

Export Express

Insights to Accelerate International Expansion



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

Sell to 96 Countries

Looking for new customers and distributors in international markets? Export Solutions’ distributor database covers more than 9,700 distributors in 96 countries. Our database features extensive coverage of leading food, confectionery, and beverage distributors. New! Export Solutions’ retailer database now tracks 2,950 retailers in 96 countries. Order now at www.exportsolutions.com.

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New Distributor – Cooperation Model

Good news! You’ve just met a promising new distributor candidate (or two) for a top priority expansion country. A high level of enthusiasm exists from both sides, but many questions need answers prior to a confirmed agreement. Experienced export managers can confirm a long road from a positive first meeting to securing an initial order and distributor commitment to a serious launch plan.

Export Solutions helps to answer the question “Where do we go from here?” “Cooperation Model” is a term that we assign to describe the follow up process from initial meeting to formal agreement. This includes our “10 C” method of developing the joint work plan. These action steps include preparation of a year one plan and costs, understanding the proposed value chain, and consumer marketing plan. Another essential element is the establishment of a year one scorecard identifying shared business objectives.



Export Solutions has participated in more than 300 distributor search projects on six continents. This includes more than 50 distributor interviews per year. We believe that a clear Cooperation Model is the critical decision point in selecting your preferred partner. The Cooperation Model establishes a road map to translate “Export Dreams to Retail Reality.”

Greg’s Guidance: Cooperation Model

1. What is the year one business plan?
Investments required?
2. What is the proposed value chain?
Factory gate to store shelf?
3. Who is my brand manager or first point of contact?
4. What is the calendar of milestones through
consumer launch?
5. What mutual goals are established in
a year one scorecard?

Ten Tips: Converting Promising Leads to New Partnerships

Have you ever experienced an incredible first meeting with a distributor? Strong alignment, good fit, everyone smiling, timelines agreed. Then, nothing happens! The export manager may take up to six months to translate his outlook from “done deal” to “dead deal.” There are two reasons why this occurs.

First, distributors are positive, competitive athletes, always striving to win new business. However, in some cases, the distributors wake up after time to reflect and decide they really weren't that interested in the brand after all. Failure also results when a strong first personal meeting at a trade show or distributor's office is followed by a relationship buried in email communication, with no personal touch. Below are Export Solutions' Ten Tips on converting promising new business leads into tangible business partnerships.

1. Zoom/Teams – Don't Depend on Email

Motivated distributors still return phone calls, but frequently receive up to 200 emails a day, many from existing brand partners. Top distributors' business days are captured by a continuous flow of meetings with customers, principals, and their own employees. Best bet is to call a potential partner or set up Zoom meetings. Email is okay for routine correspondence, but too easy to ignore or delete.

2. Follow Up Immediately & Frequently

Time slips away, as Export Managers focus on existing businesses and “problems of the day.” One tip is to put regular follow up reminders on your computer calendar.

3. Focus on 10 C's: Category Review, Calculation, Cost of Plan, Compliance, Contract, etc.

Described below are critical elements to translate a “lead” into shipments.

Category Review: How does your category look in target country? Category size, competition, pricing, margins, and merchandising activity.

Calculation: What is the distributor's proposed calculation from your factory gate to the store shelf? What are standard costs like duties and taxes? What are flexible or negotiable like trade discounts and distributor margin?

Cost of Plan: Each brand needs a plan to gain market entry. This includes key

account “sell in,” followed by consumer and trade promotion activities. Look at the distributor's proposed plan, as well as several options with different price tags.

Compliance: Many countries feature a product registration process and labeling requirements. In some countries, this step is easy with automatic compliance for a USA or European brand. Or a simple solution with a small distributor applied sticker. In other countries like Japan or Indonesia, plan on one year or more to navigate the complex process.

Contract: “Ready, Set, Go” can be delayed by 3-6 months due to contract negotiations. Company lawyers demand 20 page agreements in English that even the Brits can't understand. Distributors prefer two page letters of understanding or a handshake deal. Do what is right for your business, but expect delays and frustration.

4. Request References

A good idea is to quickly request distributor references from other brands they handle. Motivated distributors will send impressive references right away. Also, have your credit department run a Dun and Bradstreet or Equifax report as soon as possible. Many trade show meetings are with “pretenders” who state exaggerated claims and are ultimately too small to handle your brand. Better to discover this sooner versus later.

5. Move Beyond the Distributor Owner/MD

The distributor owner “writes the checks,” but frequently serves as a “bottleneck.” The key is to quickly get your brand assigned to a “worker” whose task is to move your project through the system and produce an order!

6. Establish Realistic Timelines

Sync with category review dates and avoid holiday periods. Update timelines frequently. New distributor relationships always take longer. Plan on six months from first meeting to first shipment. Be pleasantly surprised if things move quicker.



7. Distributor Response Time Signals Interest Level

How often do you check your emails? Probably every hour. When I work on distributor search projects for well known brands like Pringles, Tabasco, or Barilla, distributor response is lightning fast. Motivated distributors will chase you if they are interested because they are anxious to start selling your brand!

8. Establish Regular Checkpoint Calls

I suggest every two weeks at a minimum. Use a common document of priorities, action steps, and due dates.

9. Visit the Distributor

It's amazing the amount of progress that will be made during a meeting at the distributor's office. Also, the distributor will work hard in advance of your visit as your project moves up the priority list and they want to guarantee a favorable impression. A visit to the distributor's market signals your commitment. Beware if the distributor is reluctant to schedule your visit. Either he has changed his mind about a partnership or his office and capabilities do not match the bold promises made at the initial trade show meeting.

10. Parallel Path Two Candidates per Country

A favorable first meeting represents an excellent start. However, there are still many steps (think 10 C's in point 3) before you sign a contract and receive your first order. Always keep two candidates in the process, in case your top choice disappoints. This can be tough, but represents a better option than needing to start the entire process over again.

Buyer New Item Scorecard Score _____

Criteria	Weighting	Rating	Evaluation Factors
Product Innovation	20%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High growth category or mature? • Taste or performance • Differentiation vs. current assortment • Consumer research insights
Saleability	20%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packaging attractiveness • Retail price point vs. category norms • Sales turnover at other market retailers
Promotion Plan	20%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of investment...\$\$\$ not percentage • Consumer marketing: sampling, digital • Trade: listing fees, trade allowance level • Participation in retailers' programs
Team	20%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributor/Broker: category experts? • Logistics service level • Merchandising team to service stores
Size of the Prize	20%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental category sales • Incremental category profits/margin • Realistic projections (data)
X Factors			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I love/"believe" the story? • Does the item sync with corporate goals? • Will this product appeal to our customers? • Will it sell better than the item it replaces?

Greg's Ten Tips

1. Good news travels fast and bad news travels slowly
2. If you want to know what's really going on, spend a day visiting stores
3. Pick up the phone and call a friend or business partner versus email
4. Be positive. Think, "why not?"
5. Results are directly proportionate to your investment: Marketing, People, Focus, Time
6. A distributor (or Broker) "respects" what the Brand owner "inspects"
7. Shipment numbers rarely lie
8. Put it in writing
9. If two people agree on the principle of a deal, you can usually work out the financial terms
10. There is more in common with industry practices across the globe than differences. Brand owners everywhere desire more shelf presence and retailers demand more discounts. Recognize the differences, but focus on the universal requirements for innovative products supported by marketing and trade investment.

Online Distributor Dating: 2024 Rules

How do you sign new distributors without traveling and trade shows? The export community is rushing to virtual trade shows as a new tool. Leading distributors are already past the early novelty of online “blind dates.” What are the new rules of online distributor dating? View Export Solutions’ 10 tips for a successful “match.”

1. Are You a Good Fit For Each Other?

The process of exporter and distributor linkage is frequently random, with little thought to pre-screening for prime prospect candidates. Our Export Passport system classifies exporters from level one “start-ups” to level ten multinationals. Distributors range from one star “pioneers” to five star “champions.” Exporters should focus on Prime Prospect distributors that represent a good potential fit based upon their business aspirations and investment level.

2. What Distributors Want to Know

Create a one page, fact based company profile focused on “what distributors want to know.” Export managers fill distributor inboxes with offers loaded with information on product attributes, but fail to address key issues regarding brand competitiveness for a country. What is your pricing strategy relative to competition? How much will you invest in promotion and media? What is a reasonable size of the prize for the distributor?

3. Brandscaping – Credentials Makeover

Your website is the first place a potential new distributor will check before confirming a web meeting. Has your site been updated to reflect Covid 2024 realities? Conduct a credentials makeover of your web site, company catalog, and standard presentation. Focus on commercial facts such as your market share, social media campaigns, and launch model versus bland promises on superior performance and the claim that you export to 30 countries.

4. First Date – Casual Coffee

Think of your initial web meeting with a distributor as a first date for a coffee. Do not try to overwhelm the distributor with facts and PowerPoints. Send presentations, samples, and your profile in advance. Devote the “first date” to telling your “brand story” in a personal way. Share relevant local examples while supplying a rationale why the distributor and his country represent a good match with your ambitions.

5. Second Date – Working Lunch

What will the relationship look like if the brand and distributor decide to work together? Export manager can share a brief containing their objectives (size of prize), pricing, investment model, and marketing strategy. Motivated distributors will design a business plan and questions. These items should be shared in advance. The second date should be devoted to talking about the proposed plan and gaining alignment around key issues.

6. Samples – Essential

A distributor will not buy your product without tasting it. Send samples in advance. Distributors will be compelled to accept the virtual meeting at the very least to share local feedback on taste preference. Include a small gift with your company logo.



