



U.S. Small Business
Administration

Since 1963, National Small Business Week and SBA have honored the outstanding spirit and accomplishments of small businesses across the nation who contribute so much to our communities, the economy and the American way of life.

Small Business Exporter of the Year Award

Honors individuals who owns and operates a small business engaged in exporting products or services outside of the United States.

- SBA's size standards will apply in determining the eligibility of a nominee.
- Nomination may not exceed four pages in length.
- Signed nominations and SBA Form 1926 and Consent for Disclosure forms required.

Information forms with the completed nominations must be delivered no later than Nov 4, 2019 at 4:30 pm

to the
SBA Hawaii District Office
500 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 1-306
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 541-2990
www.sba.gov/hi

2020 SBA Small Business Awards

SMALL BUSINESS EXPORTER OF THE YEAR

Business Name: Hawaii Air Cargo

Lead Owner(s): Brian Suzuki

Up to 4 principals may be nominated & must complete required forms.

Title: President and CEO

Phone: (808) 391-8566 **Email:** bsuzuki3785@gmail.com

Street Address: 2938 Ualena Street, Honolulu, HI 96819

City: Honolulu **State:** HI **Zip code:** 96819

NAICS/Industry Code: 488100 **# Employees:** 24

Start operation (MMYYYY): 081975 **Type (LLC/Corp):** Corp

Home Address: 95-591 Nawenewene Circle, Mililani, HI 96789

Web address: www.HawaiiAirCargo.com

Nominator Name: Mike Lau

Affiliation/Business: Hawaii National Bank

Phone: 832-2951 **Email:** Michael.Lau@HNBhawaii.com

Street Address: 1620 N. School Street, Suite 145

City: Honolulu **State:** HI **Zip code:** 96817

Provide a brief one paragraph description of the small business:

Since 1982, when Mr. Suzuki took over ownership of the company, Hawaii Air Cargo has provided reliable and economical air freight service to/from the U.S. mainland, Asia and beyond. With offices in Honolulu and Los Angeles and a vast network of both air-, land- and ocean-based partners, Hawaii Air Cargo provides a variety of customers with value-added service and prompt shipping at reasonable rates.

Give a concise statement clearly describing the qualifications of this individual to be recognized with this award:

After nearly four decades in service, Hawaii Air Cargo's commitment to customer service remains its No. 1 priority. In times of fluctuating fuel prices, security and screening surcharges, and other related shipping hurdles, Hawaii Air Cargo works closely with clients ranging from individuals and small businesses to Hawaii's largest companies and organizations. Hawaii Air Cargo is proudly veteran- and minority-owned.

Type and date of SBA Assistance: SBDC, SCORE, Export: various dates.

This may include loans, lending and contracting support (8a), training, and consulting with SBDC, SCORE, WBC, Export, VBOC, Emerging Leaders etc.

Award Selection Criteria for the Small Business Exporter of the Year

Nominees will be evaluated by the following criteria. Please respond to each question.

- I. **Increased sales, profits, and/or growth of employment** because of exporting. Include total number of full-time and part-time employees: 24. Please include gross revenues for past three years:

2016	2017	2018
\$ 6,880,688.56	\$ 5,858,852.63	\$ 6,685,394.70

(Profit and loss statements and balance sheets for the past three years will be required from the State winner.)

	2016	2017	2018
Total Assets	1,332,693	1,415,855	1,486,955
Total Liabilities	473,167	489,972	487,348
Revenues	187,936	113,757	118,124
E.B.I.T.	306,413	151,465	95,700
Net Worth	859,526	925,883	999,607

Estimated % of revenues derived from export activity: **9%**

Number of employees: **24**

- II. **Creative overseas marketing strategies**, with a description of the products exported and markets served. Please include which countries you currently export to and any plans or efforts to further expand.

Hawaii Air Cargo President and Owner Brian Suzuki developed his strategic business skills and marketing strategies in the air cargo industry upon his honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy, when he was recruited by Pan American World Airways in Honolulu. His eagerness to travel and fluency in Japanese earned him a position in passenger service, where he spent 4 years (1968-1972) before transferring to Pan Am Cargo. While at Pan Am, he trained in New York City, London and Hong Kong, and was promoted to cargo management in 1975. He was then offered a position with an air freight forwarder, and in 1982, he took over ownership of Hawaii Air Cargo, where he still serves as president and CEO.

