



## Exporter Profile

### Melissa Cocks, Highford Marketing Group Ltd



Melissa Cocks is Christchurch born and bred, but talking to this young woman, you get the feeling that she will soon be going places!

Leaving Christchurch Girls High School with hopes of an accounting career, she graduated instead with a marketing degree from the University of Canterbury. As part of her studies, Melissa worked as an intern with German owned Gelta and thank goodness for this twist in fate, because New Zealand needs more young exporters like Melissa. .

On graduation, she took up a position with Gelta, in charge of local sales and getting to grips with export documentation and a year later, Melissa moved on to Highford Marketing Group Ltd where she has worked for two years as a Marketing Assistant.

Highford is a 100% exporting company specialising in both chilled and frozen meat cuts, seafood, wine, dairy, frozen berries, honey and other New Zealand

goods. During her time with the company, Melissa says she has *“been fully exposed to the international trade scene, from documentation and sourcing product through to the logistics of getting product to the end client”*.

Only six months into the job, Melissa made her first trip visiting existing and potential clients in four countries, an experience which served as good preparation for her current portfolio, which includes sourcing meat and other products for sale to Singapore, Indonesia and India.

Melissa’s success is heavily dependent on establishing and maintaining strong relationships and keeping up to date with trends in the market.

Earlier this year, Highford Marketing Group Ltd participated in the Singapore Food show, providing Melissa with yet another challenge - to organise the company’s expo display, as well as interacting with prospects from all over the world.

Melissa is currently enrolled at the New Zealand School of Export where she has successfully completed the Certificate of International Trade in 6 months rather than the usual eight, passing the International Trade Research module with distinction.

*“The fact that my job is in International Trade made sense for me to study at the same time and get more in-depth knowledge. Studying makes you look at the bigger picture and it has made me think about situations and ways of business that I would have not considered previously.*

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*Staff are very supportive and efficient in giving feedback and the School has catered to me by bringing exams forward and sending my material out earlier. Although it seems a lot of work, a couple of hours out of your week is not really much to ask.*

Now, well on her way to finishing the Diploma of International Trade, Melissa has this advice for others starting out on the road to international trade: *“The skills and knowledge you need vary, but a good understanding of international markets, trading terms, document procedures and of course your product is a good start. The political and economic environment are constantly changing and therefore you need to adjust your marketing strategies to allow for this, but the main criteria is that you are open to learning about cultures and meeting people. Often International Trade requires travel and building relationships and it is not suited to everyone.”*