7. Online Category Reviews – Local Research

Many top supermarket chains feature e-commerce web shops. It’s simple to conduct basic overseas category reviews from the comfort of your home office. This allows you to capture local category dynamics in advance of your call and validate distributor performance at leading retailers. Export Solutions’ retailer database tracks more than 2,950 retailers in 96 countries, with one-click links to retailers web shops as available.

8. YouTube Videos Make You Stand Out

Create a fun 2-3 minute YouTube video. Show your factory, product range review, and introduce your export team. Demonstrate your creativity and what an energetic partner you will be. Balance original content with professional quality.

9. Check Out Their Family

Reference checks are essential with online distributor dating. Conduct a Google map search to see the distributor’s building. Check out how many employees they have on LinkedIn. See their depth of product listings on local supermarket web shops. Check with two or three of their existing suppliers. Run a Dun and Bradstreet financial check. No company is perfect, but you must provide extra attention to the due diligence process during this period of uncertainty.

10. Visit Before the Wedding

Online distributor dating (or Zoomer) can streamline the process of new distributor screening. However, nothing replaces the intimacy of a personal visit to the distributors country. It may be possible to complete the preliminary “dating” steps online. However, it may make sense to delay the wedding ceremony until you can visit the country in person. Divorce is ugly and costly. As with many couples in love today, it may be better idea to delay the wedding to enjoy a longer honeymoon. Good luck!

Exporter Data Sheet

What Distributors want to Know about Your Company

New Business Opportunity: _____ *(Company Name/Country)*

Key Contact:		Telephone:	
Web Site:		Email:	
Founding Date:		Ownership:	
Annual Sales:		Total Employees:	
0-\$50 million	\$50 million - \$250 million	\$250 million- \$1 billion	\$1 billion +
% Sales International:			
0-10%	10-25%	26-50%	50% +
Exporter Classification/Description: _____ (#1-10, based upon Export Solutions' scale)			
Core Product Range:			
Unique Selling Point:			
Market Share:			
Home Country:	Country A:	Country B:	Country C:
Current Business in Distributor's Country:		Yes/No:	Size \$:
Current Customers (Distributor's Country):			
Investment Model:	Listing Fees*: Yes/No	*average \$35 per item,per store	
Trade Promotion Budget:	Dead net price:	10% of sales:	Mass:
Marketing:	Digital:	Sampling:	360 degree:
Ambition/Size of Prize:	Sales:	Market Share:	
Year 1			
Year 2			
Year 3			

Are Distributors Interested in Your Brand?

I have conducted hundreds of distributor interviews for multinational companies: P&G, Nestle, General Mills, Duracell, Lindt, Tabasco, Barilla, J&J, etc. Distributor candidates all claim enthusiasm and high interest in your brand. See Export Solutions' checklist of clues to measure true distributor interest level.

	High Interest	Low Interest
Email Response	Immediate reply	Delayed or no reply
CEO Engagement	Active participation	Delegated to middle management
Scheduling Meeting	Flexible and easy	Difficult. Conflicts.
Airport/Hotel Pick-Up	Offers to pick you up	Take a taxi!
Meeting Presentation	Tailored. Prepared for you.	Standard presentation
Category Research	Obtains data	None
Competitive Review	Shares photos: store sets	Informal comments
Store Visits	Organized/led by CEO	Office meeting only
Samples	Obtains and tries samples	Waits for you
Team Participation	3-6 people at meeting	One person
Cell Phone	Shares private number	Email address only
Questions	Addresses key issues	No questions
Timeline	Meets due dates	Delays
Post Meeting Follow-up	Immediate and frequent	None
Proposed Plan	Detailed and fact based	Brief topline
Results	Winner	Second place?

10 C's – Cooperation Model

1. Case

Manufacturer supplies a business case confirming brand "aspirations" for the country: Key items in portfolio, estimated base pricing, volume/market share expectations, and investment model.

2. Category Review

Distributor supplies a local review of category competitors, pricing, and merchandising practices.

3. Capabilities

Distributor shares detailed organizational capability and customer coverage. Could include references from existing suppliers represented. An important step when there are two or more candidates under consideration.

4. Commitment and Costs

What is the Year 1 Plan and Forecast? Targeted listings, marketing activities, launch budget and volume estimate associated with the spending plan.

5. Calculation – Value Chain

Line by line, build up from port to retail store shelf. Include currency assumptions.

6. Compliance

Highlight product registration and label requirements. Typical timelines for compliance?



7. Captain of Team

Who will be our day-to-day brand manager or first point of contact? Which senior executive will serve as our "Brand Champion?"

8. Contract

Options include formal contract, letter of understanding, or handshake deal. Begin this process early!

9. Consumer Marketing

What are planned activities to generate consumer trial and repeat purchases? Trade marketing, consumer marketing, social media, etc.

10. Calendar /Close

Distributor supplies a detailed timeline of all activities. When can we expect first order and delivery to support launch? Frequent checkpoint calls or meetings.

Looking for Good Distributors?

Export Solutions' database covers 9,700 distributors in 96 countries.

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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
- Entry Plans
- Export Workshops
- Motivational Meeting Speaker



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

www.exportsolutions.com

“The Right Way” – New Country Launch

Retail buyers and distributors are receptive to brand launches from multinationals. Why? Multinationals succeed, as they introduce new products “The Right Way.” Export Solutions recaps 30 components of launching “The Right Way.” Exporters create magic with limited budgets! Winners check as many boxes as possible on “The Right Way” scorecard.

Product	Retailer
<input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful innovation – not “me too”	<input type="checkbox"/> Boost category sales, margin, and profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer market research insights	<input type="checkbox"/> Syndicated data (Nielsen) – category facts
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical confirmation of product differentiation	<input type="checkbox"/> Invest in retailer “push” programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable retail price – premium (not sky high)	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 high value promotional events per year
<input type="checkbox"/> Test market results – similar country or retailer	<input type="checkbox"/> Retailer VP, distributor CEO at intro call
Marketing	Excitement
<input type="checkbox"/> 360 marketing plan: TV, in-store, social, PR	<input type="checkbox"/> Launch party – memorable location
<input type="checkbox"/> Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> PR, social media, trade press
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media	<input type="checkbox"/> Celebrity endorsement
<input type="checkbox"/> Displays: end of aisle and shelf blocks	<input type="checkbox"/> Distributor sales contest
<input type="checkbox"/> Special offers – retailer fliers	<input type="checkbox"/> Donation to local charity
Team	Scorecard
<input type="checkbox"/> Distributor – best in class, category expert	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 1: invest; year 2: break even; year 3: profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Local manager – launch oversight	<input type="checkbox"/> Sales volume (retail sell-out)
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing, social media, PR agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Market share
<input type="checkbox"/> Brand/technical resource from headquarters	<input type="checkbox"/> Retail availability (weighted distribution)
<input type="checkbox"/> Total distributor engagement: reps. to CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 2 commitment and enthusiasm

Business Case Template – Brand Owner **Request for Information – New Distributor**

Activity	Comments
Brand Owner Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founding date, headquarter location • Annual sales • Category, point of difference, international sales
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated Year 1, Year 3, Year 5 revenues • Market share aspirations
Product Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core items from product portfolio
Retail Price Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated retail price or premium vs. current category items
Channels/Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target trade channels, customers
Marketing Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending range or percent of sales • Any contingencies
Marketing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer promotion, sampling, media • Trade promotion, listing fees • Social media, community engagement
Launch Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch date • Retail availability date
Information Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category Review, Year 1 Business Plan • Value Chain, Team Members • Timeline

Sample Business Case Template- Brand Owner “CerealCo*”

Request for Information – New Distributor for CerealCo

Summary

CerealCo was founded in 1960 and is based in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). 2024 sales exceeded \$300 million, including more than \$100 million in export sales to 25 countries outside the USA. CerealCo is a leader in organic/ gluten free cereals.

Opportunity

CerealCo’s goal is to achieve retail sales of \$500,000 in year one, growing to \$1 million by year three and \$2 million by year five. Market share objective is 15% of the premium international cereal category. The size of the prize translates to roughly \$1.5 million in distributor sales to retailers and \$1.1 million in CerealCo sales to the distributor by year five.

Product Range

CerealCo offers a complete range of more than 30 organic, gluten free and sugar free cereals. For international markets, our six core items are Organic (Original), Organic with Nuts, Organic Chocolate, Organic with Berries plus Gluten Free, and Sugar Free. All core items available in a 300 gram size.

Retail Price

Approximate retail pricing is equivalent to \$5 US dollars including VAT in local currency. This is consistent with other premium international cereals and approximately a 20% premium to non-organic cereals. Our price list is attached.

Channels/Customers

Our year one focus is on the supermarket and natural foods channels. Initial targets are supermarkets catering to middle and upper income consumers in the major cities. Year three aspiration is to expand to all supermarkets and launch into the foodservice/horeca channel.

Marketing Budget

A provisional year one launch budget of \$50,000 has been established. Ongoing marketing and trade support levels are projected at the rate of 10% of distributor purchase value.

Marketing Activities

Distributor and CerealCo will agree on a joint business plan. Key components will include sampling and introductory price discounts. A limited budget is established for listing fees at leading chains. However, it is CerealCo’s preference to offer “free goods” in lieu of a listing fee. Launch plan will include ongoing social media campaign targeted against online communities appreciative of other organic and gluten free products.

Launch Timing

Initial shipment – February. Sales Launch – March. Retail Availability – May. Marketing starts – June.

