

**Information Sheet:**

# Primary Market Research Work Plan

Once you are export ready, where do you begin? There are numerous state and federal trade promotion programs and services available to help you make contacts overseas. All are designed to help you identify distributor prospects, and are geared towards eventual export sales. However, most companies initially will have many questions that can only be answered by primary market research (direct contact). There are four ways a firm can do this rather inexpensively. By focusing on learning more about key questions, instead of making sales, there is less pressure on anticipated results. And, if sales are made, that answers the key question that the firm initially has about their global market potential!

## 1. Commercial News USA

This magazine was developed by the Commercial Service and allows a firm with a new-to-export product to advertise at a nominal rate (minimum \$445). The minimum advertisement consists of a B&W photo and a product description of fewer than 105 words. The magazine is published monthly (except for two months) and is disseminated through Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) overseas posts (142 posts in 69 countries). It provides exposure to more than 100,000 readers worldwide, many of whom are agents or distributor prospects.

## 2. International Contacts

Listings of contacts can be obtained from various sources, including limited FCS posts. They are usually accessed by harmonized code, and contact information can be retrieved in various formats. The information is generally considered to be limited, but those listed have expressed an interest in your type of product in order to be listed.

## 3. State's Department of Economic Development Overseas Offices

Latest figures indicate that 40 states have overseas offices (all states combined have more foreign offices than the FCS). These are excellent places to start determining potential for establishing international distribution. State offices are particularly attuned to helping in-state firms establish export sales in areas where they have overseas offices. Although the number of countries (offices) may be minimal (usually fewer than six), they are located in key markets and there generally is no charge for their services.

## 4. U.S. Trade Shows

Often overlooked for their global potential, most major domestic vertical (industry specific) trade shows will have up to 20 percent, or greater, international attendance. Some of the most popular industry shows are even promoted overseas by Commerce with their International Buyers Program. Foreign distributors who attend these shows already are pre qualified to some extent by the fact that they are there — it demonstrates their commitment and aggressiveness in serving your market. Domestic trade shows also provide an excellent opportunity to invite prospects to visit your facilities after the show (or while they are in the states) and learn first hand about your products and people.

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