



[10 tips for finding buyers in the European processed fruit and vegetables market](#)

Finding buyers in Europe involves considerable investment and intensive preparation. Don't go emailing buyers randomly, but first plan and prepare thoroughly. Then look for buyers who fit your capabilities. Find other practical tips and many sources of information here.

Contents of this page

1. [Know your market](#)
2. [Choose your channels](#)
3. [Decide which countries to focus on within Europe](#)
4. [Prepare for the market requirements in your segment](#)
5. [Look for buyers that match your capabilities](#)
6. [Review the websites of European sector associations](#)
7. [Participate in trade fairs and conferences](#)
8. [Network and meet buyers face-to-face](#)
9. [Conduct an email marketing campaign](#)
10. [Make sure you can be found online](#)

1 . Know your market

Before starting your search for buyers, think about the market segments that you want to sell to and the products that you want to offer. Do you offer conventional products? Do you focus on a specific niche such as organic produce, fair trade or sustainable production? Are your products special and premium, or run-of-the-mill commodities?

Furthermore, there is a big difference between industrial markets, which need ingredients (offered in bulk), and consumer markets, which need retail-packed products. Will you be looking for importers of raw materials – juices, concentrates, dehydrated fruit and vegetables or edible nuts? Or will you need to look for importers and distributors of consumer-packed products?

The combination of a specific market segment and product is known as the Product Market Combination (PMC). Choosing your PMCs will help you to choose your channels and to focus your search for buyers.

Tips:

- Choose your PMCs in as detailed as possible. A description like “premium organic mango puree for the industrial market in western Europe” is more helpful than “mango puree for

Europe”.

- Read [studies about the trends and competition in the markets for processed fruit and vegetables in Europe](#).
- Read our factsheets on [fruit juices and concentrates](#), [edible nuts and dried fruit](#) and [canned fruit and vegetables](#), among others, to learn about opportunities and challenges in these markets.
- Focus on one or few European markets in the beginning and research them well. It is much better that you have deep knowledge and understanding of one European market than to have limited knowledge of all European markets.

2 . Choose your channels

After defining your PMC, investigate through which channels this market is served. You can then decide where you want to link into the channel. Consider the following two dimensions.

Typically, there will be various parallel channels leading to the same market. For example, internet sales, multiple retail and specialised retail each serve the final consumer with finished products. This is the horizontal dimension.

Since most channels consist of multiple buyers and sellers, there is also a vertical dimension. Consider the channel for fruit juice and concentrate to the industrial market, which consists of importers who may also act as blenders and processors (step 1) and final product manufacturers such as juice packers (step 2). In theory, you now have a choice to sell to the importers or directly to the packers. The latter may be prepared to pay higher prices, but will have very strict requirements on logistics and service.

Tips:

- Read our study about the [market channels and segments in the European market for processed fruit and vegetables](#) for information about the different kinds of buyers.
- If you are a more experienced exporter, you can try selling directly to markets that are normally served by European importers. However, this requires a lot more effort, and you will have to convince buyers to buy from far-away places.
- Be aware that selling directly to retail channels often means higher investments (e.g. renting a warehouse in the target market), participation in the competition procurement calls and possibility to deliver small quantities frequently (such as weekly).

3 . Decide which countries to focus on within Europe

The country dimension is relevant in choosing your PMC as well as in selecting your trade channel. Your PMC should be specified geographically. And the same goes for your channels. But to what extent should the target market be specified within Europe?

The answer depends on the market that you want to serve. If you are selling bulk products to industrial markets, national boundaries are indeed less relevant. Especially in the European Union where legal requirements are largely unified. If you sell finished products, however, the market requirements may already differ from one market to the next. And if you are promoting a consumer

brand, your promotion must be tailored to each country market.

For ingredients in many cases a more general geographic classification will suffice, for example between western and eastern Europe or between north and south. Or you can choose a country that represents a larger region.

