



**Export Solutions**

Distributor Identification Experts

Winter 2022 | Volume 14 Issue 1

# Export Express

Insights to Accelerate International Expansion



Our Mission: Help Manufacturers "Spend time **Selling** to Distributors versus **Searching** for Distributors"

## Looking for New Distributors?

How about 9,200? Export Solutions' distributor database has helped 3,000 brand owners in 14 years speed up the process of finding qualified distributors. Our database covers more than 9,200 distributors of supermarket and drug store type products in 96 countries. Search by country, category, brand name, or country of origin. Experts for Europe, Middle East, Latin America, and Asia with complete regional coverage. "Spend time *selling* to distributors versus *searching* for distributors."

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## Howdy Saudi!



I received a Saudi tourist visa online in 10 minutes for my October visit. The smiling Saudi at immigration greeted me with a warm Marhaba...welcome. Streets contained advertisements promoting a Formula One Racing event in Riyadh kicked off by a Justin Bieber concert. This is not the same Saudi where I lived for three years working for Clorox. The game is changing dramatically in the Middle East, led by a cultural revolution in Saudi Arabia.

### Saudi vs. UAE

Saudi Arabia launched an aggressive campaign to shift the commercial capital of the Middle East from Dubai to Riyadh. Saudi Arabia features a population of 36 million, almost four times the UAE. Saudi is the largest

economy in the Middle East, with a GDP double the size of UAE. Today, many multinationals manage the GCC from Dubai. Riyadh has begun to exert pressure to encourage companies to maintain a significant physical presence in Saudi Arabia if they want to access this lucrative market.

### Why Now? Saudi Vision 2030

Saudi Vision 2030 has been launched to diversify its economy and reduce its dependency on oil. The vision has three main pillars: to make the country the "heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds," to become a global investment powerhouse, and to transform the country's location into a hub connecting Afro-Eurasia. This strategic framework focuses on infrastructure

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## Beyond the Brand Manager

For many exporters, eighty percent or more of their distributor interaction filters through a distributor brand manager.

If you are lucky, this energetic university graduate completes your reports and serves as a capable advocate with the distributor sales team. Brand owners frequently demonstrate excessive loyalty to their brand managers as local heroes

that rescue the export manager from periodic emergencies. In reality, the distributor brand manager is a “middle man,” communicating with the generals that deliver the results at key account and store level.

International brand building is a team sport. Winners are companies that form strong relationships with all functional leaders in a distributor organization. Web meeting tools like Zoom and Teams facilitate easier direct linkage with key distributor personnel. Discussed below are Export Solutions’ tips for moving “Beyond the Brand Manager” to accelerate your business to the next level.



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## Strategic Services

Contact Us for  
*Export Solutions*

1. Identify Best in Class Distributors: 96 Countries
2. Best Practices Export Strategy
3. Distributor Management Workshops
4. Export 101: Let's Get Started
5. New Market Prioritization and Launch Plan
6. Personal Distributor Introductions: 96 Countries
7. Walmart International
8. Distributor Contracts, Margins, and Fees
9. Meeting Speaker
10. International Strategy Expert

### 1. Key Account Managers (KAMs) Are the Power Players

KAMs are the major account experts and own the buyer relationships. Direct feedback from them provides valuable, realistic insights. Most distributors have weekly KAM meetings that are worthwhile to join to discuss a key priority. Roll up your sleeves and become visible with the sales people “carrying the bag.”

### 2. Field Sales Teams Control the In-Store Show Room

Typically, a distributor’s store-level merchandising team reports to the sales director, a few “hand-offs” away from the brand manager. Retail stores represent the place where export dreams are translated to cash in the register. Field managers juggle a large basket of priorities for their sales army. Fund a sales contest and you will build loyalty.

### 3. Follow the Money to the CFO

How well do you know the CFO at your distributors? The finance department is the cash hub, approving orders, handling payments, and guiding the distributor’s financial health. Establish a relationship with the CFO when all is well, as it will pay dividends when a financial crisis erupts.

### 4. Meet the Digital Team

E-commerce development represents a growth initiative everywhere. Many distributors hire a small, young team. Create “First One in Benefits” by partnering with this group at this early stage of team evolution.

