



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 9,500? Export Solutions distributor database has helped 3,000 brand owners in 15 years speed up the process of finding qualified distributors. Our database covers an average of 88 distributors per country of supermarket type products for 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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Where to Score in 2024



World population passed 8 billion. With 197 countries in the world, which countries offer exceptional growth opportunities for 2024? An essential question is the balance of focus against competitive mature markets versus emerging countries with large populations, but low category development. The good news is everyone eats and the world is full of breakthrough success stories where an energetic export manager paired with a hungry distributor to pioneer outstanding results. View Export Solutions top 10 opportunities to score in 2024.

Big Bets

Every company should select one high potential country to battle for market share. Most international brands sell to Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and the USA (overseas brands). However, the current business is usually small relative to the size of the prize. A new formula includes a strong commitment to activation

activities: “sell out” vs. “sell in.” Appoint a country manager to attack local opportunities. In many cases, a new partner may be required, with a fresh outlook and capabilities aligned with your new aspirations.

Sunshine States

Tourism is booming, with flights packed to sun-drenched locations in the Mediterranean and Caribbean. Greece expects more than 30 million visitors, three times its population. Portugal is a hot spot, including almost three million from the USA. Dominican Republic will host eight million visitors creating jobs and a higher standard of living for this island nation of 11 million people. Foodservice appears as a significant beneficiary as well as stores catering to expat populations. Some companies maintain dual marketing strategies in sunshine states, with unique approaches for the local consumer and the foreigners.

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Right Fit?

Is your export development strategy the “right fit” based upon your company’s aspiration and investment? As we assess our international footprint, so much was created in the last century before listing fees, digital marketing, and e-commerce. Many distributor relationships were established long ago, based upon a short meeting at a trade show or a referral from a forgotten colleague. Too many export plans are “copy-paste” from what



Export Solutions
Distributor Identification Experts

worked last year! Export success today requires a fresh look at market prioritization and distributor partner profile to insure alignment with your growth objectives.

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. Segment Countries: Strategic, Priority, or Opportunistic

This guides our choices in terms of marketing budget allocation and time dedicated to managing the country. Incorporate lessons learned on where your brand and category has thrived versus chasing export dreams like China and India where the eating habits are very different. Optimize your business in neighboring countries before collecting pins on the export map from long-haul destinations.

2. “From High Class to Mass”: Retailer Targets

In the USA, everyone wants to sell to Walmart’s 3,650 supercenters. However, this is not the right showcase to pioneer premium overseas brands to adventurous consumers. Each country features upscale retailers featuring broad assortments of international and specialty food brands. E-commerce appears as a universal channel open to new brands. Your strategy should concentrate on winning at the retailers where your target consumers shop.

3. Do Aspirations Mirror Investments?

Too many export plans contain optimistic visions for global expansion. I admire the ambition, but many of these managers are disappointed when the shipment numbers fall short. There is a cost of doing business in every country and it is only going up! Managers should check what it costs to launch and develop a brand in their home country. Adjust for population, and you will quickly discover an activation estimate for an overseas country. Focus on countries where you can market and compete. In some cases, it may be preferred to skip a potential opportunity if you have no budget to support your brand.

4. Are Your Distributors the “Right Fit”?

Everyone knows the famous distributors with impressive capabilities designed for blue-chip multinationals. “Niche” distributors survive through excellent customer relationships, but fewer services. Either model can succeed, as long as your brand development, shipments, and availability sync with market potential. Too often, companies and distributors outgrow each other, but remain in a “bad marriage” due to history. In many cases, companies receive a lift with a long overdue shift to a more modern partner.

5. Enthusiasm and Energy Are Always the Right Size!

Look for local distributor experts with passion, follow up, and commitment. Validate their “PowerPoint promises” with a retail reality check of their current principals.

To win the export race, you must have the right running shoes. If your shoes are too big, you may look good for a while, but not travel far. If your shoes are too small, they will always be a pain. Look for comfortable shoes that match your racing style today. Good luck!

