

Agent Distributor Qualifications Checklist

The following factors should be considered in evaluating prospective overseas representatives. Their significance varies with the products and countries involved. The questions should be tailored to the needs of the company seeking a rep.

Sales force

- Number and location of sales staff.
- Would the rep need more staff to service your account effectively? Would it be willing add staff?
- How is its sales staff compensated? Are any incentive or motivation programs offered?
- How is its sales staff trained? Would it pay or share costs of in-country training if needed?

Sales performance

- Sales volume for the past five years. If growing, why? If not, why not?
- What sales volume does it foresee for your products? Based on what? Is this adequate for you?

Territorial coverage

- Current territory served. Is that the coverage you need?
- How does it serve more distant areas within its territory -- resident staff, branch offices?
- Would it be willing to strengthen coverage in areas you consider important?

Companies/products represented

- How many and which companies/products does it currently represent? Is this a manageable level?
- Would you be the primary supplier? What priority would you receive?
- Would your products fit well in this mix?
- Do you compete with any of the companies/products represented?

Customer profile

- What end-use sectors does it mainly sell to? Are these the right targets for you?
- Who are its key accounts? What share of sales do they represent? Do they make sense for you too?

Facilities and equipment

- Communications facilities and preferred methods -- phone, fax, cable, E-mail, other?
- Warehouse and stocking capacity. Is there enough for you, if you need it?
- Customer support facilities/capabilities. Can it install and service your products if needed?
- Training facilities/capabilities. Can it train users if needed?

Localization capabilities

- Can it translate your sales literature and ad copy if needed?
- Can it alter the packaging or the product itself if needed to meet local requirement or tastes?

Market development capabilities

- Market research -- Does it conduct or use market research in decision-making? Can it help you assess your market potential?
- Promotion -- Does it promote itself and the products it represents? What promotional literature is used for this? What promotional media are used? How are the results measured? How much is spent on each method? If the principals contribute, what formula is used to allocate the costs?