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Using AI For

Export Intelligence... and MORE!

ABOUT ME!

Derek Leung

- Development Lead @ Digital Nova Scotia
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- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/derekhkl/>
- Worked at developing digital-first programs and campaigns at Western University, York University, and University of Waterloo
- Worked with Adidas, American Express, Melitta, and more
- Led trade missions on behalf of Digital Nova Scotia creating over \$65M in long-term economic impact (2025)



AI doesn't replace the human,

BUT IT CAN HELP US

EXTEND OUR

CAPABILITIES

AI will make you more productive,

**BUT IT IS IMPORTANT
THAT YOU'RE USING AI
EFFECTIVELY**

AI will save you time,

**BUT IT IS IMPORTANT
THAT YOU REINVEST
THE TIME GAINED**

Canada's AI Adoption is

LOW!

12.2%

used AI in the last 12 months

14.5%

plan to use AI in the next 12 months

66.7%

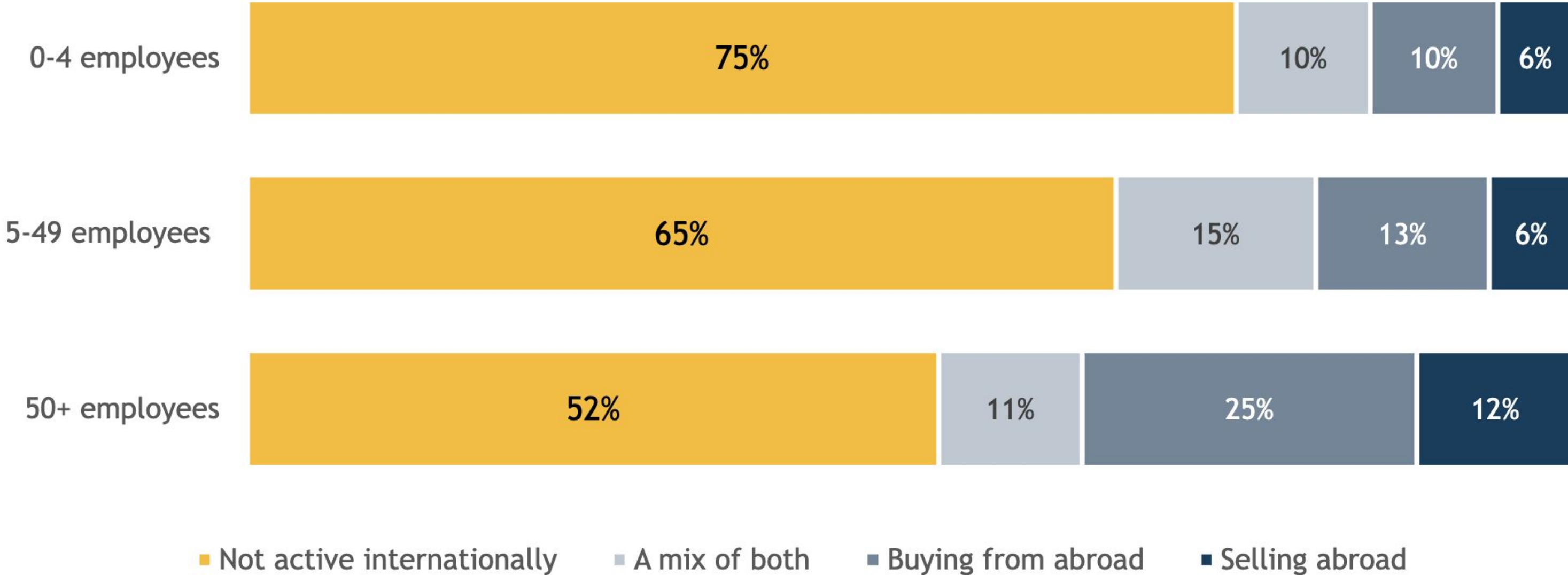
have no plans to use AI

78.1%

of non-adopters say AI is "not relevant"

