BUYING LEADS IN IMPORTING EU COUNTRIES

AMD

Building sustainable partnerships

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Buying leads in importing EU countries

Visit (online/ offline) trade fairs and use their catalogues

- A good way to find buyers is by visiting trade fairs.
- Many European businesses use these trade fairs to manage their relations and show their presence on the market.
- Trade fairs are therefore an ideal place to meet in person with various importers.
- They are also a great opportunity to find background information on your new target market(s) and present your company directly to your potential customers. Fg.
- The main trade fairs in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector are Fruit Logistica in February in Berlin (Germany).
- Fruit Attraction in October in Madrid (Spain).

Important international trade fairs in Europe

- **Fruit Logistica:** **Fruit Logistica** in Berlin (Germany) is the largest and best-known trade event for fresh fruit and vegetables.

- The trade fair offers an **exhibitors list**, which you can use to find potential buyers. The trade fair normally attracts 3,300 exhibitors every year.

- **Fruit Attraction**: **Fruit Attraction** in Madrid (Spain) has gained importance over the last years, growing 10% in 2019 and attracting almost 100,000 visitors from 140 countries.

- **Macfrut**: **Macfrut** in Rimini (Italy) presents a wide variety of companies that are active in fresh produce. The trade fair is ideal to get to know Italian buyers of fresh fruit and vegetables, which you can find in the **exhibitors catalogue**. The event has less international appeal than Fruit Logistica and Fruit Attraction. In 2021, they attracted 800 exhibitors and 32,500 visitors. The **Tropical Fruit Congress** during the fair may attract a more selective group of potential buyers of tropical fruit.

- **The London Produce Show:** The London Produce Show is a specific networking event and can be interesting when the United Kingdom is your target market. It mainly exhibits British companies that supply fresh fruit and vegetables, and related services and technologies.

- **The German Fruit & Vegetable Congress:** The German Fruit & Vegetable Congress or "Deutscher Obst & Gemüse Kongress" (DOGK) is a 1-day event with plenary presentations and parallel forums about all the major current issues in the supply chain. Participating companies include European importers as well as German retailers.

- **Medfel**: Medfel is a trade show in France for all types of companies that are active in fresh fruit and vegetables, mainly from the Mediterranean region. You can expect purchasers from retailers, producers, importers and technology providers, which you can find through the exhibitor list (mostly in French).

- **Biofach**: Biofach is a relevant trade show for suppliers of organic food. Several specialised companies for organic fruit and vegetables also present themselves here. Normally, you can find them by searching the category of fruit, vegetable, potatoes, mushrooms in the online exhibitor and product list.

Visit wholesale markets

Visiting wholesale markets can give you an idea of the type of products that are sold in the region. However, they can also be a good place to find buyers; for example, by browsing the wholesale market website or by walking around in person. To meet with decision-makers from companies at the wholesale markets, it is recommended to schedule meetings.

1. **Rungismarket (Paris, France):** the most famous wholesale market in France;
2. **Mercamadrid (Madrid, Spain):** one of the main wholesale markets in Spain;
3. **Mercabarna (Barcelona, Spain):** one of the main wholesale markets in Spain;
4. **Grossmarkt Hamburg (Hamburg, Germany):** close to the port of Hamburg;
5. **SogeMi Mercato Agroalimentare Milano (Milan, Italy):** one of the largest wholesale markets for fresh fruit and vegetables in Italy;
6. **New Spitalfields Market or New Covent Garden Market (the United Kingdom):** wholesale markets for fresh products in London.

Use online news platforms for information and promotion

Online news platforms are good sources of information about different markets, buyers, as well as other companies in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. You can find news articles of private businesses, including from potential business partners, but you can also try to get your own story published. This option makes them the ideal place for promoting your own company. There are several publications and news sites that you can use for advertorials or publishing your own news item:

1. **Freshplaza**: Freshplaza.com (English) and Freshplaza.es (Spanish) are news sites for fresh produce with daily updates. They also publish stories, updates and innovations of specific companies.
2. **Fresh Fruit Portal:** Freshfruitportal.com is an online news site for fresh produce and also publishes industry announcements.
3. **Fruitnet:** Fruitnet has a number of regional publications in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. If you are among the larger exporters in your country, advertising with Eurofruit can be a good option to show your dominance.

