
Based on the answers to the above questions, a short list of potential representatives can be developed and a more detailed list of questions prepared for the second round of the screening process. These should include:

- name, age, educational background, and work experience of senior executives and sales personnel;
- average turnover per product;
- average order size;
- number of calls per month per salesperson;
- number of annual visits to customer;
- potential of the product in the specific market;
- promotional arrangements and costs;
- current warehouse facilities;
- transportation arrangements; and
- names of trade associations to which the firm belongs.

The Personal Interview

Once a short list of potential representatives has been developed, the next step is to arrange a personal visit to the marketplace. However, before the visit, exporters should check the business and bank references provided by the distributor/agent. Reference checks can save time and money by eliminating those representatives with whom you share few business interests. If possible, the exporter should arrive several days in advance of the appointment(s) in order to survey the market and observe the local business environment. Should there be a trade show scheduled at the time of your visit — although not necessarily in the same field — it may be useful to attend as an observer to learn more about local business customs, packaging preferences, etc.

The exporter should also notify the Canadian embassy or high commission of the impending visit, so that the commercial officer can assist with final