	Q3 of 2024	Q3 of 2025
All businesses	10.6%	14.5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	4.8%	4.9%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	4.6%	3.4%
Construction	3.2%	9.2%
Manufacturing	13.1%	7.2%
Wholesale trade	12.2%	7.8%
Retail trade	5.1%	5.7%
Transportation and warehousing	4.2%	6.6%
Information and cultural industries	29.7%	38.6%
Finance and insurance	17.9%	31.5%
Real estate and rental and leasing	13.0%	24.4%
Professional, scientific and technical services	24.6%	26.3%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	12.7%	11.6%
Health care and social assistance	11.4%	23.2%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	18.5%	15.2%
Accommodation and food services	6.0%	14.8%
Other services (except public administration)	6.5%	8.7%

AI Has The Most Potential to Support SME Exporters



Date source: CFIB

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How can AI create value

ACROSS THE EXPORT WORKFLOW

Simple Export Workflow



Example: AI-Enabled Tool Set for Export

Market Intelligence Perplexity AI, Google Search, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot

Lead Prospecting LinkedIn Search, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, Apollo.io

Qualification Custom GPTs, Gemini Gems, Copilot GPTs

Outreach DeepL, Smartcat AI, Grammarly, ChatGPT / Gemini / Copilot

Sales Activities Canva, Google Slides, PowerPoint, Klaviyo, Lovable

Compliance AskReg AI, Blue J AI, Gaia Dynamics AI

Sample Productivity Gain Calculation for Export: Time

Export Function	Example AI stack used for estimate	Manual hours / month	AI-assisted hours / month	Time saved / month
Market intelligence	ChatGPT Business + Perplexity Enterprise	20	8	12 h
Lead prospecting	LinkedIn Sales Navigator + Apollo	30	12	18 h
Qualification	Custom GPTs / Gemini / Copilot seat	25	10	15 h
Outreach	ChatGPT + Grammarly (+ optional DeepL)	24	10	14 h
Sales activities	Canva + AI writing support + Klaviyo/free-to-paid mix	20	8	12 h
Compliance	Gaia Starter or AskReg-type specialist AI	15	6	9 h
			TOTAL HOURS SAVED PER MONTH	80 h

Sample Productivity Gain Calculation for Export: Cost

Export Function	Example AI stack used for estimate	Est. AI tool cost / month	Est. manual in-house cost / month	Est. AI-assisted in-house cost / month	Money saved vs hire / month	Est. provider cost / month	Money saved vs provider / month
Market intelligence	ChatGPT Business + Perplexity Enterprise	\$50	\$962	\$434	\$528	\$2,500	\$2,066
Lead prospecting	LinkedIn Sales Navigator + Apollo	\$160	\$1,242	\$657	\$585	\$2,700	\$2,043
Qualification	Custom GPTs / Gemini / Copilot seat	\$30	\$1,035	\$444	\$591	\$2,000	\$1,556
Outreach	ChatGPT + Grammarly (+ optional DeepL)	\$60	\$1,056	\$500	\$556	\$2,040	\$1,540
Sales activities	Canva + AI writing support + Klaviyo/free-to-paid mix	\$40	\$880	\$392	\$488	\$1,700	\$1,308
Compliance	Gaia Starter or AskReg-type specialist AI	\$99	\$735	\$393	\$342	\$2,625	\$2,232
TOTAL		\$439	\$5,910	\$2,820	\$3,090	\$13,565	\$10,745

