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To meet these conditions, the following steps in selecting trading companies should be respected:

- 1 The manufacturing company should carefully define its objectives and specify its needs. In particular, it should determine the projected intensity of its export activity, i.e. the share of production it can commit to export *on a regular basis*. (Capacity for occasional export activity is not enough to elicit vigorous support from a trading house). The company should also decide which (if any) of the export tasks enumerated above it intends to perform itself. It would, for example, be a good idea for the producing firm to do a bit of its own groundwork in identifying the foreign markets which present the best potential for its products. This is a task which could, of course, be performed by trading houses. However, their focus is likely to be markets in which they are already firmly established, and they may not be the most attractive for a given producer.
- 2 There are a number of factors to be considered in selecting a suitable trading house, and many will have to do with the degree of *market expertise and coverage* and *type of services* sought. It is especially important for the manufacturer or producer to define the depth and nature of *product expertise* needed. This may turn out to be the key factor, since only a limited number of trading houses are likely to possess the required expertise or the capacity for developing it quickly. This does not mean that a trading house with a high level of product expertise will not have to rely on the manufacturer it represents in the course of business transactions with third parties. A manufacturer should know his products and end-users better than anyone else. At the same time, a trading house should be able to count on the manufacturer's technical support to develop an effective sales presentation.

The above considerations lead inevitably to the pertinence of such dimensions as the trading company's *size* and the *length of its export experience*.

Size should not, in itself, constitute a selection factor. While the larger company can be expected to offer wider product and market expertise, and a greater variety of services, the small manufacturing concern may well find it easier to deal with a small trading house whose services are more personalized and better tailored to its needs.