

Commissioned agents are the most common form of representation and they usually have an exclusive arrangement with their suppliers. Some firms have their own wholesale and retail outlets, but independent wholesalers usually are the distributors. Sector specialization is common among importers/agents, but within sectors most agents concentrate on broad product areas such as pharmaceuticals or electronics. Since Israel is a small country with a good communications system, one agent can usually cover the whole market.

Exporters should, if possible, make a personal visit to Israel to select a suitable agent who will be able to market their products and to observe local conditions first-hand.

Particular care should be taken to ensure that the selected agency has sufficient standing and financial resources to offer adequate representation, as well as repair facilities, if required. In general, the best type of representation is offered by an agent who specializes in similar but non-competitive products and is already established in the targeted markets.

Business Contacts

It is advisable to make business contacts prior to planning a trip to Israel. This can be done either through Israel's various Chambers of Commerce or through direct correspondence with the appropriate business.

Many exporters choose to use the services of the commercial section of the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv. Initial contact may be by letter or by fax. It is advisable to send the commercial section a complete set of literature about the exporter's products or services, and to state the specific objectives for the trip (i.e., first trip to identify an agent or follow-up trip). The commercial section will then suggest contacts and ask that the exporter forward preliminary information on the product to the potential buyer, as most Israelis prefer to know in advance the exact nature of the product as well as its technical characteristics.

The commercial section will then follow up with the buyer and arrange for the appropriate appointments so that, upon arrival in Israel, the exporter will have a full program of calls pre-arranged, minimizing the time spent "looking for the right contact."