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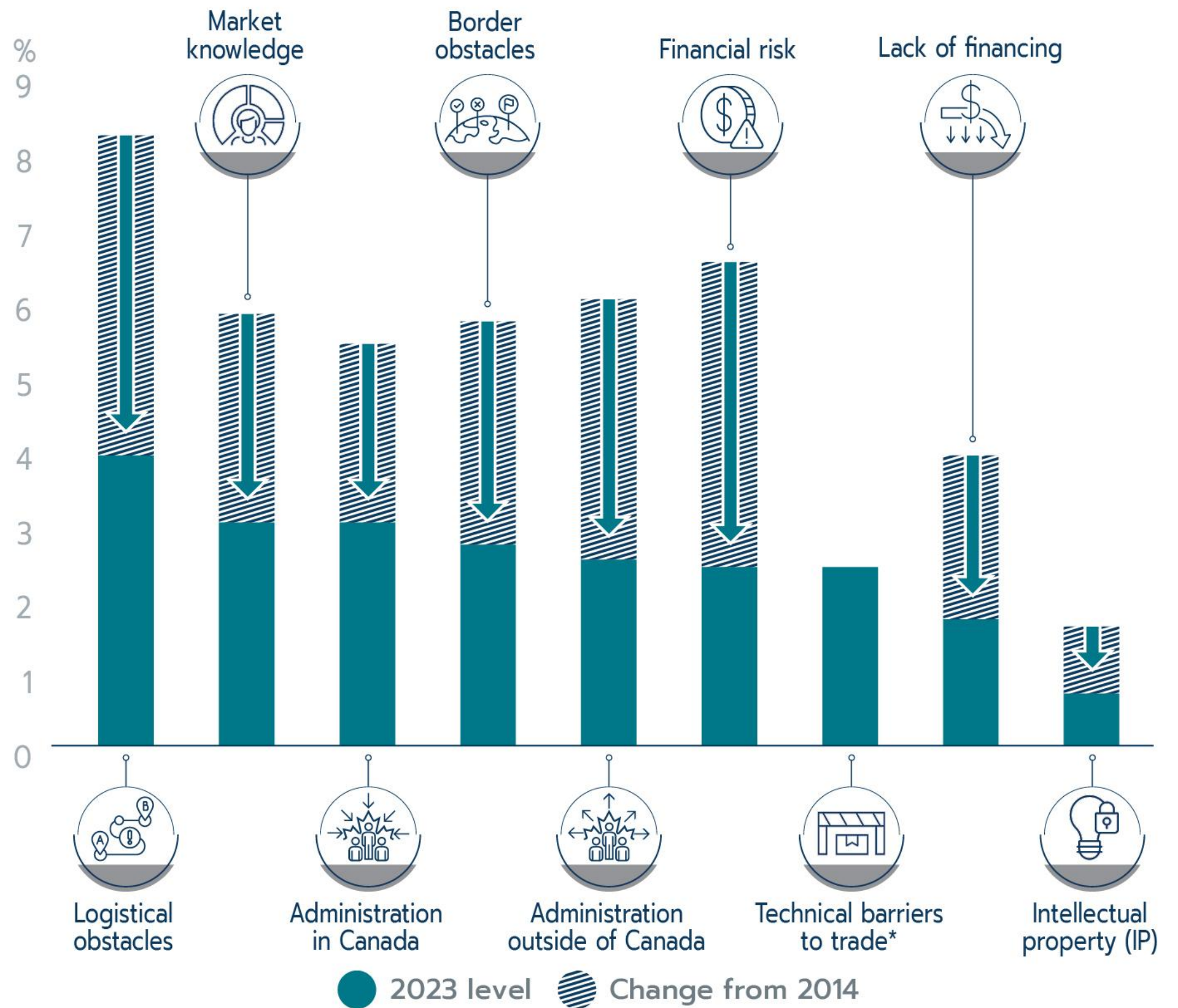


Use AI To Increase Efficiencies With

MARKET RESEARCH AND COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Non-exporting SMEs' Reasons for not exporting

Date source: Statistics Canada



*Question not asked in 2014

Note: Excludes "local nature of business" as reason for not exporting.

Data: Statistics Canada, Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises

Source: Office of the Chief Economist, Global Affairs Canada



Prompt Like How An Exporter Thinks

- Many prompts are TOO SIMPLE! A good prompt can be over 1,000 words long.
- Prompts, especially for complex topics, need to have multiple layers
- Ensure you are clear about what you want to see in a market entry report
- Now let's try some AI-market research for the fictional production, the DeeNS BorealBrew™ Thermal Press Bottle, a premium, fully made-in-Canada insulated French press travel bottle.





AI-Assisted Market Research:

- Prompt** A basic prompt would be: Create a highly detailed, practical, and decision-oriented market entry report identifying and ranking the top 10 export destination countries for the DeeNS BorealBrew™ Thermal Press Bottle outside Canada. The report should help a small-to-mid-sized Canadian company make realistic export decisions.
- BUT, let's dive into what a useful export-oriented prompt looks like



Detailed Market Research Prompt: #1 Defining AI's

What to include

A good role statement does four things:

1. Names the expertise areas (for example: international trade, market research, export strategy).
2. Sets the seniority level (senior analyst, advisor, strategist).
3. Defines the business lens (small exporter, limited infrastructure, practical recommendations).
4. Signals the tone (decision-oriented, realistic, not generic).

