

VI. Sales Information

- A. Description of internal sales organization.
- B. Description of external sales organization.
- C. System used for agent/principal communication.
- D. Methods used to evaluate sales representation.
 - 1. Effectiveness.
 - 2. Reputation.
 - 3. Morale.
 - 4. Training.
 - 5. Reports.
- E. Record of sales volume by product to date for this territory.
- F. Sales objectives for next year for this territory.

VII. Production Situation

- A. Is production limited or flexible?
- B. Difficulties in obtaining materials (projected).
- C. Pending production limitations and forecasts.

VIII. Advertising and Sales Promotion Information

- A. Advertising budget for this region, if any.
- B. Samples of advertising developed.
- C. Description of sales promotion activities (trade shows, films, etc.).
- D. Description of publicity samples and activities.
- E. Evaluation of activities to date.
- F. Samples of competitive advertising and literature.
- G. Estimate of competitive expenditures and allocations.
- H. Policies on cooperative advertising, if applicable.

IX. Sales Leads

- A. How are they generated?
- B. Qualified?
- C. How quickly are they furnished to salesmen?

X. Agent/Principal Relationship

- A. How is the exclusivity of this territory described and what are its boundaries?
- B. Have you any house accounts and if so, what is your commission structure?
- C. What are your policies on field back-up and visitation?
- D. What is your commission structure?
 - 1. Percentage amount.
 - 2. When paid.
- E. Do you currently work with a Representatives Advisory Council?
- F. What are your policies for termination?

XI. Written Agreement with Agent

What are the points you would like it to cover?

Interviewing Prospective Agents

You now have done all the groundwork needed to conduct personal interviews of prospective manufacturers' agents on your short list. The main purpose of the interview is to confirm basic information that you have collected earlier, and to explore in depth the subjects that could not be covered in preliminary correspondence.

The interaction between you and each agent you interview is very important to the future success and longevity of your relationship. Remember that any agent you hire should not be left to develop your new territory alone; you should have a partner with whom you often will want to communicate with.

Experienced personnel managers in large corporations have learned to be excellent listeners. They have fine-tuned their interview technique so that they get potential employees to expand their answers, thus revealing more about themselves than the question alone requires for an answer. In your interviews, try to avoid asking questions or making statements that can lead the agents to reply with the answers they believe you are seeking.

In order to evaluate objectively the results of your interviews, you should ask each agent the same questions and make notes of the responses.

The "Guidelines for a Manufacturer's Interview with an Agent", reproduced below, should be used as a resource list only. Not all of the questions will be relevant to your needs.

Guidelines for a Manufacturer's Interview With An Agent*

Because the selection of agents is so crucial to the success of your sales program, it is imperative that this choice be based on comprehensive information that be obtained only through prescreening and in-depth personal interviews.

There is a tendency to classify agents as one group, but there is a wide variety of agency operations in every industry - one-man and father and son operations, firms with 10 salesmen covering a particular area, and companies with 30 salesmen and 10 offices concentrating their efforts in the metropolitan areas, etc. Each has its own advantages, and your efforts to find the proper match will succeed if you persist in the search.

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