

# Why Should My Company Participate in a Trade Show?

By Maria Nemeth-Ek

U nsure if exporting is right for your company? Trade shows—both domestic and international—let you find out with less risk. Our center-spread calendar proves there's one that is just right for your business. Here are five really good reasons to try them as part of your export strategy.

**1 Trade Shows Have Buyers.** Ask any sales representative, the way to make business contacts is to talk to the customer face-to-face. Making the right impression is critical. With the right presentation, and plenty of business cards, you can go a long way toward promoting your product overseas. You might even make a sale right at the show, but don't count on it.

**2 Trade Shows Have Distributors.** Distributors build their reputations on providing their retail customers with exciting imports. They come to trade shows to find the best the world has to offer. Talk with them, find out what they need. It is a great way to get your product to customers in many countries worldwide.



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**3 Trade Shows Are Cost-Effective.**

In fact, they are among the best ways to maximize your overseas marketing budget. When you go to an international trade show, you meet potential clients from all over the world. Not even the wealthiest companies could afford to meet with so many potential clients from so many regions in a few days. If your company is targeting a particular region, there are several trade shows designed for regional markets, such as Europe or the Pacific Rim.

**4 Trade Shows Provide Market Research.**

This is the kind of market research you could not pay to have done. When you talk to potential clients, you find out what they are looking for—and what their customers want. You may discover that your preconceived notions about



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**5 Trade Shows Provide Product Testing.**

When you offer samples of your product to overseas buyers, they can give you their opinion on the spot. It will give you a chance to get reactions to flavors and ingredients.

You may learn from a buyer in a trade show that your key ingredients are restricted in some markets. If so, you can make adjustments in your formula prior to shipping to that customer—and avoid a big headache.

Trade shows also give U.S. exhibitors the chance to observe their competition and whether their techniques and products appeal to buyers. ■

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