



Export Basics - Meeting with Buyers - Be Prepared For the Meeting

Making your presentation and pitch

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

- Product and packaging samples – make sure to take best sellers or products that would be the best fit for the buyer.
- Points of what makes your product unique and competitive edge
- Mock labels or developed labels adhering to market requirements
- Description of export products and top sellers (*product specifications – HS code*)
- Detailed documentation and brochures on your products and company (*including company history and product line summary including unique selling features*)
- Know your shipping costs – what is 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 and other associated costs to reach a final price.

Be ready for buyer questions

As well as presenting your product or product line, you must also be prepared for questions that buyers may ask. Be prepared to discuss buyers' requests for exclusivity.

Here are some questions that buyers may ask that you should be prepared to answer:

- What are your distribution networks in Canada?
- Do you currently export? Where?
- Why are you exploring new export markets?
- Can you supply references from one of your current customers in domestic or export markets?
- Have you visited the market previously?

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- Do you have staff who can speak the language?
- What are your commercial objectives for the country you are exporting to? (*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 towards?
- 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? (*for the country you wish to export to*)
- 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?

There are a few financial questions that buyers will have when discussing your company and product line that you must be prepared 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*)

Be prepared with your list of questions

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

- Experience and success 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?

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