### 5. Treat Distributor CEO as a VIP

CEOs are busy, stretched by brand owners, customers, employees, and shareholders. Find ways to engage the distributor CEO in your business. Consider quarterly Zoom dates and extend an offer to join your distributor advisory board. Invite him to visit your company headquarters for a first-class experience and a meeting with your CEO.

A favorite part of any market visit is “management by walking around.” I love to visit every department. Smile to everyone, handing out a small gift with your company logo, and say thanks for your help. Today’s travel guidelines limit these trips, but challenge us to adapt this practice in a virtual way.

We appreciate our brand managers, but must remember that our partnership service agreement is with the entire distributor, not just one person.

Good luck!

Greg Seminara

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## Preferred Supplier Scorecard

Distributors deliver their best results for their favorite principals. How do you rank?

Supplier Assessment	Considerations	Rating: (10 = Best)
Annual Sales Revenue	Percent of total distributor sales	
Annual Profit Generated (\$)	Net sales times gross margin	
Years of Service	New to 20 years or more	
Compound Annual Growth Rate	Flat to 10% or more	
Supplier Investment Level	Zero to 25% of sales	
Celebrates Success	Awards, dinner, thank-you notes	
Shares Best Practices	Serves as category expert	
Logistics Service Level	Target 98% on time, complete orders	
Visits Retail Stores	Never to full day every visit	
Reimbursement of Billbacks	2 weeks to 3 months	
Senior Management Relationship	None to long-term partners	
Export Manager Experience	New hire to 10 years or more	
Response Time	Same day to one month	
Supports Distributor's Ideas	Invests in local ideas	
Good on Customer Calls	Avoids calls to customer favorite	
Admin Requirements	Orders only to multiple reports	
Supplier Visit Frequency	Never to weekly	
Relationship: Entire Team	Finance, logistics, administration	
Respects Fair Profit for Distributor	Healthy distributor is profitable	
Achieves Joint Business Targets	Creates culture of success	

## Spotlight on the Caribbean

Would you be surprised to learn that most USA companies sell more to Puerto Rico than Brasil or China? Our neighbors in the Caribbean serve as important customers for USA brands. These tourist destinations depend on USA imports for essential food, beverage, and personal care products. These markets are easy to access with USA packages universally accepted.

### Country Segmentation: Core 4

The Caribbean consists of more than 700 islands across 28 nations. However, 80% of sales are concentrated in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Trinidad, and Jamaica. Puerto Rico is the "big prize," accounting for around one percent of total USA volume for most manufacturers. Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic feature large supermarkets bursting with a mix of America's favorites and local brands.

### Foodservice: Small Packs

Tourism appears as an important component of the economy for many of our favorite islands. This causes populations to surge during peak vacation months. Your foodservice business could be larger than your retail business in popular holiday spots like the Dominican Republic or Jamaica. Consider small sizes to capture lower price points and short-term renters who need only one week's supply.

Cluster	Islands	Population	Focus
Core 4	Puerto Rico, Dominican Rep., Trinidad, Jamaica	18 million	80%
3 B's	Bahamas, Bermuda, Barbados	750,000	15%
Tiny Paradise	Aruba, Martinique, St.Lucia, 20 Total	1.8 million	5%
Populated/Poor	Cuba, Haiti	23 million	?

### Powerful Distributor Options

Some of the largest and most sophisticated distributors in the world are based in Puerto Rico. Distributors serve as the top suppliers to the trade. Few companies maintain subsidiaries in these small countries. As a result, distributors may represent companies like P&G, Unilever, and Mondelez. These distributors are trained by these global leaders, adopting many of their operating practices and philosophies.

### Miami Consolidation Hub

A common practice is to ship to Miami for regular freight service or distributor pick up. Pricing is a key issue. Most offer export pricing to avoid burdening the value chain with USA overheads that need to be replicated overseas. Careful oversight must be exercised to avoid diverting temptation. A simple metric is to track sales per capita versus mainland USA levels. Do not believe

stories about cruise ships, duty free, and the infamous San Andres islands with two supermarkets.

### Winter = Peak Season

Caribbean sales surge during the winter tourist season. This requires inventory build up in September and October. Normally, summer months are slower and dedicated to planning.