The company now has 24 employees with branches in Honolulu and Los Angeles. Eighty percent of its business consists of shipments to Hawaii from the U.S. mainland. Ten percent is for cargo going to Asia, and the remaining ten percent is inter-island and freight going to the U.S. mainland.

While Hawaii Air Cargo ships a large array of items, notable import business includes construction materials, utility supplies, motion-picture materials for all of Hawaii's theaters, fashion wear and printed products. Many of the company's growing number of exports to Asia require special logistics, handling and timing. This includes macadamia nut chocolate candies, cut flowers, live plants, and live shrimp for farms in Southeast Asia, as well as tropical fish (Brian once developed a system where he cleaned and re-oxygenated fish containers during shipment to increase their survival rate). Hawaii Air Cargo also handles shipments from the DOD and major contractors to bases around Asia and the South Pacific. In recent years, as exports of products such as Hawaii chocolates and flowers has softened, Brian has strategically looked to growing markets such as Hawaii honey and coffee exports.

- III. **Effective solutions** to export-related problems.

Over the past four decades, the air-cargo and freight-forwarding landscape has dramatically changed. Competition from global shipping companies such as FedEx and UPS has increased, and a wider array of air-cargo options has flooded the marketplace. Brian has tackled numerous challenges to keep Hawaii Air Cargo as a leader in shipping to and from Hawaii, and he is well-known for personally navigating issues for clients. This includes everything from working with airlines to negotiate cargo rates and space, as well as ensuring constant temperatures door-to-door.

When Incheon Airport opened in South Korea he was told that the chocolate candies would take 30 to 45 minutes before storing in an airconditioned warehouse. This was unacceptable since the chocolates would melt during the summer and freeze in winter. It would make the product unsaleable. Brian arranged to take five chocolate mac nut shippers to Korea and arranged a meeting with Korean Air Cargo management where a solution was agreed upon and no losses have been claimed since.

Brian formed the Air Cargo Association of Hawaii 26 years ago in response to the difficulty of freight companies securing cargo space on flights during the busy holiday season. USPS would block all space as the holidays approached, often resulting in delayed shipments for local businesses. Brian worked with a group of Hawaii shippers to meet with USPS and develop a solution where USPS chartered dedicated flights during the holidays, freeing up much-needed cargo space.

He also uses his breadth of experience to help local companies reduce costs. This includes negotiating less-expensive air-cargo rates on flights from Hawaii to Asia, as they are often in less demand than in-bound flights, and using an industry standard in determining rates, unlike larger shipping companies that use complicated formulas and fees.

IV. Demonstrated encouragement, advocacy or partnership effort provided to other small businesses in or entering the export arena. Volunteer assistance to other small businesses entering the export market.

Over more than four decades of doing business in Hawaii, Brian has developed an extensive network of partners, and he is committed to both advocacy and volunteer assistance to help others succeed. Brian is currently active with the following organizations: The Hawaii Pacific Export Council; the Hong Kong Business Association of Hawaii; the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii; the Japanese Chamber of Commerce (past Vice Chair) and the Air Cargo Association of Hawaii (founder, past president and current director). He also works as a member of industry associations such as the Electrical Industry Association, Hawaii Flooring Association, the National Association of Women in Construction and the Oahu Contractors Association to help meet a growing need for construction materials in Hawaii.

He has lectured extensively on importing, exporting, and selecting a carrier at the Department of Commerce's Export University, University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture, Hawaii community colleges, and with commodity groups around the state. He has also led trade groups to Japan, China and Korea.

Additionally, Brian has participated on the State's Agribusiness Development Council, lending his expertise from working with growers, farmers and producers and shipping perishable agricultural goods throughout the Pacific. His advisement has been featured on the popular TV show "Think Tech Hawaii", and in a 1999 book published by the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture on bringing Hawaii products to market. In 2000, Gov. Linda Lingle recognized Hawaii Air Cargo with a statewide award for its export achievements.