Register with trade directories

- You can use trade databases to find potential buyers, but their directories are also useful to present your own products. Some trade directories charge for membership to publish your information or contact other traders. Sometimes, you can use a free trial to start with and then see whether it is worth paying the annual fee.
- After your registration, you can either join as a supplier or directly look for buyers. Be selective in the directories that you are using and make sure that you leave a professional impression. Posting randomly on many sites may look cheap and even desperate.
- Beside the listings of sector associations, there are no specific databases for the fresh fruit and vegetables sector. General databases and trade platforms are mentioned below.

- Organic Bio: International directory of organic food companies;
- Green trade: A marketplace for organic products;
- Tridge: Platform that provides data on global trading and a supplier database, and facilitates trade transactions;
- Kompass: Global Business-to-Business (B2B) database;
- Global buyers online: a place to search for the latest trade leads from buyers and importers from all over the world;
- Europages: Directory of European companies; a professional portal that encourages business-to-business exchanges.

Contact your local business support organizations

- Contact your country's chamber of commerce, sector association or local business support organisations (BSOs) to see whether they have tips or services to find potential buyers of fresh fruit and vegetables in Europe.
- Sector associations in your home country will be able to provide you with relevant information about your sector. Some will also be able to give you information on your target market in Europe. As a registered member of a sector association, potential buyers from Europe also have a way of finding your company.
- Business support organisations and trade promotion agencies go further with their assistance in finding potential buyers. Among their activities are the organisation of trade missions and trade fair participations.

- **India: The Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda) covers fresh fruit and vegetables, among other sectors, and has introduced the trade portal Agri Exchange, where they connect buyers and suppliers.**

Participate in European support programmes

- There are organisations in Europe that help exporters from overseas with support programmes and useful information. Several of them promote imports from developing countries and can also help you to get in contact with European importers. Check with them to see whether there are specific programmes for your country or possibilities to find buyers for your product.
- Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI):
- Import Promotion Desk (IPD):
- SIPPO:
- Finnpartnership:
- Open Trade Gate Sweden (OTGS):
- Enterprise Europe Network (EEN):

Use member lists of sector associations in Europe

- **Look for sector associations in Europe, and find the names of fruit and vegetable traders in their member lists. You can find several associations and leading companies through Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association.**

- **"Freshfel Europe is a membership association, whose members and associated members are national associations, organisations, and companies with an interest in the European fresh fruit and vegetable sector. Freshfel Europe's members are from across Europe, and work along the whole supply chain from producers to wholesalers, traders, logistics and retailers." (Freshfel)**

Attract buyers to your website

- Web searches are very popular among buyers, so be sure that your company can be found by using the most common search engines. Remember that your website is the main online communication channel, and should fully reflect your business and commercial strengths.

- Normally, a website is the first place where buyers will see whether you have a well-established company. If you do not appear in their web searches, or when you have an unprofessional or unfinished website, they may assume that you are not a suitable exporter and unable to fulfil their demands.

- An example of a modern website in fresh fruit is Burke Agro in Nicaragua, which uses storytelling and quality images to present their business. Their story includes their main strength of being a socially engaged and sustainable company.
- Provide a complete picture of your company
- Update your website regularly
- Share your website URL

Attract buyers to your website

- **In order to find buyers across Europe, you can use business networking platforms such as LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the most important medium for professional use and includes relevant groups for many industries. You can join groups such as Fruit import and export (>48,000 professionals), which tripled in size in the past 2 years, the Dutch platform Groenten & Fruit (GFActueel.nl) (>3,600 professionals) or Africa Import Export Trading (>196,500 professionals), a networking community powered by Africa Business Communities for people who are professionally involved in international trade in Africa.**

- **Other country-specific sites such as Xing in Germany and Viadeo in France are used as well, but on a much smaller scale. Alternatively, you can choose to post articles and news about your company or share videos on Vimeo or Youtube. These methods are more passive ways to let buyers find you.**