Greg Seminara
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“Spend Time Selling to Distributors versus Searching for Distributors”

Export Journey: SMCG to FMCG

A big difference exists in export strategy for SMCG (Slow Moving Consumer Goods) and companies committed to FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) brand building. Either model is okay. Many companies are en route between SMCG and FMCG. Alignment between aspiration, investment, and perspiration drives realistic outcomes.

	SMCG		FMCG
Aspirations	Niche	Participant	Mass/Leader
Consumer	Homesick	Upscale	Local
Research	None	Nielsen	Consumer
Portfolio	Best sellers from home market	Best sellers from home market	Tailored to region or country
Packaging	Standard packs stickered	Multilingual	Local language label and pack size
Factory	Corporate HQ	Corporate HQ	Offshore
Pricing	Super Premium	Premium	Competitive
Marketing	None	Sampling, Digital	360 Plans TV, Digital
Trade Spend	None	10-20% Discount	Ad, Display 20-30% Discount
Route to Market	Niche distributor	Mid -size distributor	Mass distributor or subsidiary
Country Focus	Adjacent Homesick Expats	Mid-size countries plus USA	All countries USA, Japan, Brasil
Channels	E-Commerce Homesick Expats	Supermarket E-Commerce	All channels
Oversight	1 visit/year from HQ	Regional manager	Dedicated country manager
Complexity	Low	Moderate	High

Measure Market *Share* NOT Markets *Sold*

Many international managers wear their export coverage map as a badge of honor. At major trade shows, polished exhibitors open their pitch with “we are the leading xyz brand in Spain, exporting to 30 countries.” This may impress some distributors, as it reflects that the company has experience with processing cross-border orders. However, the influential data point is the producer’s track record of creating meaningful market share in new countries.

I remember a famous Italian brand approached me regarding a massive distributor search project. Their global director reported that the company sold their brand to 70 countries and confirmed that Export Solutions was active in 96 countries. The project scope was to identify distributors in the 26 “white space” countries which were mostly tough-to-access nations in Latin America and Asia. My response was that although the company claimed sales to 70 countries, they actually maintained a significant business in only 20 countries. My advice was to target 10 of their current countries and upgrade their route to market partner. This option promised a larger size of the prize and reward. The manager did not agree with my concept, as he was more concerned with growing his country count. So, no consulting contract for me, but I still love their brand.

Another time, I met the MD of a high-growth UK snack food manufacturer at Gulfood. I shared that I appreciated his innovative brand and believed it offered potential for incremental export development. His memorable response: “We export to 30 countries and have it covered!” This response was from a company with total turnover of about \$30 million, including no more than \$5 million outside the UK. He was smarter than me, as they sold the company a few years later for \$100 million. However, I wonder with a stronger international footprint, if the purchase price could have reached \$150 or \$200 million?

Stop counting countries as a primary measure of success! Instead focus on creating sustainable brand equity in strategic countries.

1. What are your global market share aspirations?

Many companies set a target such as achieve 10% of the premium segment within three years. Market share objectives will vary by country and should parallel marketing and team investment.

2. What is your market share in your top countries?

Is your brand a leader, player, or niche participant? Distributors may estimate market share, capturing share of category assortment, or percentage of shelf space.



3. What are reasonable expectations for a country?

Factors include population, purchasing power, category size, price competitiveness, and available marketing investment.

4. Distributors are different than traders!

Best in class distributors are local brand builders who maintain pride in their local marketing capabilities. Traders represent customers who buy from you at a price and then resell the brand to anyone in their country. An enormous distinction exists comparing the service offering of these two models. How many of your distributors are brand builders versus traders?

5. From Zero to Hero

Consider alignment with a power distributor in under-represented countries. Small shipments to distributors in large countries contribute to your shipment budget. However, the upside is significant through a more strategic approach.

Ultimately, export managers control their own destiny. Company leadership demands results and will applaud extraordinary shipment performance, whether the new business is sourced from Belgium or Brasil. A fresh and independent analysis of your customer list and coverage map could reveal hidden growth opportunities. Do you really have your top countries covered?