### Export Solutions Can Help

Export Solutions' distributor database covers nine top island markets and around 300 distributors of supermarket-type products. Export Solutions completed six distributor search projects in the Caribbean. Brands work with us to quickly partner with leading distributors and begin profitable shipments to these "low hanging fruit" countries. Contact us to learn more about how Export Solutions can leverage our distributor contacts for your benefit in 2022.

## Create Your Own Export Library



*Distributor Search Guide*



*Export Handbook*



*Selling to USA Handbook*



*Distributor Management Guide*



*Finance & Logistics*



*Idea Guide:  
New World – New Business*



*Export Treasure Chest  
My Favorite Templates & Forms*



*People Power  
Strong Teams Build Great Brands*



All guides available free at [www.exportsolutions.com](http://www.exportsolutions.com) in the *Export Tips* section.

## Can We Help You? Distributor Search Helper for:



Your  
Logo  
Here



Procter & Gamble



Johnson & Johnson



## Recent Distributor Search Projects

Asia	Europe	Middle East	Latin America
Australia	Germany	Israel	Argentina
China	Ireland	Kuwait	Brazil
Indonesia	Netherlands	Qatar	Colombia
Japan	Nordics	Saudi Arabia	Costa Rica
Malaysia	Spain	UAE	Ecuador
Philippines	United Kingdom	North America	Mexico
Singapore	Africa	Canada	Panama
South Korea	South Africa	United States	Peru



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### Call the Export Accelerator!

Contact Greg Seminara at [greg@exportsolutions.com](mailto:greg@exportsolutions.com)  
to discuss your business development project.

[www.exportsolutions.com](http://www.exportsolutions.com)

## What is Your 2022 Training Mission?

Elite teams require training. This applies to sports, military, and the international road warriors who manage export departments. Many companies claim a deep commitment to training and people development in their mission statements. Two years of Covid-related travel limitations and the emergence of Zoom tools has created an efficient new forum for training our internal and distributor teams.

### Education For All

A lot has changed in the last two years. Everyone can benefit from an updated course in winning requirements for 2022. This should apply to your distributor network and international team, as well as your own personal development plan. Another opportunity exists to teach colleagues in your home office on the unique dynamics of export and the enormous potential available in the global market of 7.9 billion people.

### Portal – 24/7 Resource

Leading companies implemented a global export portal. This gateway provides instant access to brand facts, digital images, and success stories. Expanded portals allow order placement, sales forecasting, and other export reporting. A must for best-in-class performance this year.

### Distributor Training

Zoom allows you to connect with large groups instantly. I have participated in global distributor meetings linking sales teams from around the world. Other export managers have used web tools for new product launch meetings, to kick off a retail sales contest, or to manage a planning session with the entire key account team. The goal is to make the meetings entertaining and engaging for your remote audience. One beverage company's web meeting featured a surprise appearance by a Euro Vision winner!

### Functional Experts

Each company features deep functional expertise at their headquarters. Overseas distributors appreciate access to these



professionals. Why not schedule a web meeting featuring your digital marketing manager, supply chain VP, or IT guru? Another option is to develop a session for your global team managing a common customer such as Carrefour, Walmart, or Metro AG.

### E-Commerce

E-commerce is the primary growth channel for all companies. However, most managers' fundamental training focuses on brick and mortar principles. Consider hiring an external expert to speak about "doing business with Amazon." Focus on the practical operational requirements such as supply chain and search strategies versus a speaker who tells you "how fast e-commerce is growing."

### Personal Plan

What are your personal development plans for 2022? The new year is a great opportunity to allocate time to attend a leadership development class or a session on managing teams. Evaluate options early and receive management commitment before budgets are cut!

### Self-Paced Programs

Frequently it is a challenge to sync everyone's schedule for a training event.

An alternative is to record training webinars and share them for review later. Multinationals frequently offer individual training via self-paced modules to indoctrinate new distributors or brand managers.

### Export Solutions Workshops

Each year Export Solutions offers more than 10 export workshops throughout Europe and the Americas.