Better formula

“Act as a senior [trade + market research + export strategy] analyst advising a [small / mid-sized exporter]. Provide practical recommendations that reflect real channel, regulatory, and execution constraints.”

Avoid

Roles that are too broad (“be an expert”) or too disconnected from the business decision (“write a marketing report”).

Detailed Market Research Prompt: #2 About The

Tell the model which document it must trust first.

- Upload the product document and tell the model to extract facts before analysing markets.
- Instruct it not to contradict the document.
- Require assumptions to be stated clearly whenever the document is silent.
- Ask for a short product summary before the market analysis begins.

Product Details to Provide

- Company and product name
- Category and use case
- Country of origin / manufacturing
- Materials, specs, features
- Target user and positioning
- Price tier and differentiators
- Brand context and likely export strengths

Why This Improves LLM Output

Reduces hallucination, improves fit-to-market reasoning, and keeps recommendations consistent with the actual product instead of a generic category assumption.

Detailed Market Research Prompt: #3 The Task

Build the task as a process, not just a request



Task-writing checklist

State the business objective, the size of the shortlist, the ranking logic, and the exact recommendation you want at the end. Good prompts ask for both analysis and prioritization.

Make the output decision-oriented

Your prompt does this well: it is not just asking “what markets look attractive?” It asks “which countries should DeeNS enter first?” That final choice is what turns research into action.

Detailed Market Research Prompt: #4 Market Selection Criteria

Demand & category fit

- Product demand
- Product culture
- Product relevance
- Market capitalization

Customer economics

- Purchasing power
- Goods openness
- Consumer spending

Channel readiness

- E-commerce maturity
- Retail environment
- Economic maturity

Trade & regulation

- Tariffs / Duties
- Trade access for Canada
- Regulatory complexity
- Trade agreements

Logistics & execution

- Shipping practicality
- Distribution complexity
- Ease of doing business

Competitive fit

- Competitive intensity
- Fit for Canadian-made premium offer
- Likelihood of SMB success

SMB weighting tip

For small businesses, weight execution factors almost as heavily as demand. A giant market that is hard to enter may be less attractive than a slightly smaller market with easier channels and trade conditions.

Detailed Market Research Prompt: #5 Report Structure

- 1 Executive Summary**
Opportunity, best-fit markets, risks, and strategic recommendation
- 2 Product Summary**
Key features, positioning, use cases, export strengths, assumptions
- 3 Methodology**
Criteria, weighting, and how 20 countries become 10
- 4 Longlist of 20**
Why considered, key opportunity, key limitation, final status
- 5 Top-market deep dives**
Country-by-country analysis with pricing, channels, regulation, logistics, and risks
- 6 Comparative Ranking Table**
A side-by-side top 10 table for faster decision-making
- 7 Export Readiness Requirements**
Packaging, labelling, compliance, IP, localization, and support
- 8 Strategic Recommendations**
Top 3 first-entry markets, sequencing, channel plan, messaging
- 9 Sources and Data Notes**
Verified facts vs estimates vs assumptions vs strategic judgement

Detailed Market Research Prompt: #6 Additional Info & Instructions

Source discipline

Treat uploaded documents as core input. Do not contradict them. Extract facts first.

Evidence discipline

Use recent, credible sources. Prefer official trade, customs, economic, and market sources.

Judgement discipline

Separate verified facts, estimates, assumptions, and strategic judgement.

Output discipline

Be practical, justify rankings, and specify the final format (report, PDF, deck, tables, visuals).