Looking for Good Distributors?

Export Solutions' database covers
9,500 distributors in 96 countries.

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Distributor Identification Experts

Introducing



America's Favorite Brands

19 Companies | 200+ Top Brands | \$85 Billion Combined

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View our activities for export managers – www.usafoodexport.com

Export Solutions' New Distributor Checklist

- ___ Contract/Agreement
- ___ Price Calculation Model
- ___ Business Plan: objectives, marketing, spending, key dates
- ___ Category Review: Pricing, Shelf, Assortment, Merchandising
- ___ Label Compliance
- ___ Shelf Life
- ___ Order Lead Time
- ___ Minimum Order
- ___ Pick up Point
- ___ Payment Terms
- ___ Payment Currency
- ___ Damage Policy
- ___ Product Registration
- ___ Forecast: Year 1
- ___ Pipeline Order & Inventory
- ___ Brand Facts
- ___ Product Samples
- ___ Appointment Letter
- ___ Brand Specifications in System: Distributor & Customers
- ___ Training: Key Account Managers, Retail, Administrative Staff, Warehouse
- ___ In Store Standards: Pricing, Shelf Management, Merchandising
- ___ FAQ's/Handling Common Objections
- ___ Key Account Presentation
- ___ Customer Appointment Dates
- ___ Category/Business Review: Tailored to Each Key Account
- ___ Retail Sales Contest
- ___ Checkpoint Calls
- ___ Market Audit Date
- ___ Reporting: Track Distribution, Pricing, Shelf Positioning, Merchandising, etc.



Talk to an Expert

- Find Distributors in 96 Countries
- International Strategy Road Map
- Fix Problem Markets
- USA Market Expert
- Export Workshops
- Motivational Meeting Speaker



Contact Greg Seminara at (001)-404-255-8387 to discuss your business development project.

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Where to Score in 2024

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10 Prime Prospects (*Export Solutions Database)			
Type	Country	Population (millions)	Distributors*
Big Bet	USA (overseas brands)	340	636
Big Bet	Mexico	130	204
Big Bet	Japan	123	177
Big Bet	Poland	41	98
Big Bet	Saudi Arabia	37	114
Sunshine	Greece/Portugal/Croatia	GR 10 PT 10 HR 4	GR 91 PT 90 HR 78
Sunshine	Dominican Rep./Jamaica	DR 11 JM 3	DR 67 JA 31
Oil	Gulf (ex. Saudi)	24	483
Oil	Guyana	800 k	25
VIPs	Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand	VN 100 IN 285 PI 117 TH 72	VN 51 IN 80 PI 112 TH 103

Meet the VIPs

Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines contain more than 500 million people combined. Thailand attained the second largest GDP in the ASEAN region, also supported by a significant tourism sector. 100 million people account for the top 20% of VIP population. The region is blessed with beautiful new stores from Aeon, Tops, and Robinsons. Go now while the cost of entry is reasonable.

American Dreams

Will 2024 be the year to discover a new model for your USA business? Americans are open to world cuisine, with many of the 340 million citizens regularly enjoying food from Italy, Mexico, Japan, etc. People are cooking at home more often, experimenting with new recipes and higher quality brands. Food brokers are the key players servicing the USA supermarket industry. Follow their expert guidance on getting listed and investing in retailers' best programs for generating sales turnover. Export Solutions retailer database tracks 458 USA customers, many looking for unique items to differentiate their product range versus mass retailers like Walmart or Kroger.

Mexi-Grow

Mexico is booming, benefitting from "nearshoring" of manufacturing from China. Bustling Monterrey features more than five million people, with an ideal location only 130 miles from the USA border. Walmart is a leader, with more than 2,900 stores across 5 unique formats. Many Mexican consumers are familiar with famous USA and European brands. Winning requires alignment with a marketing-oriented distributor, supported by a strong in-store merchandising team.