Information Required

Distributor should supply the following information within three weeks:

- Answers to key questions
- Cereal category review
- Year one business plan proposal
- Value chain: port to retail shelf
- Distributor proposed point of contact for CerealCo
- Timeline of key activities

**CerealCo is a fictitious company. Any resemblance to an actual cereal company is coincidental.*

Need more information? Visit www.exportsolutions.com.

Ten Questions: Developing your Cooperation Model

1. Size of the Prize

What are the distributor's year one and year three volume estimates? How big is the category? Is the category growing?

2. Key Account Listings

What listings can we achieve in year one? Who will be our biggest customers? Will there be differences in retailer acceptance by region or channel?

3. Trade Reaction

What will retailers like about our brand? Any potential barriers? Which retailers will be most challenging?

4. Brand Manager

Who will be our primary point of contact? Experience level? Workload?

5. Marketing Investment

What budget is requested to achieve our mutual shipment objectives? Who pays for marketing costs? Which costs are split?

6. Currency Fluctuation

What assumptions are made in your price calculation? What happens if the currency fluctuates more than 5 percent in either direction? How do you handle price increases?

7. Distributor Margin

What is your distributor margin? What services are included? Any other fees or regular costs if we work together?

8. Trial and Repeat

What strategies are required to generate consumer trial and repeat purchase? What works? How do you conduct post-promotion analysis and measure payout and success?



9. Focus

Where will our company rank in terms of volume contribution to your overall business? How will we secure share of mind during our critical first year?

10. Issues

What are the biggest issues we will face? Barriers to success? What must happen to win?

5 Critical Questions to Thrive in 2025

1. Are we willing to pursue international acquisitions?
2. Would your company consider overseas contract packing (versus export)?
3. Can we test a high spend investment plan ("The Right Way") in a strategic country?
4. Would your company invest aggressively in offshore head count in advance of sales?
5. Europeans: can we develop the USA market implementing the USA playbook?
USA factory, broker network, competitive pricing, USA team, channel strategy, 30-50% of sales on trade promotions?

Why do Export Managers Partner with Export Solutions for Distributor Search Help?

- ✓ **Industries Leading Distributor Rolodex**
 - Excellent relationships across 96 countries
 - Database tracks 85 distributors per country
 - 300+ distributor search projects completed.
- ✓ **10 Step Distributor Search Process**
 - Logical, thorough due diligence process
 - Professional approach yields positive results
 - Publisher: *Distributor Search Guide*
- ✓ **Independent Expert Assessment**
 - Expert partner to export managers
 - Focused on all aspects of distributor search
 - Working for you!
- ✓ **Results**
 - 90%+ success rate
 - Align with “Best in Class” distributors
 - Typical project takes 4 months from project brief to distributor selection
- ✓ **Make Your Life Easier!**
 - Identifies 5-8 qualified candidates per country
 - Organize meetings with top candidates
 - Sounding board during assessment process
 - Export Solutions participation sends positive message to distributors.



Export Solutions Can Help!

- Distributor Search helper in 96 countries

Contact Greg Seminara at
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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?”		



Price is Right?

Consumer pricing is one of the famous “Four P’s” of product marketing. Many export managers spend countless hours negotiating wholesale price lists with distributors and retailers. However, this intensity frequently disappears when the discussion shifts to the point of pricing to the consumer. This is unfortunate, because retail pricing is at the critical point where our marketing dreams and distributor inventory are translated to tangible sales.



Strategic Services

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7. Walmart International
8. Distributor Contracts, Margins, and Fees
9. Meeting Speaker
10. International Strategy Expert

I recently conducted a seminar where I presented a full day program on Export Strategy, Distributor Economics, and Getting More Than Your Fair Share of Your Distributors Attention. In the Distributor Economics module, I surveyed the group on how many maintained copies of each distributor’s price calculation. This is the fundamental formula that tracks each brand’s pricing inputs from factory gate to supermarket shelf. None of the participants had copies of their distributor’s actual price calculation or requested a market wide retail price survey. As the norm, busy export managers focus attention on the myriads of details required to process orders such as importation paperwork and product registration. However, retail pricing is a critical element to add to your “to-do” list.

Listed below are Export Solutions’ Tips for managing your retail price guidelines.

1. Review Suggested Retail Price by Market.

Is your pricing realistic based upon 2024 market dynamics and your cost calculation?

2. Conduct Market Wide Retail Price Survey

How do your prices compare versus your suggested retail price and competitive set?

3. Obtain Distributor Price Calculations

Most distributors openly share this information with their brand partners. If a distributor is hesitant, it’s usually easy to figure out if you have retail prices.

Retail price - distributor cost - sales taxes and import duties = gross margin.

This gross margin is divided by the retailer and distributor.

4. Examine Each Line Item of a Price Calculation

Distributors and Retailers are entitled to a fair return for their work on your brand. They maintain profit targets just like your company. In some cases, price calculation transparency leads to breakthrough changes in business development. I remember a situation where the distributor established an 8% currency benefit at the start of a price calculation to hedge against fluctuation. The export manager agreed to sell in the common currency, absorbing the risk, but translating to an 8% positive benefit to the brand price. In some cases, distributors may place “average” numbers in a calculation for logistics services or trade discounts which may not be representative for your brand.

5. Evaluate Relationship Between Everyday Pricing and Promotional Pricing

Price analysis should reveal typical price paid by the consumer. For example “everyday” prices are not as relevant if the consumer habit is to wait until product is on promotional discount to purchase and “stock up.”

6. Supermarket E-Commerce Sites Offer Instant Desktop Price Surveys

Lately, I have checked online web sites for retailers in the UK, Australia, Panama and the USA to get an immediate snapshot of market prices and assortment. It’s not perfect, but a free and easy way to begin to understand market pricing dynamics.

Pricing is a cornerstone of your brand proposition. A little emphasis and investigation will determine if your “Price is Right” to optimize sales in a country.

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

Price Calculation Worksheet

Item	Amount	Comments
List Price (factory or port)		Compare to your domestic list price? Avoid diverting risk.
Exchange rate		Watch bank rate vs. distributor rate.
Freight (sea, truck or rail)		Target full containers. Consolidation is costly.
Duties		Apply correct Harmonized (HS) code. Confirm Free Trade Agreements.
Customs clearance, insurance		Money and time!
Inland freight: port to distributor		Translate actual costs to case rate. Avoid flat percentage rates.
Landed Cost		
Product Stickers		Select countries.
Listing Fees		Flat fee. One time only. Usually not in calculation.
Marketing fund accrual		Typically, 10-20% of list price. Part of calculation or manufacturers price.
Distributor Margin		Normal range: 15-35%. Depends on size, complexity of brand, services, and "what trade spend is included."
Other Distributor Fees		Should be part of distributor margin. Avoid hidden profit centers.
Price to Retailer		Fair and transparent model. Incentives for large customers, extra performance.
Retailer promotions, incentives, rebates		10 – 20% depending on the country.
Other Retailer Fees		At times for merchandising or central distribution. Should be allocated from distributor margin.
Retailer Margin		Global average: 28% Range: 15% -45% based upon category, brand.
Sales Tax/VAT		Included in price in many countries. USA sales tax is on top of shelf price.
Consumer shelf price		Everyday prices and promotional prices.

Cost Calculation Assessment*

*Ambient grocery example: Higher margins – Chilled and Health & Beauty products

Assessment Criteria	Global Benchmark	Actual
Retailer: Everyday margin	35%	
Retailer: Back margin (rebates, discounts)	0-10%	
Retailer: Other margin (Damage, merchandising, central warehouse)	0-5%	
Total Retailer Gross Margin	25-50%	
Trade Promotion (Manufacturer)	5-20% of net sales	
Total Distributor Margin	15-35%	
Warehouse / Stickers	2-4%	
Delivery	2-5%	
Total Distributor Logistics	3-7%	
Key Account Sales	1-3%	
Brand Management	1-2%	
Merchandisers / Field Force	0-4%	
Total Distributor Sales Team	4-6%	
Administration	1-2%	
Finance and Collections	2-5%	
Overheads (office, IT, corporate)	2-5%	
Distributor Promotion Investment	0-10%	
Distributor Net Profit	2-5%	



Distributor Economics

Do you speak the same language as your distributors? I am not talking about English, Italian, Arabic, or Chinese linguistic skills. I am speaking the language of money. Most export managers discuss business with their distributors in terms of cases and containers. Many distributors are entrepreneurs that measure their business in terms of profit contribution and cash flow, just like your company CFO. Understanding distributor economics can position you and your company as preferred suppliers.



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7. Walmart International
8. Distributor Contracts, Margins, and Fees
9. Meeting Speaker
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1. Distributors deserve a reasonable profit for their efforts.

Many achieve a net profit margin of only 3-5 percent plus various owner benefits. A financially stable partner invests in people and technology to advance your mutual business. A solid balance sheet allows the distributor to weather the storm in a political or financial crisis.

2. What is the "salary" you pay your distributors?

Calculate cash flow generated by your company by analyzing distributor net sales to customers multiplied by the distributor margin excluding any promotional bill backs. Margin is one metric, but cash generated pays the bills. How does the distributor salary compare to the work required to service your business or the cost of maintaining a local subsidiary?

3. New Business = Bonus

Distributors are constantly searching for new brands. The next piece of new business entering a distributor generates incremental sales while better utilizing fixed assets like the sales team and warehouse. Brands with existing sales in a country are very attractive as they contribute immediately to the distributor, even if they require a lot of effort during the initial transition.

4. Pioneering is tough!

Would you work for a company for one year without salary? That is the scenario when a distributor is challenged to pioneer a brand in a country for the first time. The cycle of distributor selection, business plan, new product launch, marketing activation and customer repayment may take one year or more before the distributor receives his first "paycheck" for his efforts for your company. Of course, there is a long term pay out for the distributor when the brand works. This is one of the primary reasons that distributors are reluctant to start to represent a new company without a strong USP and investment program.

