

need to be considered, but the following are likely to be the key considerations in determining the long-term success of a seller-agent relationship:

- **The Experience of the Potential Agent**

Does he have experience in handling your products? Does he have a thorough knowledge of the industry?

- **The Financial Status of the Potential Agent**

Do credit and banking sources always provide an entirely accurate or comprehensive assessment of a company's financial and business position? It is therefore advisable to retain the services of a credit agency or other impartial third-party to verify all financial information.

- **The Prospective Agent's Overall Business Reputation**

In order to get a better idea of the performance and reliability of any Taiwan company, exporters should find out: How is the firm viewed by bankers, vendors, clients and competing firms?

- **The Taiwanese Company's Overall Strength**

Many trading companies on the island are relatively small in size. It is thus important to be sure that the firm has a staff large enough to promote new foreign products effectively.

- **Associations with Other Companies**

A sizeable number of trading companies have financial ties with other firms. It is essential for foreign companies to be aware of such links and how they might affect the performance of a potential agent.

- **Similar Short- and Long-term Objectives**

Canadian exporters seeking to market products in Taiwan should try to make certain that a potential agent has a genuine interest in its products. Is the degree and duration of this interest in accordance with its own objectives?

Finally, it may be noted that agents or distributors are not always essential. In recent years, many foreign companies have established their own highly successful export networks in Taiwan. In addition, direct marketing has been gaining ground in recent years, although it still makes up a comparatively small proportion of the distribution channels used by foreign suppliers to Taiwan.