Howdy Saudi

Saudi Arabia is committed to establishing Riyadh as a commercial capital of the Middle East. A huge transformation is underway, with Saudis flocking to restaurants and entertainment such as rock concerts and movies. Sindalah is scheduled to open in 2024, the ultra-luxury island which is part of the NEOM project. I recently completed a distributor search project in Saudi. There are massive stores from Panda, Danube, and Tamimi filled with western brands. Key is navigating listing fee environment and alignment with one of the 114 distributors that is the "right fit" based upon your business objectives.

Where is Your Team?

In the past, export managers serviced the globe boosted by a few grueling two-week trips. Zoomer emerged during the Covid era. Winners are investing in boots on the ground for Big Bet countries. These managers wake up in the market, speak the language, and dominate the attention of leading distributors. I believe that your investment budget in people may be equally important to marketing investment in some countries.

Export Solutions Can Help!

Export Solutions database provides complete coverage of distributors in these top 10 countries. This can serve as an export accelerator to help you identify top candidates. I have completed more than 300 Distributor Search projects on five continents for companies like Barilla, Tabasco, Duracell, Lindt, and General Mills. Our rigorous distributor search process and immediate access to top distributors everywhere helps our brand clients win. Contact Greg Seminara at greg@exportsolutions.com for more information.

Select Your Distributors, Do Not Let Your Distributors Select You!

How many emails do you receive a week from “distributors” wishing to represent your brand? How much of your trade show time is wasted on impromptu meetings with enthusiastic “traders” who make bold promises, but never order? Why are we surprised when you search these companies on the internet to discover there is no information or a web site “under construction?” Many companies’ distributor networks contain these small, anonymous distributors who aggressively pursued a famous brand, but rarely deliver. Give them an “A” for effort, but distributor search must include proper due diligence of all potential candidates, not just the small one chasing you.

Do you believe that the best distributors are waiting in line at trade shows or speed dialing export managers? The most powerful distributors are busy building brands for their existing partners. However, all distributors are open to representation of new companies. In fact, many of the more strategic distributors assign a brand manager to new business development. This senior person is dedicated to evaluating new company representation inquiries like yours.

Hiring the right local partner is the third most important step in optimizing your sales. This follows creating a differentiated product and willingness to invest in marketing support. Listed below are some practical tips on selecting the right company to optimize your business in a new country.

Identify a Pool of Preliminary Candidates

Create a large group of potential candidates. This could include distributors or local producers of related products. Include qualified candidates that have emailed or visited at a trade fair. Highlight companies that are specialists in the market sector that you are aiming at. Export Solutions streamlines this process with our industry leading distributor database containing an average of 88 distributors (large and small) per country.

Establish Partner Selection Criteria

What are the key attributes of your most successful distributors? Category specialization? Multi channel coverage? Synergy with related brands? Choosing a large “Best in Class” partner versus a “Small, Hungry” company willing to pioneer a new brand is an important preference.

Determine Candidates Preliminary Interest Level

Send a brief summary of your product proposition and company credentials to the 5-10 most promising candidates. An immediate follow-up phone call to your top candidates is an appropriate personal connection. Distributors expressing an interest should complete a brief company overview recapping their corporate capabilities: Sales, Coverage, Key Principals, etc.

Schedule a Meeting in the Candidate’s Office

Interview at least three candidates depending on the size and scope of a project. Schedule the meeting 4-6 weeks in advance. Provide a specific agenda at least 3 weeks in advance, including pre-work such as category market analysis. Meet the distributor’s team that would work on your business, as well as senior management. A distributor’s office provides clues on company culture, scale, and capabilities.



Prepare Distributor Assessment Grid

Create a list of key questions to ask each candidate. Topics could include local category dynamics, cost of entry, and distributor success stories. Create a standard grid to evaluate and compare all candidates on a common platform. Contact us for our free Distributor Search Guide with assessment grids, agendas, sample questions and templates for every aspect of the distributor search process.