5. What is the "size of the prize?"

Distributors appreciate export managers that frame their partnership in terms of mutual profit development. Brand owners that understand the intricacies of distributor cost to serve will be rewarded. Measure your profit contribution to a distributor and request that a fair share of their resources be invested in your brand development. A profitable distributor is a healthy distributor!

Good luck!

Greg Seminara
greg@exportsolutions.com

10 Tips: Distributor Contracts 2024

When was the last time you reviewed your distributor contracts? Fortunately, both brand owners and distributors only dedicate time to these documents at the start of a relationship or when the end is near. View our ten tips on handling distributor contracts.

1. Contract, Letter, or Handshake deal?

Most companies maintain a mix of these type of relationships. This is normal, although most wish to standardize the model. The rule of thumb is that the “more money you spend, the more detailed the contract you need.” A simple two page letter of understanding may be appropriate for a small business or a handshake commitment in situations where the distributor “buys and resells.” However, fully supported brand launches and business management of a global brand usually requires a detailed contract to protect both parties.

2. Sole Versus Exclusive Distributor

Most distributors demand country exclusivity. This is standard, but may cause problems if the region is subject to inbound shipments from global customers, e-commerce, or grey market traders. A compromise is to offer a contract as the “sole” distributor, providing protection from the manufacturer appointing multiple partners in a country.

3. Distributors are Customers

At contract time, some manufacturers fail to remember that distributors are customers, buying your product and reselling to all local retailers. Suppliers may forward “one way” contracts that are biased to terms favoring the manufacturer. Would you send a contract like that to Kroger, Carrefour, or Tesco? Key is to strike a reasonable balance favoring commercial sensibilities.

4. E-Commerce Implications

Many distributor contracts were executed before the advent of e-commerce. Revised agreements may be necessary incorporating e-commerce service requirements: items, pricing, inventory, metrics, channel exclusivity.

5. Local Law Dominates

Overseas companies should have their contract reviewed by a local law firm to guarantee compliance with local regulations. For example, in Puerto Rico and Belgium, distributor (agent) protection laws supercede any contract language.

6. Point of Arbitration

Normally, the brand owner automatically assigns his home country as a point of arbitration for any disputes. In some cases, both parties select a neutral country like Switzerland. A global corporate counsel once taught me that ultimately any dispute will need to be resolved in the distributor’s home country. For example, a USA company can sue a distributor in a USA court. It is unlikely that the distributor will hire a USA lawyer or even show up. The USA court may enter a judgement, but the brand owner still needs to go to the distributor’s country for enforcement.



7. Notification of Contract Termination

Standard contracts appear for two or three years with provisions for automatic renewal. Distributors fight for long lead times; a loss of brand can represent a major disruption. From a brand owner’s side, would you want a terminated employee working for you for six months or one year? I prefer three months notification, but that can also backfire if the distributor resigns your business.

8. Loss of Major Principal

Sadly, I have witnessed distributor bankruptcies because they were doing “too well.” A distributor grows the brand to a size where the manufacturer decides to take the brand back and form a subsidiary. The distributor scrambles, but sometimes they need to lay off more people and causes a rapid exit of other brands. 2024 contracts should require distributors to inform you within 10 days of notification (not effective date) of any loss of principal representing ten percent or more of their business.

9. Global/Regional Customers

Large players like Walmart, Costco, Amazon, and Carrefour can be difficult to manage. They demand best pricing system wide or threaten to trans ship from other locations. In some cases, these retailers may demand to “buy direct.” In this case, you can add an “indent” clause permitting this practice while compensating the distributor for local services such as merchandising.

10. Late Payments & Currency Exchange Rate

A distributor that pays late signals financial difficulties. Include a clause that allows you the option to consider the contract in default with payment delays beyond 45 days or with frequent problem payers. The benchmark for calculating currency exchange rates should be specified in the contract. I have seen cases where a distributor assigns a five to ten percent benefit in his favor to protect against the possibility of currency swings.

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- Professional 10 step due diligence process
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Greg Seminara • greg@exportsolutions.com

"Spend time *Selling* to Distributors versus
Searching for Distributors"



What is the Plan?

Picking the right distributor is not an exact science. I know that each of us experiences moments of frustration when we question, “why did we ever pick that distributor?” Believe me, an equal number of examples exist where a distributor may share the same emotion about your company! Frequently, a partnership is christened by a positive distributor interview or enthusiastic meeting at a trade show. Everyone is always in a hurry to negotiate prices and a contract and



secure the first order. However, in many cases the decision to work together is cemented without a formal business plan where expectations, road map, and KPI's are established. Unfortunately, one year later both parties may find themselves pointing fingers at each other due to disappointing results.

I recently completed a distributor search project in the Middle East. We interviewed a number of good candidates and identified two with high potential. Last month, I was notified by the export manager that he selected one of the candidates. I supported his decision, but questioned how the plan proposals for the two distributors compared? The vague response confirmed no plans, just that he liked one distributor better.

This year, another project brought me to a country where a new distributor had been appointed less than one year earlier. Initial results were severely below expectations. The first question I asked the brand owner related to the reconciliation versus the original one-year business plan. What happened? In this case, there was general understanding about the direction of the partnership, but never alignment around a one-page scorecard with KPIs and a logical road map.

Launching a new distributor relationship is like the birth of a child. A mother rarely leaves the side of a baby, providing comfort, safety, and nutrition until the infant is healthy and able to survive without constant oversight. The same philosophy must apply to a distributor partnership. During the first few months, there must be frequent communication, care and visibility from the supplier with the new “brand parents.” This approach results in a healthy brand. Too many times, I see a new distributor appointed without anyone from the manufacturer committed to visit the country for the sales launch meeting or conduct a retail sales audit within the first sixty days. Parents bring their newborn to the doctor frequently for checkups.

Listed below are Export Solutions’ tips on creating a clear annual plan for each country and distributor partner.

1. Select new distributors based upon the quality of their year one plan: targeted listings, volume forecast, and retail penetration. What is their written commitment and timeline for achievement?
2. Current distributors should also have a confirmed one page plan. Merchandising events, new listing targets, spending, and shipment targets.

Many brand owners treat distributors as good customers which is a smart approach. The distributor is paying your invoice, not a retailer. Successful distributor partnerships thrive when both parties are aligned and committed to a simple, one-page plan. Looking for a sample format? I’ve prepared a one-page business plan template that is freely available in the Export Tips section of my web site or simply email me. What is your annual plan for each country?

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Everyone Loves Samples – Ten Tips

Do you enjoy free samples? Everyone is delighted to try a new product. In most cases, feedback is positive and starts the road to a purchase and a potential customer for life. Every export manager is proud of their product quality. However, many companies underinvest in sampling as an essential marketing tool. Read Export Solutions' 10 Tips for expanding your sampling program.

1. Trial/Snack/Travel Size

Do you offer a small size suitable for sampling? Options range from a specific trial size to a one-use portion of your product. Many retailers dedicate valuable cashier checkout space or travel sections for small sizes.

2. Influencer Product Seeding

Digital influencers are critical when targeting the generation glued to their phones. Stand out to influencers with a handwritten note and a sample of your best product. Engage with the influencers after sample delivery and develop a relationship versus a one-time campaign.

3. Uber Eats & Grubhub

Online food delivery services are expected to record more than \$300 billion in the USA in 2024. Companies should adapt their Foodservice channel strategies to include sample sizes. The format can be a portion pack condiment, mini desert treat, or a trial size of a related product. These can be added to a meal delivery from a high profile restaurant as a gift to their customers and to strengthen their overall usage of your brand "back of house."

4. Co-Promote

Sampling may be expensive, so it's always good to co-promote with adjacent products. Partnerships with other brands from a shared distributor or through a bulk mailing from your country's food trade promotion organization represent efficient options. "Think about the entire plate, not just your product."

5. Distributor Samples

Distributors serve as your local brand ambassadors. Include ten cases of samples with every container order. Encourage the distributor to supply a case of "car stock" to each sales representative to share with store managers. Donate samples to employees' children's sports teams to build goodwill.

6. Trial Size Shippers

Retailers love these profitable display pieces as they generate profitable sales revenue versus a free giveaway. Normally, these special display units contain about 30-50 units and retail for \$1 to \$2 per unit with a profit margin of 50%. Shippers can be efficient, with no listing fees, representing a simple "in and out" trial generating promotion.



7. Subscription Boxes

Amazon offers more than 400 monthly subscription boxes. A typical box contains samples of 5-10 products. USA examples include Nom Nom and Try Treats for international snacks. Delta airlines supplied me with a tasty sample box for lunch last week.

8. Embassy Sampling

Many companies' product portfolios represents regional cuisine, a new taste overseas but highly appreciated by local expats. Request that your distributor drop off cases of product samples at your overseas embassy. Sponsor national holiday events for the expat community. Your product may even be featured at an ambassador's dinner!

9. Event Sponsorship

Everyone looks forward to the return of outdoor concerts and festivals. These fun events can be impactful places to sample beverages and indulgent products like biscuits, snacks, candy, and ice cream.

10. Sample Truck

I love the story of a European protein bar manufacturer who painted a truck with his brand colors. His team drove all around town distributing samples. The truck arrived at stores, buyers' offices, and even major trade shows. No surprise that this manufacturer gained a loyal, youthful following with this adventurous approach.

Be generous with your samples! Delight potential buyers and distributors with your wide range of innovative products. Always include a memorable gift with your company logo. Remember that no potential new distributor will sign an agreement with you until their team has tried your product and given it the "thumbs up."