Extra instructions worth keeping

- Tell the model to label assumptions clearly
- Ask for reasoned estimates when data is incomplete
- Require professional headings, tables, and subheadings
- Ask for citations and note where legal validation is needed

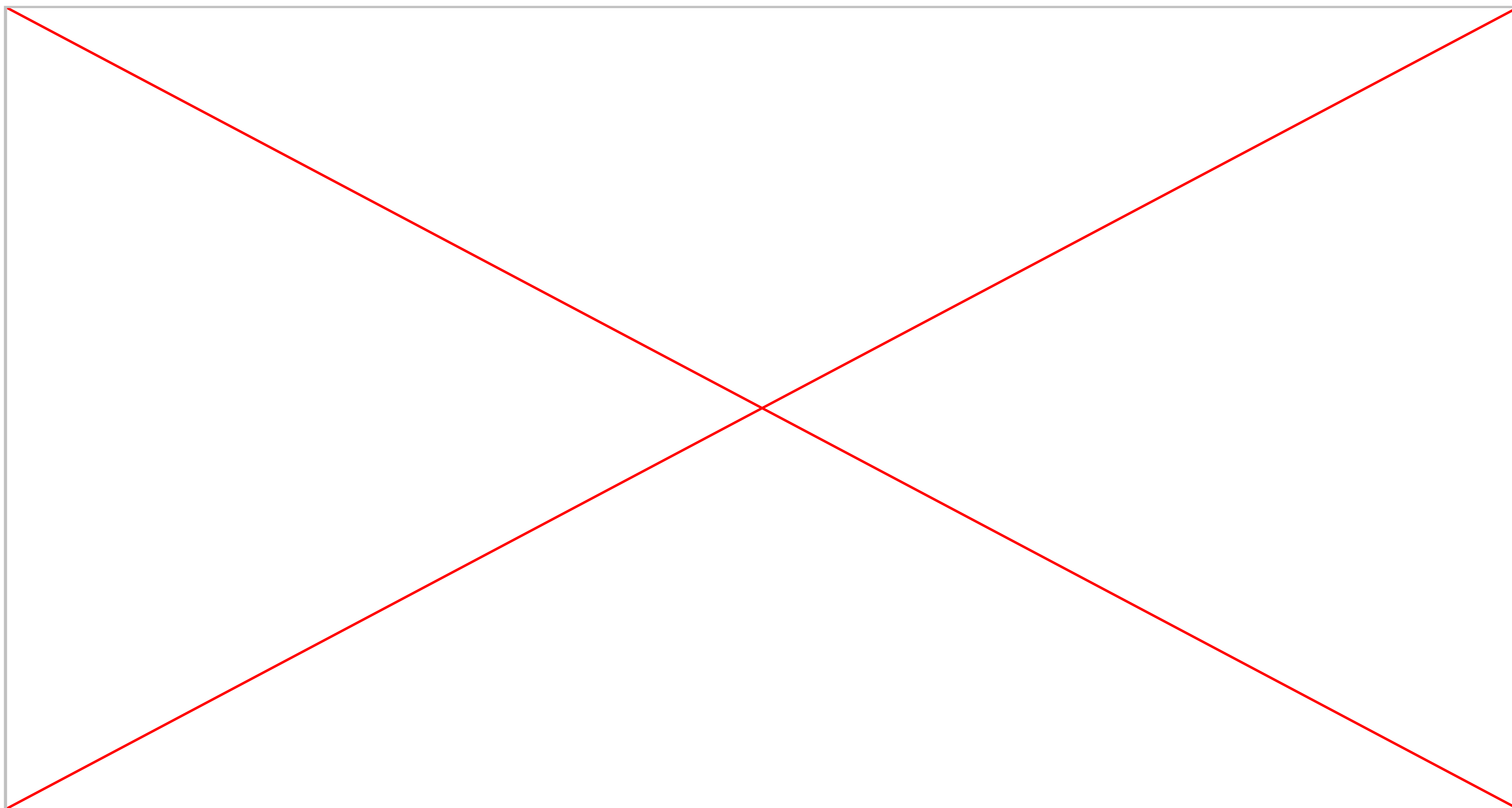
Best practice for LLM use

LLMs are excellent research copilots, but they are not the final authority on compliance or law. The prompt should explicitly identify areas that need legal, customs, or regulatory validation before launch.