Independent Evaluation of Candidates Performance for Existing Brands

Visit supermarkets and other retailers to observe category conditions. At the same time, evaluate each candidate’s performance for his existing clients. Do his current brands maintain a strong presence in the market? Or are his brands hard to find on the shelf? Complete these visits to leading retailers independently, as an accompanied trip may lead you to check stores which may not be representative of marketplace reality.

What is the Distributor’s Plan?

If selected, what is the distributors Year One plan? Customer targets, price calculation, marketing plan, volume expectations? Timeline and benchmarks? Key issues? Resources required? Does their plan align with your vision and the size of the market opportunity?

Reference Checks Represent an Important Next Step

Request references of 5 of the distributors top 10 clients. Call at least three references and request insights into performance and capabilities. Acknowledge that these are likely to be positive references, but they always provide significant value. Run a Dun & Bradstreet or other type of credit report on leading candidates. See Distributor Assessment template on page 31.

Future

Companies conduct rigorous assessments before hiring new employees. A higher level of intensity must be displayed during the distributor search process. When you choose a distributor, you are selecting a whole team to represent your company in a country, not just one individual.

Export Solutions’ Motto: **Select your distributors, do not let your distributors select you.**

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



Export Solutions
Distributor Identification Experts

Call the Export Accelerator!

Contact Greg Seminara at greg@exportsolutions.com
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What Distributors Want to Know?

Strong distributors are overwhelmed by calls from brand owners looking for new partners. Distributors assess each opportunity carefully, as any new brand must add incremental sales and profits and not distract from priorities from existing brands handled. What is the “size of the prize” for the distributor?

Assessment Criteria	Facts	Rating (10 = Best)
Your company: size / reputation		
Existing business: sales in distributors country?		
If zero “current sales,” what is realistic expectation?		
Brand’s USP...your point of difference/innovation?		
Size of investment plan: Marketing and Trade?		
Potential distributor revenues? margin?		
How does the product taste? (or perform)		
How attractive/compliant is the packaging?		
Pricing relative to category?		
Brand success story in an adjacent country?		
Competition intensity in category?		
Brand range complexity? Product shelf life?		
Local market research? Syndicated data?		
Will brand invest in marketing and social media?		
Will this be a tough product to launch?		
Can we grow with the brand owner?		
Your brand: core distributor category or adjacency?		
Will the export manager be good to work with?		
Will we be proud/excited to represent this brand?		
What is the “size of the prize?”		

Export Solutions Distributor Assessment Grid

Criteria (weighting)	Rating	Evaluation Factors
Corporate Credentials 30%		Size, sales force, logistics, # employees. Reputation (reference check existing brands). National coverage. Multi-channel coverage.
Category Expertise 20%		Sells brands in my category. Shelf space for existing brands. Current brands selling to target retailer. Category analysis and insights.
Brand Building 15%		Ideas to build or launch my brand? Marketing plan, cost, timing. Success stories.
Cost to Serve 15%		Fair, transparent model relative to size of business, brand investment, and work required.
Enthusiasm for My Brand 20%		Advance preparation, CEO involvement. Follow-up on commitments. Alignment with your vision.
X Factors: People, Admin., Professionalism, etc. +/-		CPG/FMCG background for leaders. Efficiency of scheduling meeting. Office environment. Do you enjoy the people?



Rating System

Rating	Score
Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Average	3
Fair	2
Poor	1



Contact Greg Seminara at (001)-404-255-8387 to discuss your distributor search project.

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We've Got You Covered!

Distributor Database Coverage

**World Food &
Beverages**
3,515 Distributors

Confectionery & Snack
2,846 Distributors

Italian Food
1,467 Distributors



Europe
3,239 Distributors
34 Countries

Asia
2,074 Distributors
17 Countries

USA Importer/Distributor
636 Distributors

Latin America
1,628 Distributors
29 Countries

Middle East
972 Distributors
12 Countries

9,500 distributors – 96 Countries

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*“Spend time **Selling** to Distributors versus **Searching** for Distributors”*