2024 E-Commerce Game Plan

E-commerce development is a top 2024 priority for all manufacturers and distributors. Create a game plan now or risk getting left behind.

- ✓ 2023 E-commerce business review for each country
- ✓ Amazon global key account performance review
- ✓ Set stretch objective for 2024 channel growth. + 15%?
- ✓ Create 2024 e-commerce development plan for each country
- ✓ Brand owners leverage corporate e-commerce resources for export help: training webinar, best practices, etc.
- ✓ Distributors: develop an e-commerce channel team
- ✓ Establish a specific plan for different e-commerce models: Amazon, Alibaba, supermarket web shops, new models
- ✓ Adapt all aspects of your export strategy to include e-commerce implications
- ✓ Hire/link with young people under 30 to achieve goals
- ✓ Set goal to become an international e-commerce expert
- ✓ Scorecard results

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Launch Plan Proposal – Year One*

Brand Objective				
Volume: _____		Wtd. Distribution: _____		Share: _____
Consumer Marketing Activities				
Activity		Rationale		Cost
1.				
2.				
3.				
Trade Marketing Activities				
Activity		Volume		Cost
1.				
2.				
3.				
Listing Fees				
Customer		# SKUs, Space, Promotion Support		Cost
1.				
2.				
3.				
Total Year One Volume		Total Year One Cost		Wtd. Distribution
Distribution Achieved with Above Spend Level				
Customer	Stores	% Country	# SKUs	Volume (annual)
1.				
2.				
3.				

*Feel free to attach other pages to support your recommended launch plan.

Year One Scorecard Example

Brand owners and distributors enter new relationships with great expectations. Most partnerships succeed, but some under deliver leaving both parties disappointed. Export Solutions' Year One scorecard helps both parties align on KPI's.

Objective	Goal	Results
Shipments to Distributor		
Distributor Sales to Customers		
Top 5 Customers		
Region: Sales Split by Area		
Channel: Sales Split by Channel		
Market Share		
Listings: Top 5 Customers		
Retail Pricing		
Shelf Positioning		
Shelf Space		
Sampling		
Social Media		
Displays		
Manufacturer Investment		
Brand Manager Performance		

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Malaysia	Spain	UAE	Ecuador
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5 Steps: From Niche Status to Mass Market Success

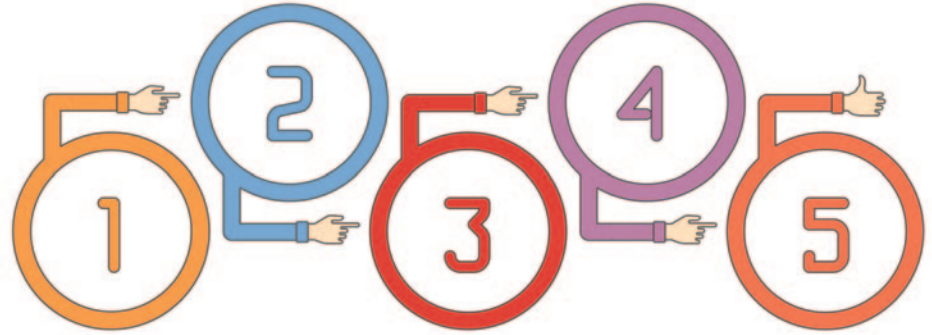
Can you resist the temptation to sell to the biggest retailer in a new country first? Multinationals armed with barrels of money and stacks of market research attack all retailers with a high profile market entry plan for their new products. More likely that your company supplies you with a beloved local brand and a small checkbook to invest wisely. What is the logical route forward for exporters of favorite brands from the USA, UK, Germany, Brasil, Mexico, Japan, etc? Listed below is Export Solutions' 5 step plan to translate your niche item to mass market success in overseas countries.

Step 1: Sell to Homesick Consumers

There are six million USA expatriates abroad and also 6 million UK citizens found outside Great Britain. On a broader basis, there are 80 million people of Italian heritage living outside Italy, including about 17 million in the USA, almost equivalent to the USA's entire Asian population. 92 million foreigners claim ties to Great Britain, including 17 million people living in Australia and 12 million in Canada. These statistics apply to almost all countries who can find their citizens dispersed around the world. These homesick consumers are desperate for their favorite brands from back home. Frequently, they will shop online or at stores dedicated to treats from home such as Taste of America in Spain or the wide array of British delights found at Myers of Keswick in Manhattan. Eataly is a retail monument saluting the global popularity of Italian foods. These retailers are logical first customers for our products.

Step 2: Create Visibility at Restaurants Featuring Your Cuisine

Many people first discover a new cuisine from eating out at a restaurant. Adventurous people like variety in their diets. Tex-Mex brands enjoy high growth in retailers throughout Europe, Middle East, and Asia. Consumers first learned about Tex-Mex food through visits to Mexican restaurants. There are several stories emerging from China such as Starbucks successfully generating significant coffee sales from tea drinking Chinese. Other American products are generating trial in China through partnering with USA style restaurants. Teach consumers about your brand through placement and visibility at restaurants featuring your country's cooking. Consumers will attempt to recreate the food experience in their homes with the brands that they enjoyed at a restaurant.



Step 3: Target Regional Chains in Expatriate Areas

California is home to 33% of the USA's Asian population. New England maintains the highest concentration of Brasilians. Chicago is home to many Greeks. Italians are everywhere, but primarily reside in the Northeast USA. Over half of the USA's Hispanic population can be found in California, Texas, and Florida. New York Metro is home to people from all over the world from UK to Israel to Russia to France to the UK. Major cities like London, Hong Kong, Sao Paolo and Sydney share similar dynamics. The idea is to sell to regional supermarket chains with existing demand generated by people with ties to the home country. For example, HEB in Texas is an excellent destination for Hispanic products. German foods target Giant Eagle or Meijer in the central USA. Italian food products enjoy strong visibility at Shop Rite and Price Chopper. USA products sell well in overseas locations where the USA maintained military bases such as Germany, Philippines, or Japan.

Step 4: Upscale Retailers Feature Variety

Every country features retailers catering to high income consumers. These stores feature extensive assortments of international products as a strategy to differentiate versus traditional supermarkets. Their consumers maintain more disposable income to purchase premium international brands and are

more open to distinct gastronomic experiences. Upscale supermarkets range from Wegman's in the USA to Waitrose in the UK, Esselunga in Italy, Jumbo in South America, Superama in Mexico, Kem Chicks in Jakarta, and City Super in China.

Step 5: Proven Track Record Drives Mass Appeal

Exporters that have successfully completed steps 1-4 above are now ready for mass retailers. Success at penetrating high end, trend setting, retailers will make your brand more attractive to supermarkets catering to the general population. A patient "crawl, walk, run" approach will also present a strong case study for your management to validate the larger investments in marketing and trade programs required to support a national brand launch.

Lessons Learned

Calibrate sales expectations to your own investment in research, marketing, and trade development funding. It's perfectly acceptable to pursue listings at leading supermarket chains, if you maintain adequate brand support budgets. If initial marketing spend is limited, a better option is to make "lower risk" bets on homesick consumers or upscale families which may form a small, but appreciative consumer base. Success and learning from early markets provide a logical on ramp to broader market success.

International Expansion – Shoestring Budget

Stretching thin marketing budgets is a job requirement for most Export Managers.

Listed below are “Ten Tips” for brand building on a “Shoestring Budget.”

1. Tap into Government Export Programs

Many countries sponsor strong trade organizations that can aid your export development program. Exports translate to jobs and most countries have well established programs to facilitate the sale of locally produced products. For example, the USA Foreign Agricultural Service will co-fund marketing investments for small-mid size USA food producers through their MAP programs. German Sweets and GEFA, UBI France, ICE (Italy), ICEX (Spain), Austrade (Australia), and AG Canada serve as valuable resources for local exporters. These organizations often sponsor local “Food Events” at leading supermarkets in international countries. For example, Austrade sponsored G’Day USA to showcase Australian food producers to USA consumers. These events are highly publicized and normally feature a relatively modest participation fee.

2. Leverage Relationships with Global Retailers

Wal*Mart, Carrefour, Tesco & Costco all maintain programs to ease the export process for their current suppliers. This usually involves direct consolidated shipments with other local producers, labeling assistance, and placement in a special section in the international aisle of their stores i.e. USA Foods, France Foods, UK Foods etc. The immediate benefit is the streamlined route to market without payment of upfront local marketing fees. This allows you to “Test the Market” prior to a traditional market entry with a local distributor and heavy marketing support.

3. Joint Venture with Local Manufacturer

Another idea is to locate a local player in your category in a country targeted for expansion. You may be able to offer a potential partner innovation in taste/ flavor or packaging to complement his local expertise. A joint venture or Co-Branding agreement can produce revenues without significant start-up funds.

4. Build Marketing

Costs into

Distributor Margin

Many manufacturers build an accrual fund into their distributor margin calculation. Normally the funding level is around 10% of sales, but can range from 5 - 20% depending on the category. This creates a fund for the local distributor to manage. The accrual fund is created on a “pay as you go” basis, with fund levels proportionate to shipments. In this scenario, the manufacturer usually provides a small fixed sum to create a launch budget prior to initial shipments



5. Free Goods May Fund Trade Marketing

Free goods may be used to offset the cost of trade marketing programs, particularly for established brands. This can be in form of a 1 free with 10 purchase or similar type of promotional events. The benefit is that your budget can be stretched as your cost of goods produced is less than the wholesale cost.

