



How do I protect my products?

It is best to register your trademarks in each country in which you trade. Currently, patent protection may be applied at the national level, or alternatively, through the European Patent Convention to which all EC Member States adhere, with the exception of Denmark, Portugal and Ireland. A Community-wide patent convention will likely be established by the end of 1991.



How do I get product standards certification?

EC directives normally only lay down essential requirements for health, safety and environmental protection. In the absence of European standards, there is mutual recognition of national standards between Member States. The writing of detailed European standards has been given to European bodies such as CEN, CENELEC and ETSI whose progress has been slower than originally intended. The EC is also moving towards mutual recognition of Member States testing and certification procedures. Canada is studying a similar arrangement with the EC.



You first want to use an agent to assess the market, but how to select one ?

Look for someone offering good technical support, dedicated and operating in the same markets (size is not always a relevant criterion).

Attend trade shows to make initial contacts.



How to decrease the risks associated with a joint venture agreement with an unknown partner?

Define strictly the terms of business.

Both companies must share the same views on how to value a business.

Joint venture's management must have real authority of its own.



When considering the acquisition process: how to minimize the risks of choosing a lame duck?

Formulate very strict financial objectives by which to evaluate the company or companies.

But don't overlook "soft" issues such as morale of key staff, motivations of seller, political background and environmental liabilities.

Do a thorough due diligence search.