V. Cooperation with other businesses in the creation of export trading companies, and/or introduction of unique trading relationships, products, or services.

Brian has established numerous relationships between Hawaii exporters and prospective clients throughout the Pacific. He has traveled to multiple DEBDT and HDOA trade shows to help clients represent their products throughout Asia, and assisted Hawaii businesses with identifying and broadening opportunities.

One example of this is Brian's work with a large tropical agro-tourism company and pineapple farm in Okinawa that was in search of a pineapple-related plant for its landscaping. Brian took the owners to a farm on the Island of Hawaii, and established a 10-year relationship where more than 8,000 plants were shipped to Okinawa in the first year alone. Brian and the grower even flew to Okinawa to help identify the various species of plants after their nametags were removed upon planting. Coordinating the export of these plants was an extensive process, involving the removal of roots, cleaning of all organic matter for insects, and carefully packaging them, so they would pass agricultural inspection in Hawaii and in Japan. Brian's agricultural shipping expertise has also allowed Hawaii to expand its plant exports to Japan using lava cinders as a sterile potting media.

VI. Other examples of contributions and participation to support the local community or efforts demonstrating social impact.

Brian is active in the community. He is on the Board of Governors with the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii and has worked on several projects exhibited at the Cultural Center, including an exhibit of Japanese American amateur athletes from Hawaii who have won national and international titles. He lectures to groups around the state on Japanese history in Hawaii as well as Japanese music and motion pictures of the past. He recently spoke to 140 high school students and teachers from Fukuoka, Japan, on the history of immigrants to Hawaii from Fukuoka. He also teaches singing to seniors to help them maintain a healthy lifestyle. Notably, Brian takes care of his staff, many of whom have been with Hawaii Air Cargo for decades. He provides generous vacation leave, travel benefits, training and bonuses, among other benefits.

Information Sheet

The prestigious **SBA Small Business Awards** honor the outstanding small business men and women who demonstrate excellence and achievement. All nominees and nominees' businesses must comply with state and federal regulations regarding labor, immigration, civil rights, taxation, and other applicable regulations. SBA Form 1926 Nominee Background form must be completed, signed and submitted by each individual or team member nominated for an award.

Any financial or other proprietary information provided as required for the nomination will be held in strict confidence by the selection committee and SBA. The Hawaii District Office does not release this information to the public or the media. Selection committee members/judges are vetted by the Small Business Administration.

By submitting the completed nomination form, the nominee certifies that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the information provided is correct and the business has complied with regulations, as stated above.

Please note **that SBA will accept only one nomination per person or business entity within an award category.** If a duplicate nomination is received, the nomination submitted to HDO at the earliest time will be considered for the award. Individuals and **businesses may only be nominated in one award category** each year. **SBA winners who were honored in this award category prior to the 2017 awards (more than three years ago) may be nominated** if they continue to meet all criteria for eligibility for the award.

A Small Business Exporter of the Year will be selected from qualified candidates for the counties of Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, and the City & County of Honolulu. From the top candidates, a State winner will be named. The State of Hawaii Small Business Exporter will be considered for the Regional **Small Business Person of the Year.** **The State of Hawaii winner may be required to submit an expanded package for competition at the Regional level by early January 2020,** including a profit & loss statement and balance sheets for the past three years. If selected for the Regional award, the winner will enter competition for the National title.

Two headshots/portrait-type photographs and 5-6 colored photo images of the winner, their business operation, and at least one photo with/of their nominator will be required for publicity and the State Luncheon presentation. The photos may be in digital format and **will be due in the District Office in early February 2020.**

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I would like my nomination to be reviewed and submitted for other small business awards that would recognize my achievements in business and community. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Please contact me prior to submission. |

Nominator / Sponsor Acknowledgements with signatures:

1) _____ Date _____ 2) _____ Date _____

Nominee Signature(s):

1) _____ Date _____ 2) _____ Date _____

Received at SBA District Office on _____ by _____.