6. Private Label

Retailers source quality products for their private label at the lowest possible price. This eliminates the need for marketing investments. However, private label is difficult if freight expenses are too high.

7. Foodservice Channel

Foodservice/Catering offers a “low investment” route to market versus the supermarket channel. Foodservice usually requires less traditional brand marketing support. Foodservice operators look for tailored solutions with rebates based upon purchase levels. A small budget for SPIF’s (SPIF- special incentive fund) can generate purchases from independent restaurants.

8. Specialty Retailers

Each country has specialty retailers that serve as alternate channels for your brands. This could include diverse customers such as Cost Plus World

Market, Trader Joes, Big Lots or Dollar Tree in the USA. These retailers maintain different approaches not dependent on heavy manufacturer spending.

Their strategy is to offer different brands (or sizes) versus traditional supermarkets or mass merchandisers.

9. Co-promotion with other Brands

Retailers generate excitement through Theme events around a group of complimentary items or common cause. This could involve participating in Barbecue event with other Barbecue related products:

Charcoal, Meat, Picnic Supplies, Drinks, Pickles etc. Another example is a retailer promotion celebrating their anniversary or support of their favorite Charity (Juvenile Diabetes, etc.). In many countries, leading distributors sponsor an annual event for all the brands they represent. Don’t forget the country specific promotions (G’Day USA) mentioned earlier. In each case, manufacturers pay for a portion of the event as costs are spread out among all brand participants.

10. “In & Out” Packs/Gift Baskets

These special packs can generate incremental business without investment in listing fees or shelf space. Examples could include modular displays, trail size shippers, or bonus packs with free product or gift. Gift Baskets are very popular during the Christmas Holidays. This is a good vehicle for “Fine Foods” brands to gain exposure with gourmet consumers.

Ten Tips: How to Minimize Listing Fee Payments

Slotting allowances, listing fees or as the Irish say “Hello” money are all real estate rental fees charged in advance by retailers for access to their limited shelf space. Many retailers assign their buyers “budgets” for this type of incremental fee income. Store owners seek to obtain maximum productivity from each shelf facing and fixed entry fees are a tactic to gain immediate income from new products without an established sales history. At the end of the day, it’s a cost of doing business. Our objective is to allocate as little money as possible to listing fees to redirect our investments to consumer awareness and trial generating activities. Recapped below are Export Solutions’ Ten Tips on minimizing listing fee payments.

1. Exclusivity

Some large retailers will waive listing fees in order to achieve first in the market status with an exclusivity arrangement. Normally, this extends for three to six months. Beware, you may upset other customers who become “locked out” during the exclusivity period.

2. Pay Fees Over One Year

This approach reduces your initial outlay and also increases the likelihood that the retailer will keep your product on the shelf for at least one year. This may also allow you to structure the payment as a percent of case cost versus a “lump sum” payment.

3. Free Goods

Our net cost of “Free Goods” may range from 30-50% of a product’s retail price to the consumer. The retailer recoups his listing fee when the product is sold. Some retailers are hesitant to accept this option, as a slow moving brand may force him to wait to receive his money.

4. Approach “Non-Slotting” Fee Retailers First

Every country includes retailers and channels that do not demand slotting fees. Create a success story with these customers first. Your track record may validate the larger investment in paying the fees at a bigger account or success may help you negotiate more favorable terms.

5. Create “All Inclusive” Annual Plan

Ultimately, the retailer has many “profit centers” to reach their internal financial targets. Customers respect a solid, year one plan, with investments in their other programs like advertising, sampling, shelf rental and display. You may secure your product listings as part of your annual agreement.

6. Negotiate Reductions – Multiple Items

My experience is that many retailers have published standard prices for listing fees. However, net payment often depends on your distributor’s clout. Big distributors, representing multinational’s and a wide variety of brands know the difference between what is requested and what is really paid on high profile brand launches where the retailer needs the new brand to be competitive. The most frequent “discount” is receiving a reduced fee for multiple items: example, paying a full listing fee on first two items and receiving authorization for two extra items as part of a group listing.

7. Retailer Entertainment

Most countries still permit buyers to socialize with suppliers. The cost of a few tickets to a high profile sporting event is far less than most listing fees. A VIP plane trip to view your factory or your category in a “resort” country is another way to gain access to the shelves without writing a big check.

8. Higher Everyday Margin

Total category margin is a key assessment metric for most buyers. Some may consider a lower listing fee, if your brand delivers a margin higher than the category average.

9. Distributor Contribution

Some “hungry” distributors may cover or co-fund listing fees. There are options to “case rate” fixed fees into the distributor margin calculation. Ultimately, distributors benefit from increased sales and margin contribution from a new product listing. However, many are reluctant due to short term contracts. Most maintain policies related to brand owners retaining 100 percent responsibility for listing fees and consumer marketing activities.

10. Beg! Claim Poverty

Buyers are human and realists too. They may “bend” in their demands if they like your brand and know that you represent a small company. Long term distributors can request the occasional “favor” from a friendly buyer. Most retailers have programs to provide “low cost” chances to entrepreneurial new or local suppliers.

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in the *Export Tips* section.

Searching for New Distributors?

Export Solutions makes life a little easier for more than 3,000 export managers. Our time saving distributor database serves as a “helper” for identifying more than 9,700 qualified, local brand builders in 96 countries.

Search by Country, Category, or Country of Origin

Local Experts

Distributor Coverage

Asia:	2,089
Europe:	3,322
Latin America:	1,676
Middle East:	974
USA/Canada:	1,580

Category Experts

Distributor Coverage

Candy/Snack:	2,876
Ambient Beverage:	1,806
International Foods:	3,577
Health & Beauty:	1,927
Natural Foods:	898

Country Experts

Distributor Coverage

European Brands:	3,322
German Brands:	666
Italian Brands:	1,484
UK Brands:	723
USA Brands:	1,266



*“Select Your Distributors,
Do **Not** Let Your Distributors Select You”*

www.exportsolutions.com



Distributor Capability Assessment

Export Solutions established 15 assessment criteria to identify “Best in Class” performers as well as “under achievers.” Many distributor relationships extend 10 years or more. Is your distributor network still a “good fit” for your current business requirements? Template can also be used as New Distributor Reference Check form.

Assessment Criteria	Rating: (10 = Best)
Category Expertise/Critical Mass	
Focus/Time Dedicated to your Business	
Joint Business Plan Development, Execution, Delivery	
Alignment with Brand Owners Vision. Relationship.	
Cost to Serve (fair margin, extra costs)	
Assortment/Shelf Space	
Promotion Creativity, Effectiveness, and Efficiency	
Key Account Relations (Senior level, buyer)	
Leadership/Owner (engaged & committed to us?)	
Brand Manager (seniority, clout,creativity)	
Multi Channel, Multi Regional Coverage	
Financial Stability, Payment Record	
Supply Chain Management & Forecasting	
Problem Solving: rapid response?	
Sales Results versus Budget, Market, Category (CY, PY, 3 Years)	

Customer Relationship Assessment

All distributors claim strong relationships with their biggest customers. Below is Export Solutions' template for evaluating distributor key account relationships. Best way to evaluate distributor relationships? Your company's market share and volume growth at the customer versus the balance of the market!

Assessment Criteria	Rating: (10 = Best)
Distributor viewed as an important supplier to the retailer/buyer	
Open to bringing brand owner to customer meetings.	
Ability to schedule buyer meetings outside the office.	
Can negotiate discounted listing fees and other program costs.	
Pricing: access to price coordinator. Ability to make changes.	
Shelf: access to decision maker. Space in excess of market share.	
Merchandising Flier/Catalog: Ability to get prime feature space.	
Relationship/access to retailer owners, senior executives.	
Problem solving: rapid response? Emergency orders etc.	
Payment terms.	
Access to retailer movement data.	
Category captain or "advisor" for my category.	
Vendor awards?	
Knowledge of retailers systems. "How to get things done."	
Sales results versus overall market and retailers internal growth.	

Create Your Own Export Library



Export Strategy Guide



Distributor Search Guide



Export Handbook



Selling to USA Handbook



Distributor Management Guide



Finance & Logistics



*300 Tips for
Export Managers*



*Idea Guide:
New World – New Business*



*Export Treasure Chest
My Favorite Templates & Forms*



*People Power
Strong Teams Build Great Brands*



*New Distributor
Cooperation Model*

All guides available free at www.exportsolutions.com.



Export Solutions
Distributor Identification Experts

**Looking for a fresh point of view for your
next event or training workshop?**

**Contact Greg Seminara at
greg@exportsolutions.com**



People Power: Distributor Brand Managers

Brand owners demonstrate significant due diligence in selecting a new distributor. This includes lengthy negotiations with the distributor's owner and development of a marketing plan with their senior management. Typically, you sign a contract and then they introduce you to "John" (example), a 30 year old Brand Manager who will be your first point of contact. In reality, most brands are in daily contact with "John," but do little up front to evaluate, select, or define "John's" role in building your business.

Role Definition

Normally, the title of Brand Manager is assigned to your primary point of contact at the distributor. This person serves as the central switchboard of all elements regarding your brand's business at the distributor. Problem solving, logistics issues, promotion planning, and chasing payments are just a few of the everyday tasks assigned to the Brand Manager.

Can your Brand Manager "Move the Organization?"

A key issue is the seniority of the person assigned to your brand. Are you working with a top manager who has a close relationship with the CEO? Or are you working with a junior person who works hard, but basically maintains the flow of paper? In most cases, I look for a person that commands the respect of the distributor organization. Many distributors have multiple brand managers, all lobbying for share of voice from the team. "Best in Class" Brand Managers possess the tenacity to motivate the sales organization to achieve the results and priorities required for your brand.