Comparison of Models and Prompts

	Instant Thinking (Short)	Instant Thinking (Detailed Prompt)	Extended Thinking Model (Detailed Prompt)
Length & Depth	Very short (2 pages)	Medium (~12 pages)	Very detailed (~24 pages)
Report Generation Time	<1 minute	~13 minutes	~37 minutes
Top Markets (Top 3)	US, Germany, Japan	US, UK, Australia	US, UK, Australia
Top Markets (Full Ranking)	Includes UAE, more simplified	More refined (focus on practical markets)	Most refined + data-backed rankings
Scoring Methodology	None	Weighted qualitative scoring	Structured + data-informed weighting (HS trade data, e-comm, etc.)
Market Justification	1-line rationale per country	Moderate explanation	Deep analysis (economics, behavior, channels, risks)
Competitive Analysis	Minimal	Moderate	Deep (named competitors, positioning gaps)
Pricing Strategy	General (USD \$75–95)	Market-specific ranges	Highly tailored per country with justification
Market Entry Strategy	Basic (ecommerce + retail)	Structured (DTC → retail → distributors)	Phased roadmap with timelines (0–30 months)
Regulatory Detail	None	Moderate	Extensive (FDA, EU, Japan compliance, VAT, etc.)
Trade/Tariff Analysis	Minimal	Included	Detailed (CUSMA, CPTPP, CETA implications)
Logistics Considerations	None	Moderate	Detailed (3PL strategy, returns, freight constraints)
Export Readiness Guidance	None	Included	Detailed checklist + operational requirements

Comparison of Models and Prompts



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Using AI For Export

BEYOND GENERAL LLM TOOLS

AskReg AI

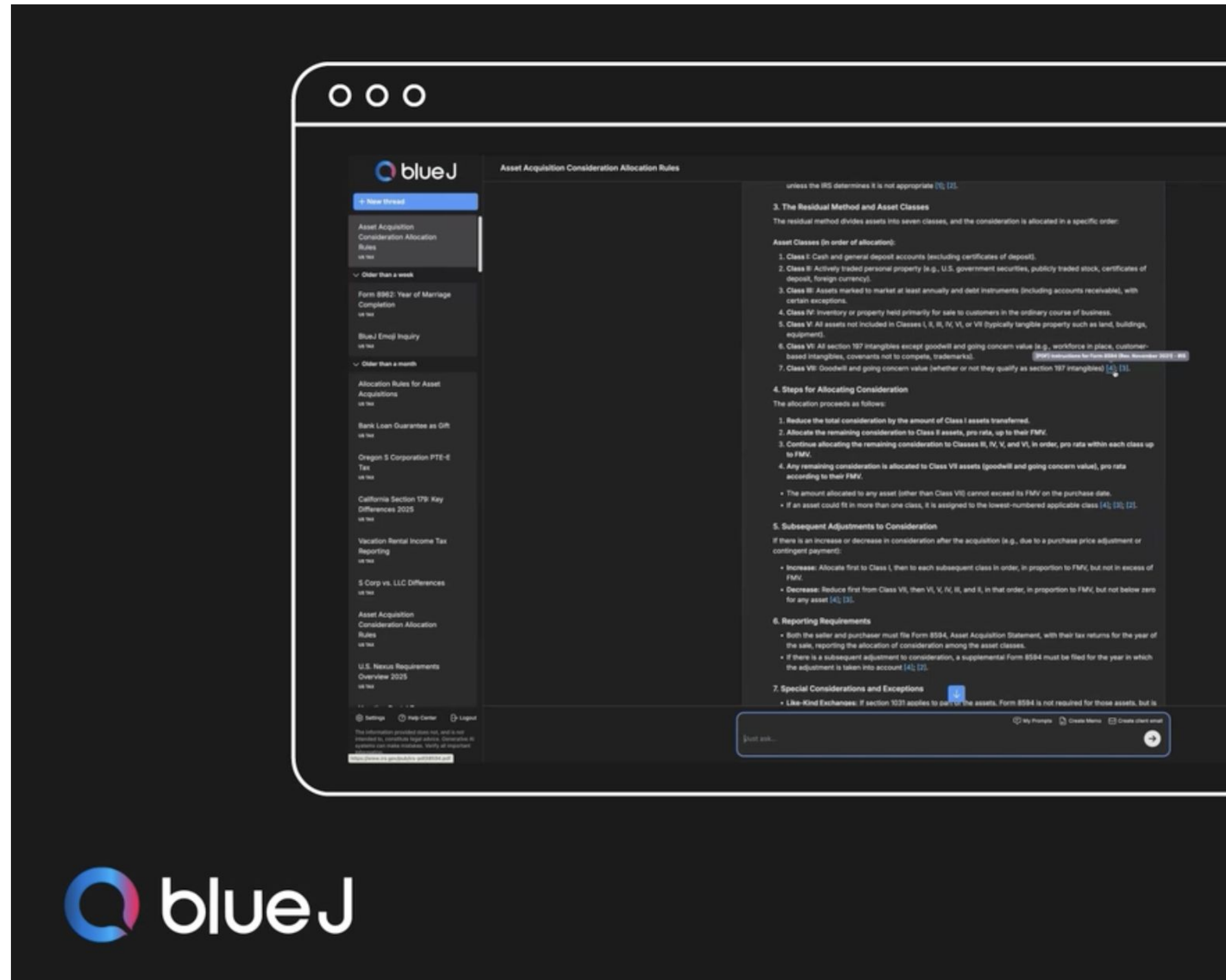
- Great for anyone requiring food and nutrition compliance
- Great tool for under \$30/month
- Get compliance details for United States, Mexico, Canada, the European Union, Australia and New Zealand.



