

*Information Sheet:*

# Direct Mail Survey

The use of direct mail is a relatively inexpensive method available to potential exporters for determining international business interests.

In today's instant communication world of FAX, making contact by mail is generally overlooked. Yet it can be a significant way to take advantage of one of the key programs available from various government sources — identifying foreign trade prospects. Finding trade leads for a company's products can be as simple as just contacting serving agencies, both state and federal. These might include the closest district office of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Commercial Service; a state Department of Agriculture; or USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) in Washington, D.C. Fees for this service are generally nominal, and information can be provided for specific product interest and for specific countries.

But that's only the beginning. Now the company must become PROACTIVE and initiate the first contact!... which raises the question, How...???

Well, the company already has the basic collateral materials (note sections International Promotion and PROGRAMS/FORMS), so all that should be needed is to prepare a cover letter and follow a simple six-step action plan:

## Step 1. Company Review

Determine the company's specific interest by product code (SIC), country(s) and type of trade lead (agent, distributor, importer, manufacturer).

## Step 2. Contact One (or All!) Serving Agencies Available

Obtain appropriate trade leads (ask for the specific program that an agency might have, and/or for "trade leads" for the countries the company is interested in).

## Step 3. Analyze Trade Leads

Review each trade lead before sending information (the "lead" may be a competitor!).

## Step 4. Prepare Mailing

Initial mailings generally consist of:

1. Cover letter (note example and section PROGRAMS/FORMS).
2. Collateral materials (note International Promotion).

**NOTE:** Application Forms, Business Information Form, Samples, Prices and other information are generally provided only after a trade lead has been pre-qualified.

## Step 5. Make Mailing

For large mailings, keep in mind international airmail rates can be expensive, therefore the company must balance providing too little information with too costly a mailing.

## Step 6. Review and Follow-Up to Responses

All responses deserve a timely follow-up, even if just to acknowledge receipt. At this stage, each response will require some degree of individual, case-handled follow through, determined by the contents of the response.

BE PREPARED to provide:

1. Distributor Application Form
2. Business Information Form
3. International Sales Program
4. Price-list
5. Order Form (with suggested stocking order!)
6. Letter of Credit Instructions

### Example Cover Letter

April 23, 1999

Sr. Juan Carlos  
Plaza Federal 1234  
Mexico 01234, D.F

#### **ANNOUNCING: A NEW SALES & DISTRIBUTION OPPORTUNITY**

Dear Sr. Carlos:

Acme Manufacturing Company is a 15 year old manufacturer of marking tags. For the first time, we are seeking international distribution for an excellent quality product that has had great success in the U.S. Market.

The product-line is called Acme-Tags and is shown and described in the enclosed brochure. Acme-Tags offer the best all-weather, permanent marking system available at an economical cost. Over two million were used by companies in the U.S. during last year alone!

Compared to other types of marking tags, Acme-Tags have excellent profit potential for you, while also offering your customers potential savings. As a distributor, you can qualify for special international trade discounts.

Please take a moment to review the enclosed information and consider your potential for distribution and sale of Acme-tags. Our international sales program, price list, and order form are available upon request to help you in placing an order.

We are planning to establish sales and distribution in Mexico as soon as we have the right distributor, and would like to

discuss with you your possible interest.

Sincerely,

John Smith  
Director, International

---

[Center for Export Readiness Training and Services](#)

P.O. Box 495  
Columbia, MO 65205  
573-289-2378

Last modified: **February 24, 2012.**

Comments or questions? email [brian@export-ready.com](mailto:brian@export-ready.com)