Workload

Brand Manager workload is always a key issue. A Brand Manager may be shared by 3-5 brands. This approach may be acceptable if you are a niche brand and you are achieving desired results. On the other hand, it is frequently preferable to secure a dedicated Brand Manager who spends 100% of their time working on your business. Exporters need to recognize that Brand Managers cost money, so your contact's workload is directly proportional to the income generated by your brand.

Marketing Versus Sales Background

Brand Managers typically come equipped with a marketing degree. This background is helpful if your brand requires a "classic marketer," combining creativity with deep focus on the consumer. In other situations, Brand Managers with sales expertise prove to be adept at participating at key account sales calls and understanding the best methods for working with the sales force.



Compatibility

Do you like your Brand Manager? Most companies spend extensive time working with their distributor Brand Manager contact. You must be aligned and develop a healthy working rhythm. This can be difficult, as you share common objectives, but report to separate bosses and perhaps different incentives. In many cases, a brand owner develops a strong personal relationship with their brand manager. This can be unhealthy if they like their contact, but let this relationship continue even if results are poor.

People Power: Next Steps

A strong Brand Manager serves as your "Brand Advocate" at the distributor. Export managers need to include assessment of their potential Brand Manager as part of the Distributor selection process. Ask "Who will be my day to day contact? Why? Other choices?" Avoid "paper pushers" that are nice people and can complete forms but offer few new ideas, complain about being overworked and fail to capture the attention of the sales force. Winning Brand Managers bring energy, new ideas, and results to your brand. Recognize Brand Managers who maintain the skill set to take your annual plan, add creative ideas appropriate for their market, and drive the sales organization to deliver the results!

Greg's Guidance: Export Strategy 2025

- ✓ What are your Lessons Learned?
- ✓ What are your Core Competencies?
- ✓ Which countries offer exceptional growth for your category?
- ✓ How much is your company willing to invest? Marketing, People, Promotion
- ✓ What will our organization need to do differently?
- ✓ What are realistic measures and benchmarks?



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.



Export Solutions
Distributor Identification Experts

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
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				



Strategic Services

Export 101: Let's Get Started

Export Solutions provides practical advice on creating your export strategy. We've helped 100's of small-mid size companies gain new sales from overseas markets. Our added value is our sales oriented approach and extensive contacts with international distributors.

Contact Us for Export Solutions

www.exportsolutions.com

Who is Your Brand Champion?



Successful distributors may represent twenty companies or more, with each brand shouting for attention. Exporters should identify, develop, and applaud a Brand Champion at each of your distributor partners. A Champion is someone who is passionate about your brand and values leadership results for your company as something deeper than just selling another case. At some point your company and distributors made a commitment to work together.

This decision was based upon a sense of shared company values and belief that your brand could make consumers happy and the distributor money. As time progresses, this initial enthusiasm fades, and partners forget the fundamental reasons why they decided to work together.

Recently, I was in the Middle East for two distributor search projects. We hitched a ride back to our hotel with the "purchaser" of imported brands for one distributor. This person had not participated in our meeting and maintained oversight for at least 40 companies. We exchanged pleasantries in the car, then introduced our brand. This manager immediately exclaimed, "That's my baby" and spouted out movement figures, category insights and sales by store for each of our core SKUs. His spontaneous enthusiasm was based upon the fact that he felt personally responsible for the success of our brand in his country, even though we had never met him before.

Listed below are Export Solutions' ideas for promoting the importance of Brand Champions at each of your distributors.

1. Who is Your Brand Champion?

The champion is not just your assigned brand manager who you deal with everyday. I prefer senior people of influence who originally supported the idea of partnering with your company. The ideal champion is the distributor CEO or National Sales Manager. Brand development is a "team" sport and you need someone who can inspire the entire group.

2. How Do You Develop a Champion?

As with sports, it takes years of training to support natural ability. Invite the Brand Champion to your corporate headquarters. Organize factory tours and meetings with the global brand managers. Introduce him to the CEO or head of international and treat him to a meal at your home. Spend time with your Brand Champion visiting stores in his country to secure his ideas to take your business to the next level.

3. A Champion Delivers Year After Year

A Champion is defined by leadership results. A true champion is not a "one year wonder." It is someone with a long term commitment and personal investment in your brand's success.

4. How Do You Treat A Brand Champion?

Champions thrive on recognition. Give them an award as "Distributor of the Year" or for serving as a member of your company's Brand Champions club. Invite them to serve on your company's "Distributor Advisory Board," if you have one.

5. Brand Champion Responsibility

Challenge the Champion to deliver exceptional results. The Brand Champions are "true believers" and are aligned with your vision. Many distributor sales teams are filled with Brand Champions. Distributors have favorite brands, based upon the prestige of the brand and personal characteristics of the people working for the manufacturer. One of my mid-size clients has many Brand Champions. How? They offer a great brand, inclusive corporate culture, and some of the nicest, most genuine people you will ever meet. Brand Champions are essential for your brand to elevate from just playing in the export game to category leader.

Greg Seminar
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"Spend Time Selling to Distributors versus Searching for Distributors"

We've Got You Covered!

Distributor Database Coverage

Confectionery & Snack
2,876 Distributors

Ambient Beverage
1,806 Distributors

Gourmet & Ethnic Foods
3,577 Distributors



Middle East
974 Distributors
12 Countries

Asia
2,089 Distributors
17 Countries

USA Importer/Distributor
654 Distributors

Latin America
1,676 Distributors

Europe
3,322 Distributors

9,700 distributors – 96 Countries

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

New Product Launch: Ready, Set, Grow – Ten Tips

Your new product launch is a big deal, comparable to the birth of a child. The first days are critical if you want to raise a “healthy brand.” Listed below are Export Solutions’ ten tips for launching your company for the first time to a new distributor or expanding through a new product introduction.

Firm Calendar

Distributor and brand owner should align on a “firm calendar.” This includes dates for sales materials development, launch meeting and key account calls. All dates are dependent on arrival and customs clearance of the first order. No product, no meeting!

Get Ready

Allow adequate time for printing of point of sale materials and development of key account presentation. In some cases, translation or local adaptation of brand owner supplied tools may be required.

Memorable Meetings

I still remember motivational meetings with themes around boxing and magic. Create new memories with a special theme or an external speaker. Off-site meetings contribute to making your launch special, with an added sense of commitment. Have fun!

Mandatory Attendance

The distributor CEO, brand manager, and export manager must all attend and have speaking roles. Best is to have one meeting with sales and merchandising teams together. However, in some cases, a follow up meeting may be required. Invite logistics, finance, and customer service people to make it a “team effort.”

In-Store Objectives

Establish clear measures for in-store presence. This includes shelf positioning, space allocation, pricing, and off-shelf merchandising. Share a photo. What qualifies as a “good store” versus a “bad store?”

Frequently Asked Questions

Prepare a list of potential questions and logical responses. Role play with the team. Share a printed one pager with sample answers to tough questions.

Samples, Samples, Samples

Provide generous quantities of samples for all distributor employees to enjoy and take home. Prepare recipes if your brand is a food product. Samples are your best advertisement.

Personal Goals

Each team member should have personal goals for your launch. For a key account sales person, this could be acceptance of the core product lineup. A retail merchandiser could be assigned a target of a specific number of stores with displays or eye level shelf placement. For the launch, focus on implementation goals versus case shipments.



Key Account Calls

In many countries, large supermarket chains dominate sales. Develop a personal strategy for each key account. What are the buyers internal goals? How do we fit with the chains consumer base and plans? Which chain “push” programs can we participate in? Schedule a “lead call” with an easier key account to get feedback that will help you with a tougher buyer. Invite the export manager or distributor MD to participate in the sales call if it will help.

Audit

Schedule a retail audit of stores to coincide with the expected retail availability of product. Bring other people from the brand owner’s company and have 2-3 teams auditing the market against a specific set of goals. Visit secondary cities, not just the stores around the distributor’s office. Recognize that conditions will not be perfect and celebrate progress to date.

Need more information? Visit www.exportsolutions.com.

NEW!

Retailer Search Made Simple Canada Example

Search By Country, Format, or Keyword. Keyword may include Retailer name. Like what you see? [Click here](#) to purchase current retailer lists.

Continent: USA & Canada Country: Canada Format: All Formats

Keywords:

127 Listings Page 1 of 2 Next >> Go To Page: 1 2

Country	Retailer	Store Count	Formats	Profile	News	Financial
Canada	7 Eleven					
Canada	Loblaws	2,300	Drug Store, E-Commerce, Hypermarket, Supermarket, Wholesale			
Canada	Costco	95	Cash & Carry/Club, E-Commerce			
Canada	Federated Coop	290	Convenience, Supermarket, Wholesale			
Canada	Fortinos	23	Supermarket			

Search by Country

Coverage: 96 countries and 2,950 retailers

Search By Format

- Supermarket
- Convenience
- Drug Store
- Natural Food
- Club, Cash & Carry

Search by Retailer Name

Supplying profiles, store counts, formats, news and info for Top 100 international retailers plus all overseas branches

Combo Search

Example 1: Who are supermarket retailers in Canada?

Example 2: How many stores does Loblaws operate by banner, in Canada?

ORDER NOW!

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FAQ's – Retailer Database

Why did you create the retailer database?

Export managers dedicate a lot of time to researching countries, retailers and preparing business plans. A standard KPI measure is tracking product listings for key customers. I believe that our industry could benefit from a global retailer database to instantly locate retailers and their store counts in 96 countries. The retailer database is a logical extension of our leading distributor database which has helped more than 3,000 companies build export sales during the last 10 years.