ASKREG	OTHER LLMS
DOMAIN EXPERTISE SPECIALIZED IN FOOD & NUTRITION COMPLIANCE	NOT SPECIALIZED IN FOOD & NUTRITION COMPLIANCE
ACCURACY HIGH ACCURACY FOR REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE	MAY LACK NUANCE & ACCURACY IN REGULATORY MATTERS
SPEED FASTER FOR COMPLIANCE CHECKS & LABEL VERIFICATION	REQUIRE MORE CONTENT & ITERATION FOR ACCURACY
COMPLIANCE CONFIDENCE RESULTS ALIGN WITH REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS	OUTPUTS MAY NOT CONSIDER COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS
CUSTOMIZATION TAILORED FOR REGULATORY & NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS	GENERALIZED FOR ALL INDUSTRIES, NOT JUST THE FOOD INDUSTRY

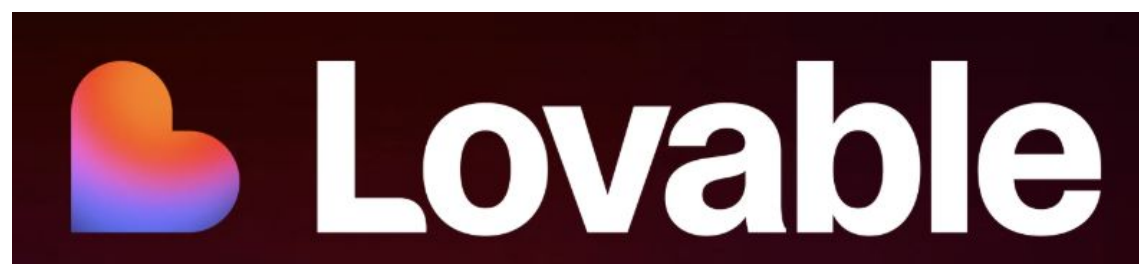
blueJ AI

- Great for anyone looking to save time and resources with tax research
- A bit more expensive, but the platform provides tax information in 220+ tax jurisdictions
- High level of detail provided by the AI outputs



