How To:
Promote Your Product in New Markets

B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Market Readiness Series

Effectively marketing your product to new buyers and consumers in export markets requires strategic engagement through trade missions, trade shows, and outreach activities. These opportunities not only help you connect with potential partners but also showcase your product's unique value on a global stage. This guide provides practical strategies to prepare for, participate in, and follow up after these events, ensuring you maximize visibility and secure lasting relationships. While the focus is on export markets, many of these tactics can be adapted to domestic expansion.

For deeper insights into preparing your supply chain and distribution for export, refer to **How to Manage Logistics and the Supply Chain.**

1. Trade Missions & Trade Shows & Consumer Events

Trade missions and trade shows are essential for introducing your product to international buyers, distributors, and consumers.

Additionally, consumer-focused events like food festivals or tasting sessions offer direct engagement with your end customers, providing valuable feedback and building brand recognition.

Types of Events

Trade Missions: Organized visits to target markets facilitated by government or industry groups, connecting you with buyers and potential partners in a structured environment.
Example: B.C. seafood exporters participate in government-led trade missions to Asia, fostering connections with premium restaurant chains and distributors.

Trade Shows: Large-scale events where businesses showcase their products to buyers, distributors, and stakeholders in the food and beverage industry.
Example: Exhibiting at Seafood Expo North America (SENA) allows B.C. seafood businesses to highlight sustainable practices to U.S. buyers.

Consumer-Focused Events: Food festivals, tasting events, or cooking demonstrations directly engage consumers, helping you build brand awareness and collect feedback.
Example: A B.C. cherry exporter hosts a tasting booth at an international food festival in Japan, emphasizing the freshness and quality of their fruit.

For tips on selecting the right markets and events, refer to **How to Conduct and Use Market Research for Exporting.**

2. Preparing for Success

Thorough preparation is key to making a lasting impression at trade shows, missions, and consumer events.

Key Preparations:

• **Promotional Planning:** Develop marketing materials that highlight your product's benefits, certifications (e.g., Ocean Wise, Marine Stewardship Council), and unique origin stories.
Example: A B.C. seafood exporter prominently features their MSC certification in brochures for European buyers.

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• **Display Design:** Create professional, eye-catching displays that align with international market preferences. Ensure packaging complies with global standards (e.g., vacuum-sealed seafood packaging or eco-friendly materials for agrifood products).

• **Shipping Samples:** Coordinate with customs brokers to ensure perishable samples comply with import regulations and arrive in optimal condition.

• **Logistics Management:** Secure event registration, plan travel logistics, and obtain any necessary entry visas or shipping documents.

For guidance on managing logistics and supply chains for international events, refer to **How to Manage Logistics and the Supply Chain.**

3. Maximizing Event Participation

Your goal during events is to create meaningful connections with buyers and showcase your product's value.

Strategies for Success

• **Prepare Samples:** Ensure product samples are well-packaged, high-quality, and meet the standards of the target market.

• **Craft Compelling Sales Pitches:** Tailor your pitch to highlight your product's unique selling points, such as sustainability credentials or local sourcing practices. For tips on crafting an effective pitch, refer to **How to Develop and Deliver a Sales Pitch for Your Product.**

• **Engage Effectively:** Understand cultural differences in business practices.
Example: Asian buyers often value relationship-building and long-term commitments, while European buyers often prioritize certifications and environmental sustainability.

• **Demonstration Opportunities:** Live cooking or tasting sessions create immersive experiences that showcase product quality.

For more on creating effective marketing materials, refer to **How to Develop a Strong Brand for Your Product.**

4. Post-Event Follow-Up

Following up after events is essential for nurturing leads and converting them into long-term business relationships.

Steps for Effective Follow-Up

1. Provide Additional Information: Tailor emails to each buyer, referencing specific conversations or product interests. Include product specs, pricing, and sustainability certifications.
Example: A B.C. agrifood company sends a follow-up email to a European buyer, emphasizing their product's organic certification and providing details on shelf life and preparation.

2. Nurture Relationships: Maintain contact through personalized updates and check-ins, reinforcing your commitment to the partnership.

3. Personalized Outreach: Tailor follow-up communications to each buyer, referencing specific conversations or product interests discussed during the event.

4. Value-Added Information: For seafood or agrifood, include details like shelf life, preparation methods, and sustainability certifications in follow-up materials.

5. Track Opportunities: Use a Customer Relationship Management system to manage contacts, track progress, and ensure timely follow-ups.

For strategies on managing business relationships, refer to **How to Sell Your Product to a Distributor.**

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5. Resources for Accessing Trade Events

Connecting with the right organizations and resources will streamline your access to trade missions and shows.

Resources:

- **Canadian Trade Commissioner Service –** Offers resources and support for Canadian businesses participating in international trade events.

- **Global Affairs Canada –** Provides information on trade missions and funding opportunities for exporters.

- **Local Industry Associations –** Connect with organizations relevant to your sector for event recommendations and insights.

- **Trade and Invest BC –** Offers opportunities to exhibit in B.C. pavilions at international food shows and provides support for B.C. businesses at global events.

- **Export Navigator –** Provides tailored guidance for B.C. agrifood and seafood exporters, helping businesses select relevant trade events.

- **BC Agriculture and Food Export Program:** Offers funding support for B.C. agrifood and seafood businesses attending trade missions and shows.

- **AAFC Agriculture and Food Trade Show Service:** Helps Canadian agrifood businesses identify relevant international trade shows.

For more on leveraging distribution channels after trade events, refer to **How to Access and Use Distribution Channels.**

Conclusion

By preparing strategically, engaging effectively at events, and following up with personalized outreach, you can build valuable relationships with international buyers and consumers.

Whether attending trade shows, missions, or consumer events, understanding cultural nuances, emphasizing unique product features, and maintaining strong post-event connections will help you expand your reach and secure long-term success in global markets.

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