What is your geographic coverage?

96 of top 100 GDP countries worldwide. This includes most Asian, Middle Eastern, and European countries. Our database covers every country in the Americas. In Africa, we cover South Africa.

What is your format coverage?

Excellent coverage of chain supermarkets, hypermarkets, clubs, cash and carry, and convenience formats. Solid initial coverage of drug stores, natural food stores, and e-commerce channels. Our database does not cover DIY/hardware, toy, office, liquor, or sporting goods channels.

Retailer database: featured info

Profile – Retailers profile and link to their internet home page.

Formats – Retailer's stores segmented by format and banner.

We track supermarkets, hypermarkets, cash and carry, convenience stores, discounters, drug stores, natural food stores, and e-commerce retailers.

News – Latest retailers' news. In some cases (Asia), we substitute a link to the retailer's latest promotional flyer.

Financial – Many leading retailers are publicly traded. A link is provided to their latest financial results. We do not offer estimated financial information for privately held or family owned retailers.

How is your coverage of global retailers?

We offer total coverage for top 100 global retailers. This includes all of their branches and banners. Searchable! Use filters to research Walmart, Costco, Carrefour, Tesco, Metro, Casino presence by country. Database covers retailer's total store outlets as well as a breakout by banner and format.



What can I use the retailer database info for?

- Obtain an instant snapshot of an average of 24 retailers per country for 96 countries.
- Track presence of global retailers like Walmart, Carrefour, and Metro AG.
- Create country specific listing maps where distributors measure brand authorization by retailer.
- Conduct home office based international category reviews and price checks from retailers' e-commerce sites (not all retailers).
- Prepare annual reviews and reports with up-to-date information on leading retailers and channels.

Searchable

The database offers filters allowing you to search by country, format, or retailer name. You can also use a combination of filters for your research.

Can I get a free sample of the retailer database?

Sure! Check www.exportsolutions.com for a complete profile of United Kingdom retailers.

Do you provide retailer's annual sales or market share information?

Accurate annual sales information is available through the financial link for publicly traded companies. We do not provide estimated financial information for privately held and family owned retailers. Channel blurring occurs between supermarket, convenience, e-commerce, and even natural food operators. We do not provide market share due to difficulty to accurately isolate and define channel market share information, particularly with so many privately held retailers.

How accurate is the retailer data?

Export Solutions' retailer database is updated weekly, so information is highly accurate. Retailer names, web sites, and formats rarely change. This makes the database 99% accurate at the company level. New stores open every day, resulting in store counts that may be 95% accurate. We intend to update store counts on a regular basis.

How much does retailer database access cost?

An annual subscription to the retailer database is \$975. This supplies one year, unlimited access to more than 2,950 retailers in 96 countries. Special offers available for our distributor database customers. Note: special pricing for government trade organizations.

How do I access the retailer database?

Visit www.exportsolutions.com and click the retailer database page. You can place a subscription or individual continent (i.e., Europe) into a shopping cart. Register and check out via credit card. The process takes two minutes and we automatically send you an invoice.

About Export Solutions

Export Solutions was founded in 2004 and is based in Atlanta, Georgia in the USA. Export Solutions serves as a leading provider of business intelligence to the food and consumer goods industries. Our distributor database covers 9,700 distributors in 96 countries and has been used by more than 3,000 clients. Our *Export Express* newsletter has a circulation of 9,900 and is viewed as an important source of insights, strategies, and templates for international development. www.exportsolutions.com.

Category Review Template* – page 1

(Estimate: Source info from Store Checks, Retailers, Nielsen, Euromonitor)

Category Sales: Total, all channels, all customers			
Retail Value _____		Wholesale value _____	
Category Sales: Percent by Segment			
Segment A _____	Segment B _____	Segment C _____	Segment D _____
Category Sales: Percent by Channel			
Supermarket _____	Convenience _____	Discount _____	Pharmacy _____
Wholesalers _____	Cash & Carry _____	E Commerce _____	Other _____
Category Peak Seasonality			
Summer _____	Winter _____	Holiday _____	None _____
Category Sales: Top 4 Customers			
Customer 1 _____	Customer 2 _____	Customer 3 _____	Customer 4 _____
Category Sales: Percent National Brand versus Private Label			
National Brand _____		Private Label _____	
Category Sales: Percent by Brand			
Brand A _____	Brand B _____	Brand C _____	Brand D _____
Category Sales: Percent by Region			
Region A _____	Region B _____	Region C _____	Region D _____
Category Sales: Market share (value) Top 4 Brands			
Brand 1 _____	Brand 2 _____	Brand 3 _____	Brand 4 _____
Category Sales: Market share (units) Top 4 Brands			
Brand 1 _____	Brand 2 _____	Brand 3 _____	Brand 4 _____
Category Sales: Top 4 SKU's/Items			
Item 1 _____	Item 2 _____	Item 3 _____	Item 4 _____
Category Sales: Top 4 Pack Sizes			
Pack Size 1 _____	Pack Size 2 _____	Pack Size 3 _____	Pack Size 4 _____

*Note: please provide your best estimate

Category Review Template* – page 2

(Estimate: Source info from Store Checks, Retailers, Nielsen, Euromonitor)

Category Size (circle)				
Mass	Standard	Niche		
Category Sales Growth (circle)				
High 10 % +	Average: 3-5 %	Flat	Declining	
Buyer Interest (circle)				
High	Medium	Low		
Category Development (circle)				
New	High Growth	Mature	Declining	
Retail Prices: Top 15 SKU's/Items at number 1 customer				
Item 1 _____	Item 4 _____	Item 7 _____	Item 10 _____	Item 13 _____
Item 2 _____	Item 5 _____	Item 8 _____	Item 11 _____	Item 14 _____
Item 3 _____	Item 6 _____	Item 9 _____	Item 12 _____	Item 15 _____
Shelf Space: Provide Photo's/Planograms				
Typical Section Size: Supermarket		# Items: Average supermarket		
Adjacent Category 1		Adjacent Category 2		
Merchandising (circle)				
Typical Percent Price Reduction	10%	20%	30%	Other
Store Flier Participation	weekly	monthly	seasonal	never
Category displays	weekly	monthly	seasonal	never
Special Packs	Bonus Packs	Pre-Price	Free Gift	Other
What activity drives incremental category sales?				
Category Insights: What's hot?				
Category Insights: What's not selling well?				
Category Summary/Other Insights				

*Note: please provide your best estimate

Distributor Supplier Relations

Managing the New Normal

Activity	Old School	New School
Customers	Mass Supermarkets	Omni Channel
Mom: Whats for?	Dinner	Breakfast, Lunch
Sales Team	Over 50's	Under 30's
E-Commerce Channel	Niche	Mass
Assortment	Limited (supermarkets)	Unlimited (e-com.)
Retail Conditions	Store visits	Web shop checks
Business Management	Sales targets	Profit targets
Distributor Expertise	Generalists	Specialists Category, Channel
Business Manager	Brand Manager	Idea Generator
Check Point Conferences	Telephone calls	Teams / Zoom
Overseas Supplier Visits	Monthly / Quarterly	Quarterly / Annually
Brand Presence	Shelf Visibility	Page 1 results (e-com.)
Distributor Logistics	Delivery by case	Delivery by unit (e-com.)
Recipe Ideas	Your brand only	Total meal solutions
Training	Annual meeting	Webinar (anytime)
Consumer Marketing	Mass via multi media	Targeted and digital
Brand Information	Email to distributors	Online portal
Pricing: Distributor Calculation	"Closed Book"	"Open Book"
Trade Shows	Visit in person	Hybrid: Virtual and in person
Foodservice	Restaurants	Home Delivery
Forecasts / Reports	Monthly	"Live," real time
Results-Expectations	Achieve your Objective	Achieve your Objective

Where Do You Want to Grow?

Asia/Africa/Middle East

	Australia – 284 Distributors
	China – 161 Distributors
	Hong Kong – 182 Distributors
	India – 110 Distributors
	Indonesia – 80 Distributors
	Japan – 176 Distributors
	Korea – 147 Distributors
	Malaysia – 128 Distributors
	Philippines – 120 Distributors
	Singapore – 164 Distributors
	Thailand – 103 Distributors
	Vietnam – 52 Distributors
	Israel – 82 Distributors
	Saudi Arabia – 111 Distributors
	U.A.E. – 206 Distributors
	South Africa – 114 Distributors

Plus 14 more countries

Europe

	Austria – 72 Distributors
	Belgium – 91 Distributors
	Croatia – 78 Distributors
	France – 134 Distributors
	Germany – 203 Distributors
	Greece – 93 Distributors
	Hungary – 71 Distributors
	Italy – 114 Distributors
	Netherlands – 162 Distributors
	Poland – 107 Distributors
	Russia – Not Available
	Spain – 173 Distributors
	Sweden – 110 Distributors
	Switzerland – 104 Distributors
	Turkey – 96 Distributors
	U.K. – 281 Distributors

Plus 19 more countries

Americas

	Argentina – 60 Distributors
	Bolivia – 55 Distributors
	Brazil – 151 Distributors
	Canada – 232 Distributors
	Chile – 99 Distributors
	Colombia – 87 Distributors
	Costa Rica – 77 Distributors
	Ecuador – 62 Distributors
	Guatemala – 66 Distributors
	Mexico – 206 Distributors
	Panama – 65 Distributors
	Paraguay – 59 Distributors
	Peru – 84 Distributors
	Uruguay – 59 Distributors
	USA – 654 Distributors
	Venezuela – 38 Distributors

Plus 14 more countries

*Use Export Solutions Database
to fill in the Gaps in your
Export Coverage Map*

