

Creating a Partner Profile Guide

A major pitfall for small exporters is to have an insufficiently clear picture of the partner they would ideally like to find.

Your research into distribution will have informed your decision regarding the channel or channels you want to use to get your product or service to market.

Drawing up a written profile of the partner or partners you need will help clarify your thinking further. It will also help you to gauge the suitability of potential partners against a 'benchmark' and to brief others about what you are looking for. You can use the checklist below to help build your picture.

Who are you looking for?

- What type of partner organisation(s) are you looking for (e.g. distributor, agent etc.)?
- How many partners will you need to give you the geographical coverage you are looking for in your target territory?
- Where do you want them to be?
- Will you need partners with the ability to penetrate several sectors? Which sectors?
- Might you need to find different partners in order to exploit different sectors?
- Where are they likely to be?

What capabilities do they need?

- How big do you expect your partner(s) to be?
- What minimum sales and marketing capabilities do you expect them to have?
- What geographical reach do you need them to have?
- What sectoral expertise do you need them to have?
- Do they need to speak English?
- What technical abilities do they need to have?
- What after-sales capability do they need to have?

The following modules offer a deeper insight into this topic:

Approaching Partner Selection

Assessing Capacity and Capability

Shared Commitment

You can find them either in the SavvyAcademy or in the 'Find and Manage Partners' 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.

What Track Record do they need to demonstrate?

- Are there key customers you need to reach through them? Who?
- What turnover or volume sales do they need to demonstrate in your product/service area or related product/service areas?
- What complementary distributorships would you see as a bonus?
- What competitive distributorships would you see as a problem?

What is your ideal partner looking for?

- Complementary products to complete/extend a range?
- A product/service to position at a certain level in the market-place?
- A cheaper source of supply?
- A supplier who is easier to work with (reliability, communication etc.)?