There are eight topics offered in 45-minute sessions. Highlights include

- Distributor Search Best Practices
- How to Gain More Distributor Focus
- Distributor Economics: "How they make money!"
- More in the Store: Shelf Tactics
- Handling 25 Critical Export Problems
- Next Level Distributor Management
- Export Strategy: A World of Opportunity

### Client References

Workshop delivery can be via Zoom or, in many cases, on-site programs. Clients have included Barilla, Tabasco, Church & Dwight, Lorenz, Bolton Group, Seeberger, Manner, and others. Contact Greg Seminara for more information.

## Howdy Saudi!

*continued from page 1*

development and investments in health care, recreation, and tourism sectors. A key goal is to present a “softer side” of Saudi Arabia and a welcome mat to overseas businesses and tourists.

### Empowering Women

Women have benefitted from the liberalization of Saudi’s social policies. Thirty-three percent of adult Saudi women are active in the work force, up exponentially from 15% in 2012. Females now play a vital role across every industry, including managerial levels. Saudi Arabia granted women the right to drive in 2018, a historic move that signaled new freedoms.

### Tourism – Key Driver

Saudi traditionally hosts more than two million pilgrims performing Haj to Mecca. Saudi established 10 separate multi-billion dollar tourism investments as part of Vision 2030. NEOM “new city” appears as the centerpiece to these efforts. NEOM represents a \$500 billion investment in developing a smart city on the Red Sea, functioning as an economic and tourist hub. Phase one is expected to be completed in 2025.

The country desires to create unique tourist attractions to appeal to adventure seekers previously unable to visit.

### Consumer Impact

Lifestyle changes are reflected in purchase habits. The foodservice sector is booming, as people consume more meals away from home. Workers now flock to cafes after work. Busy young people seek quick meal solutions. The fast-casual restaurant segment is enjoying explosive growth.

### Market Overview

Export Solutions’ retailer database tracks 32 Saudi retailers and more than 4,000 stores. Modern retail includes eight major supermarket chains, with locals like Panda maintaining dominant market shares versus regional players like Carrefour and Lulu. Today’s new market dynamics reveal that high-end players like Danube and Tamimi are performing well, while mainstream players like Panda are struggling.

A major initiative is expansion of large format stores to tier 2 cities like Abha, Buraydeh, and Hofuf.

Retailer	Stores
Panda	230
Al Othaim	227
Farm	85
Tamimi	63
Danube	44
Lulu	36
Bindawood	26
Carrefour	21
Astra	11
Manuel	8

### Export Solutions Can Help

Greg Seminara spent three years based in Jeddah, managing Saudi Arabia and the Gulf for Clorox (\$7 billion sales). Export Solutions’ distributor database covers 114 Saudi distributors and more than 900 distributors across 12 Middle East countries. Contact us to learn about getting your share of the new business opportunities created by Saudi Arabia’s expansion.

## Talk to an Expert

- International Strategy Road Map
- Fix Problem Markets
- Entry Plans
- Find Distributors in 96 Countries
- Export Workshops
- Motivational Meeting Speaker



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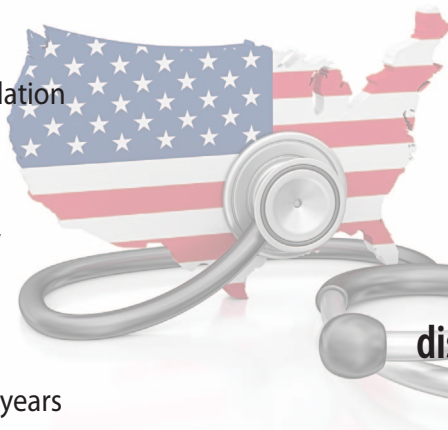
## USA: 10 Priority Investments

USA development remains a top opportunity for many European brands. Most companies sell to the USA, but maintain sales levels far below potential. The USA is complex, with 12 trade channels, 390 retailers, 50 states, and food brokers controlling sales. Which investments will deliver the greatest return?

