



How do I get to
know the
markets?

Start by consulting a trade commissioner. The overseas trade offices were very useful in giving advice on the lay of the land.

If you do your own market study, send top-level people from the parent company who can focus on key information more quickly and more efficiently.

If you use external consultants, make sure they understand your objectives and requirements clearly from the start.

Take full advantage of the information you can get through trade associations, the experience of your peers and trade magazines. In the United Kingdom and the Netherlands you will find market and company data easily. This is not true in the rest of Europe, where you will have to rely more on talking to people in the industry.

If you go for the acquisition process, use the full knowledge and experience of existing staff.

Survey all European countries, not just one. Conditions could be very different next door. You might also be able to identify scale factors across Europe for your product.



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 for nationally or through the European Patent Convention to which all European Community (EC) member states adhere, except Denmark, Portugal and Ireland. A Community-wide patent convention will be established in the near future.



How do I get
product standards
certification?

Compared with North America, the process of testing and certification is slow and expensive. Furthermore, most sectors still have different procedures and standards requiring individual application to every country.

EC directives usually outline only 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 task of writing these detailed European standards has been given to European bodies such as CEN (European committee for standardization), CENELEC (European committee for electrotechnical standardization) and ETSI (European telecommunications institute), whose progress has been slower than originally intended. The EC is also moving toward mutual recognition of member states testing and certification procedures. Canada is studying a similar arrangement with the EC.