

UNDERSTANDING:

Preparing to Visit an Export Market

VegExportNotes are designed by AUSVEG specifically for levy-paying vegetable growers to enhance industry trade knowledge. The content provided in VegExportNotes is based on the best available information at the time of publishing.



Visiting international markets is important when building an export business. Face-to-face engagement offers important local market knowledge and insights, and is necessary to build strong customer relationships. Planning ahead for your visit is essential to ensure a positive outcome and valuable experience. To ensure a meaningful and efficient market visit, undertake research before you leave to help you develop a logical and comprehensive itinerary. It is also critical you research business etiquette and cultural practices in your target market prior to visiting. The importance of getting this right cannot be understated.

There are various types of market visits growers can undertake to become familiar with target markets.

Personal market visit

Businesses that are experienced in international markets or are comfortable visiting foreign countries on their own can plan an individual program. This approach can be beneficial as it ensures you can have private meetings with customers.



Trade missions and tradeshows

Over the course of a year, industry bodies, farming and business groups, and state governments run a range of trade missions, often aligned with prominent international tradeshows and events to strengthen market presence and assist businesses to make direct connections with international customers. This approach can be beneficial as the individual does not have to make their own arrangements.



Personal Market Visit Checklist

Before take off:

- Identify your target market and when to visit
- Define your main objective for visiting the market
- Plan your trip including visa arrangements
- Determine how long you need to stay in the market to meet your objectives
- Schedule meetings with prospective customers
- Identify the need for an interpreter - this may be essential for business meetings in some markets
- Consider dispatching samples to prospective clients prior to your arrival
- Prepare business cards and any marketing materials you will need for meetings
- Identify any business, social or cultural etiquette practices you may need to be aware of



In market and at meetings:

- Query whether your chosen distribution channels are suitable
- Check your competitors' prices, availability, branding, packaging and marketing
- Understand the packaging, product value adds and pricing recommendations
- Examine market preferences with regards to specifications/varieties
- Study the cold chain logistics capabilities
- Learn about relevant regulations and industry standards
- Meet with key personnel of prospective customers
- Discuss proposed marketing strategies with each customer
- Agree on a trial shipment and any financial, transport and logistical arrangements



Post meeting:

- Follow up with a 'thank-you' email to show your appreciation of the customer's time
- Include formal answers in follow up emails to any queries raised at meetings
- Prepare a formal quotation if requested
- Investigate freight options if discussed
- Investigate possible changes to packaging, labelling or packing requirements
- Prepare and plan your planting schedule
- Organise a follow up teleconference or video conference if needed



Trade Missions and Tradeshows Participation Checklist

- Define your objective to participate in a trade mission or tradeshow
- Prepare business cards and marketing collateral
- Short list new customers you would like to meet
- Organise meeting with prospective customers
- Identify products that you would like to display at trade events and promote in the market
- Organise freight samples if exhibiting at a tradeshow
- Research the market including market preferences, packaging requirements, and product specifications
- Prepare costing and pricing of your product for the market you are visiting
- Understand available freight options and shipping time to deliver product to the market
- Identify any business, social or cultural etiquette practices you may need to be aware of
- Prepare your sales pitch - practice introducing yourself, your business/product and your unique selling proposition (USP) in under 60 seconds!



Reminder:

- Tradeshows typically run from three to five days, which requires time commitment.
- Travelling to international tradeshows can be costly.
- Exhibiting at tradeshow is a costly but effective exercise.
- There is competition from other countries at tradeshows.
- Patience is required as tradeshows facilitate introductions, and finalising a deal can take a lot of follow up after the event.