Investments	Strategy	Insights
<b>USA-Based Sales Manager</b>	Mandatory oversight of your USA development.	Base salary range: \$130 to \$200 K. Location: Atlanta, Chicago or close to importer.
<b>Broker Network</b>	Upgrade channel and regional broker networks.	Brokers sell to most customers, not importers. Bonus brokerage model works!
<b>High Class Retailers</b>	Build sales base with laser focus on retailers catering to upper income consumers.	Whole Foods, Fresh Market, Harris Teeter. "From High Class to Mass."
<b>Trade Promotion</b>	Customer specific promotions.	Invest in retailers preferred promo vehicles. 15% TPR promotions do not excite anyone.
<b>E-Commerce</b>	Hire Amazon broker to create visibility. Establish budget for pay-per-click investment.	Amazon: primary source for "homesick" consumers looking for their favorite brand.
<b>Export Solutions</b>	USA market development helper for leading European brands.	Point of difference: Sales oriented. Targeted, logical road maps; USA solutions.
<b>Supply Chain</b>	Analyze options to create more cost efficient supply chain. "Factory gate to store shelf."	Consider USA factory or co-packer. Regional third-party distribution centers.
<b>Sampling</b>	Maximize consumer trial. Direct to consumer, multi-product, sample boxes are popular.	Everyone loves free trial sizes. Costco sampling drives sales volume.
<b>Data</b>	Leverage category data to sell your brand. Nielsen and IRI are respected.	USA buyers require detailed analytics for new listings, not just a nice story.
<b>Retail Safari</b>	Spend 25 percent of your time visiting stores. "Retail University."	"Retail Reality", not board room promises. Atlanta, Dallas, LA = real USA (not NYC / Miami).

### Hire a USA Expert

- USA strategy recommendation
- Category analysis and plan development
- Identify priority channels, regions, and retailers
- Broker/Distributor identification specialist
- Have a USA pro with 20+ years experience on your team



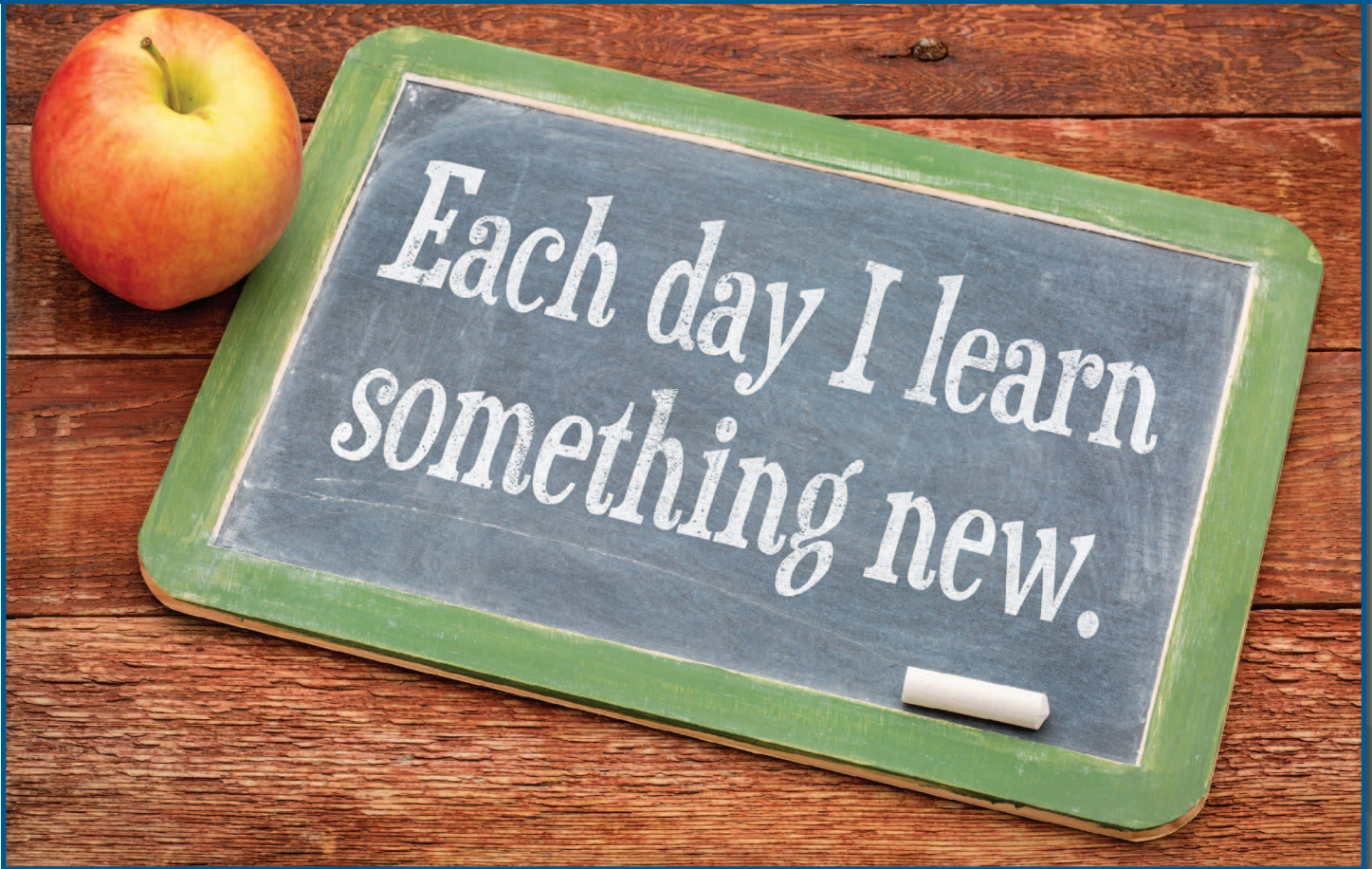
Contact Greg Seminara at  
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## *How to be Distributor of the Year*