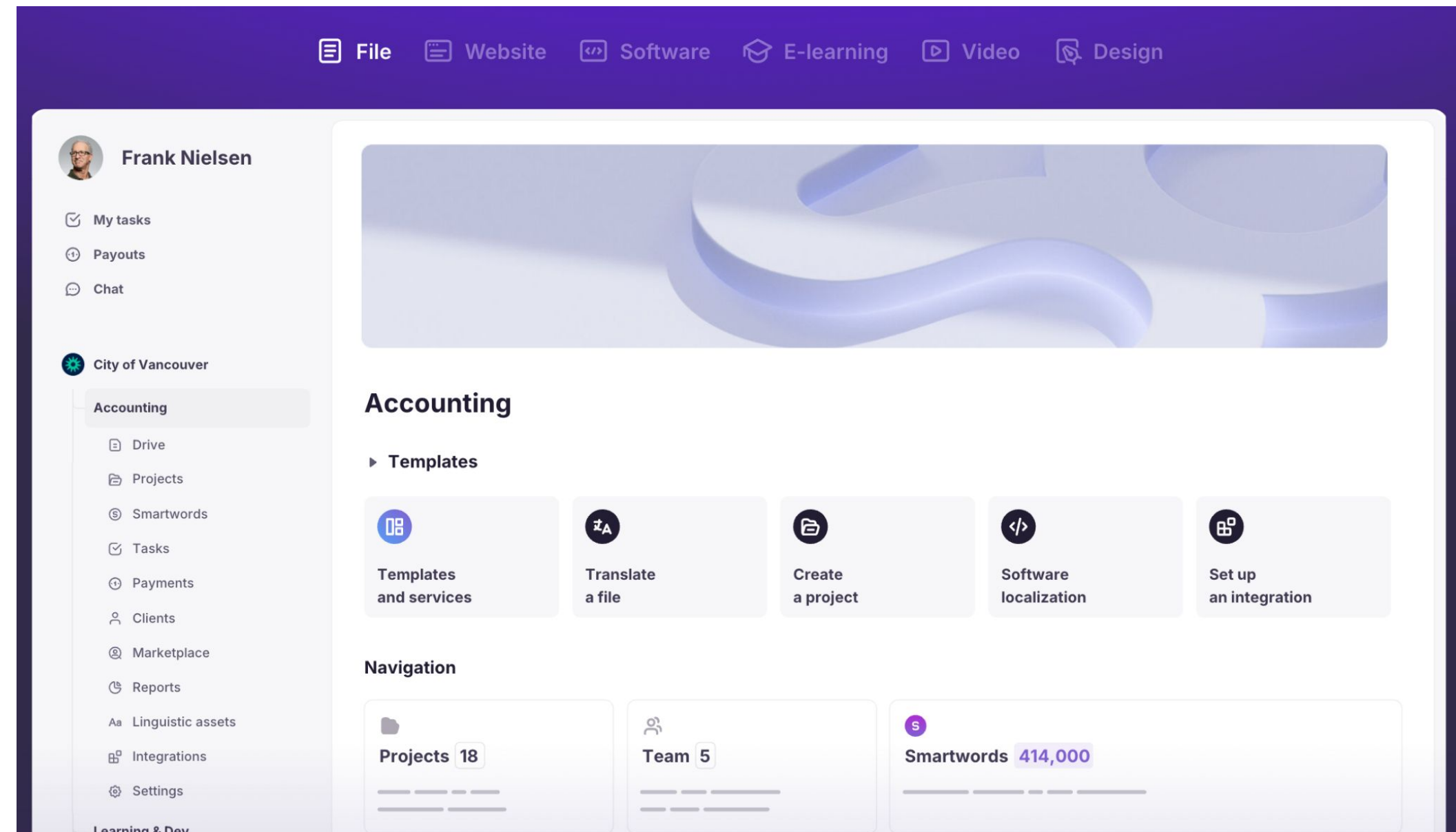
Lovalabe AI

- Affordable tool to bring in coding expertise to your company
- Great for building visually appealing landing pages, visualizing data, and more
- Have built trade mission directories and websites with the Embassy of Canada to Germany (Berlin)



Smartcat AI

- One of the most robust translation apps available
- Stronger language localization than general LLM tools
- Ability to help translate files, websites, videos, and designs
- Integrations with many apps used by organizations



Smartcat

AI for Export Bootcamp

- Perfect for SMEs in Atlantic Canada with less than 10% of their sales outside of Canada
- 6-week microcredential focused on real export workflows
- Covers market intelligence, prospecting, localization, sales content, and AI adoption planning
- Applications close April 7, 2026; live sessions start April 30, 2026
- Eligible graduates of the microcredential can access up to \$2,500 in AI-tool reimbursement

