

Export Basics

Meeting with Buyers

Be prepared for the meeting

Meeting with buyers is one of the key components to making your products a success. It is important to be prepared for these meetings so you can accomplish your objectives and make an effective presentation.

Making your presentation and pitch

Here are a few tips for a presentation to an interested buyer:



- Provide background on your company such as the number of years your company has been in business, products and top selling products.
- Identify your competitive advantages what makes you different from your competitors.
- Stress your commitment to a long-term relationship and/or partnership.
- Provide details on the product mix offered by your company.
- Show and be prepared to discuss your current packaging and, if possible, prepare samples.
- Service and lead-time commitment are crucial as well. Let the buyer know your service level and lead-time required prior to shipping.
- When it comes to price, be assertive. Be honest, include all costs associated with your products, and be prepared to negotiate.
- Take notes throughout the presentation.
- Follow up by phone or e-mail punctually, as per the buyer's instructions.

What to take to the meeting

When meeting with buyers, be prepared and have certain items ready to show/present to your interested buyers. Have the following information ready:

- Product and packaging samples – bring best sellers or products that would be the best fit for the buyer.
- Unique selling proposition.
- Sample labels adhering to market requirements.
- Description of export products (product specifications – HS code).

- Detailed documentation and brochures on your products and company (including company history and product lines).
- Know your shipping costs and your preferred export agreement for shipping and/or payment.
- Product pricing – you may not have an exact price but have a price range which includes your shipping costs (incoterms) and other associated costs in order to reach a final price.

Be ready for buyer questions

Prepare for questions that buyers may ask. Be prepared to discuss buyers' requests for exclusivity.



Here are some questions that buyers may ask:

- What are your distribution networks in Canada?
- Do you currently export? Where?
- Why are you exploring new export markets?
- Why are you targeting this market?
- Can you supply references from one of your current customers in domestic or export markets?
- Have you visited the market previously?
- Do you have staff who can speak the language?
- What are your commercial objectives in your target market? (increase sales volume, fulfill market niche, increase brand recognition, etc.)
- What are the main characteristics that differentiate your product from others in the market?
- Is your product and production facility approved for export by Canada and the country you are exporting to?
- What product certifications do you have or are working toward?
- How do you package your products for export? (specifications)
- What is the shelf life of your product?
- Are you open to produce for private label?
- What is your maximum production capacity?
- Do you have a minimum order quantity?

- Are you aware of the labelling regulations in your target market?
- Have you researched appropriate phyto-sanitary requirements? (if applicable)
- What type of customer support do you offer?
- How will you help promote your product? (Be prepared to describe your promotional plan.)
- Do you guarantee sales?
- Do you have selling contracts? (Explain that you want to make it easy for them to buy your product.)

There are a few financial questions that buyers will have when discussing your company and product line that you can prepare for. Some of these are as follows:

- What is the export price –factoring all costs to the export market?
- Will price vary according to volume?
- Is a commission included in the price?
- What are your payment preferences? Can you be flexible? (30/60/90 days; open account; letter of credit)

Prepare your list of questions

You may want to prepare a list of questions to ask of the buyer. Here are some possible questions:

- What experience and success do they have in marketing similar products in this market?
- What geographic regions do they cover?

- What other competitive and complementary products do they carry?
- How does your line fit in or complement your existing portfolio of products?
- For a broker/agent – what is your pay or commission structure?
- What type of promotions and additional funding will this product require at the distributor, retailer and/or foodservice level (i.e., mandatory coupons, neck rings, advertising budget, sampling, spiffs, distributor shows, discounting, case lot sales)?
- What are the buyer's processes for returns, product issues, recalls?
- What are the criteria for delisting? Is there a cost?

For information on exporting, Alberta companies can contact:

The Export Development Section
Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic
Development

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