Assessment Criteria	Considerations	Rating: (10 = Best)
Results vs Plan, Market, Category	Reliable, 5 to 10% + growth	
Retail Store Conditions	Brand presence exceeds market share	
Brand Manager	"A" player, dedicated resource	
Cost to Serve	Fair margin, based upon size, complexity	
Omni Channel	Channel teams, e-commerce focus	
Fun	Do you enjoy the people, country?	
Financial	Prompt payments, accurate billbacks	
Problem Solving – Response Time	Same day service, sense of urgency	
CEO	Loves your brand, engaged	
Pioneers New Business	From concept to cases	
Supply Chain Management and Forecasting	Accurate, efficient	
Customer Relations	Senior access at top retailers	
Category Knowledge	Viewed as expert by buyers	
Profitable Partner	Sells profitable cases	
Analytical Skills: Shipments, Nielsen	Trends, opportunities, plan	
Team (Finance, IT, Logistics)	Cross functional expertise	
Digital Savvy	Social media team, pioneers new tools	
Reporting	On time, complete, accurate	
Best Practices	Creative idea source for other markets	
Cultural Alignment	Perfect fit with brand owner's vision	

# Export **Workshops** & Speeches

## by Greg Seminara



### **Export Workshop Overview**

- Web and in-person workshop options available
- 8 Export Development and Distributor Management Modules
- Includes 25 Common Export Problems group work
- 200+ topics available for tailored workshop
- One-hour keynote or motivational speech



**Export Solutions**  
Global Experts, Local Solutions

**Contact Greg Seminara for  
more details and references:  
[greg@exportsolutions.com](mailto:greg@exportsolutions.com).**

## *Who Is My Team?*

Big distributors feature large teams with strong capabilities.

Manufacturers want to know who is their functional contact and how much time do they dedicate to my business?

Function	Distributor Contact	Title	Email	Phone (Mobile)
Senior Management (Owner/MD)				
Marketing Manager				
Sales Manager				
Brand Manager				
Field Sales Manager				
Digital Marketing				
Finance				
Supply Chain				
Purchasing (order placement)				
Accounts Payable				
Compliance/Registration				
Customer Service Manager				

# *We've Got You Covered!*

## Distributor Database Coverage

Confectionery & Snack  
2,701 Distributors

Ambient Beverage  
1,689 Distributors

International Foods  
3,261 Distributors

Middle East  
933 Distributors  
12 Countries

Asia  
2,022 Distributors  
17 Countries



USA Importer/Distributor  
598 Distributors

Latin America  
1,570 Distributors

Europe  
3,125 Distributors

*9,200 distributors – 96 Countries*

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