

Researching Distribution Channels

End-users

If possible start from the end-users (retailers, if yours is a consumer product) and track back to where they buy. Prepare carefully and be clear about exactly what information you are looking for. Include asking about trends not just a snapshot of what is happening now. Approach end-users with your 'market research' (as opposed to 'sales') hat on. A personal approach is best (i.e. not e-mail). Explain that you are researching the market on behalf of your company. It can be surprising how helpful people can be if they don't feel you are selling to them!

Trade Press

Subscribe to the relevant in-market trade press and monitor competitor advertising. If you are unsure about publications try approaching a relevant Trade Association in-market. For contact with these check out the internet or see UK Trade Associations below.

Internet

Analyse competitor websites, especially where outlets are listed. Check UKTI website (www.ukti.gov.uk) for any market research reports available for your sector (these are free to download for UK businesses).

Exhibitions

Attend relevant exhibitions as a visitor and 'walk the floor'. The main exhibitions worldwide are also listed on the UKTI website. Prepare your questions in advance. Talk to users, intermediaries and competitors. Be prepared to be cheeky!

UK Trade Associations

Ask relevant UK Trade Associations what research, knowledge, contacts they have who might be able to help you. Some have well developed

The following module offers a deeper insight into this topic:

Your Route to Market

You can find it either in the SavvyAcademy or in the 'Access Markets' area of 'Create Your Plan'.

Information you complete as part of the Module will be automatically entered into your Plan. The more modules you complete, the more your Plan will build.

information services. Some have good contacts with associations overseas.

General

Keep asking the same questions. By cross checking the answers you get from different sources you can build confidence in the picture you are building.

If you prefer to get someone else to do this research for you, for reasons of time or language barrier, consider commissioning an OMIS project. OMIS (Overseas Market Introduction Service) is the low cost UKTI scheme through which you can ask a commercial officer based in a UK Embassy, Consulate or High Commission to undertake detailed bespoke research for you. See 'related links' on right for more.