
Sales potential

- What is the present demand for and the long-term potential of your products and services? To find out, you will need statistics on present imports and emerging trends by volume, value and country of origin; information on the competition you face from present and future domestic suppliers and the price differential between your products and theirs; and data on the general market's acceptance of, or resistance to, new products.
- To win customer acceptance will you have to adapt your domestic Canadian product to accommodate local preferences in quality, colour, packaging or sales methods?

Being able to adapt to familiar local business practices can sometimes win you the nod over a competitor.

Regulations

- What measurement systems are appropriate, e.g., imperial, metric, U.S. fluid, avoirdupois?
- What are the existing health, safety and technical standards; the packaging, marking and labelling regulations?

Terms of payment and currencies

- You will need to know the customary terms of payment employed in your target market and the currencies used.

Distribution

- How are importers in the target country organized and how do they prefer to operate? What are their customary mark-up or commission rates? You will need to learn a lot about their preferred ways of doing business because being able to adapt to familiar local business practices can sometimes win you the nod over a competitor who cannot or will not do so. The local market structures and buying systems will help suggest how you should go about distributing your product. Will a single agent be enough or should you have a number of sales representatives? How large an inventory should you maintain? What should be the size and frequency of shipments? You will want information on the adequacy of international shippers and of inland transportation from the port of entry as well as the likelihood of negotiating commodity rates for recurring shipments.