. In short, he provides a "reality check" so that companies don't go out on a limb.

Of course, meeting with exporters on a daily basis puts Jamie in an ideal position to understand exactly what it is that exporters need to succeed.

"For a start, they need to have an Advisory Board that they can trust. Many exporters are owner-managers or owner-directors and are so busy working in their business that they can't see the bigger picture. An Advisory Board can give this bigger perspective".

Jamie goes on to say that exporters often lack planning skills: *"Most of them do plan, but it all goes on in their head, it's not written down; others have brought in consultants to write plans but these end up at the bottom of a drawer because there has been no buy-in; exporters need to work with consultants or even better, be able to write their own strategies and marketing plans".*

When asked what he particularly likes about his regional role, Jamie says *"the wide variety of industries I get to work with. If I was working in an office at a main centre, I would just work with one sector, but at a regional level I get to meet all sorts of exporters over many different industries".*

Jamie evidently enjoys his work and believes International Trade is the way forward for him, *"it's a niche career that offers opportunities for growth and promotion".* As proof of his ambition and determination to succeed, Jamie has enrolled in the Diploma of International Trade at the New Zealand School of Export: *"Although I already have a Business Degree, the draw-card of the Diploma is that it's practical. There is some theory involved, but the course has been written for exporters by exporters*



and I can pass this applied knowledge on to the exporting companies I work with".

Jamie has also been awarded the joint NZ School of Export and Manawatu Chamber of Commerce Export Scholarship: *"This Scholarship has helped me immensely. It has helped financially, but it's also an indication that the Chamber, the School and NZTE can see the benefit of me studying; they have belief in me and that provides me with the motivation to succeed".*

Jamie is certain that once he has graduated, the Diploma will help him achieve success, he is unsure what the future holds but *"an off-shore post for NZTE working with New Zealand exporters would be a great experience, I'm not sure where, but that's what makes the job so exciting".*