Tips:

- Study our [Product Fact Sheets for processed fruit and vegetables and edible nuts](#). These focus on specific countries and on Europe as a whole.
- Some countries act as trading hubs for certain products, for example Belgium for frozen fruit and vegetables, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands for fruit juice and concentrate and the Netherlands again for certain types of edible nuts.
- For ingredients, private quality and safety requirements are often very strict in western Europe, in particular in Germany, whereas in eastern Europe there may be opportunities for lower quality products.
- Northern European countries offer opportunities for higher pricing but requirements are very high as well. Also due to limited size of the markets, buyers from Scandinavian countries will sometimes prefer purchasing smaller quantities from other European countries rather than importing directly from Developing Countries. Consider Nordic markets if you offer excellent quality and are flexible in delivery options.
- Organic products and ingredients have the highest market share in northern and western Europe. In other countries this market is still in an infant stage. A similar situation exists for fairtrade products.

4 . Prepare for the market requirements in your segment

Buyers receive dozens of emails with product offers every week and will only seriously consider your offer if it looks professional. Find out in advance what the market wants to see in your emails or letters.

Business-to-Business (B2B) trading is a small and close-knit world. This means you only get one chance to make a good impression. Make sure that you are well prepared before you send information to your prospective customers.

Tips:

- Do not try to tempt buyers with unrealistically low prices. They know what good quality should cost so focus more on quality, food safety and supply capability in your communications.
- Food-safety certifications such as [BRC](#), [SQF](#) and [FSSC 22000](#) are important and often expected by buyers. Read more on [international standards and food safety management systems](#) from ITC's Standards Map.
- Be aware that food safety certification is just a first step in order to enter European markets. Be prepared for visits and audits of your potential buyers.
- Read more information about [market requirements in the European processed fruit and vegetables market](#) on our website.
- Find out if you need to upgrade your processing facilities and sourcing strategies in order

to meet European requirements.

- See our [Top 10 tips on doing business with European buyers of processed fruit and vegetables](#).

5 . Look for buyers that match your capabilities

After having selected markets, channels and countries, the last stretch of the road leading to your market is the buyer. Which buyer should you be looking for? In general, it is advisable to look for a strategic match.

- Is your buyer looking for a long-term relationship and you are too?
- Does your buyer value the premium products that you are offering?
- Is the buyer looking for new suppliers and if so why?
- Is the buyer looking for similar quantities as the ones that you can offer?
- Does the buyer have the same values as you have, for example, do you both value corporate social responsibility?

Tips:

- Do not discard a prospective buyer too quickly but always look for possibilities to make a deal. The experience will help you to fine-tune your marketing approach.
- Be loyal to buyers that have helped you getting started. Their opinion of you is an important reference for others.
- After you have gained some experience, try to optimise your mix of buyers. At some point you may want to appoint exclusive distributors for a certain area.

6 . Review the websites of European sector associations

Sector associations are a good place to find contact details of potential buyers. Some of the associations publish member lists on their website, where you can find contact details for many European companies. Alternatively, you can request these lists by email from the sector associations.

The most important international sector associations in Europe are:

- [European Fruit Juice Association \(AIJN\)](#): information about European legislation, labelling, sustainability etc.
- [European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Industries \(PROFEL\)](#): statistics about the European processed fruit and vegetables sector, information about legislation and a list of companies and national associations
- [International Nut and Dried Fruit Council \(INC\)](#): statistics and information about European regulation
- [Frucom](#) is the European Federation of the trade in dried fruit and edible nuts, processed fruit and vegetables, processed fishery products, spices and honey.
- [European Snacks Association](#) representing European savoury snacks producers and traders including edible nuts.

Many European countries also have their own national associations for different categories of processed fruit and vegetables as well, including:

- [Anifelt](#): L'Association Nationale Interprofessionnelle des Fruits et Légumes Transformés (National Processed Fruit and Vegetable Trade Association) – is active in the sector of processed (canned and frozen) fruit and vegetables
- [BOGK](#): Bundesverband der obst-, gemüse- und kartoffelverarbeitenden Industrie e.V. (German Association of the Fruit, Vegetable and Potato Processing Industry)– is active in the sector of processed fruits and vegetables (processing industry)
- [CENTA](#): The Combined Edible Nut Trade Association – is active in the edible nuts and dried fruits sector in the United Kingdom
- [FENAVAL](#): Federación Nacional de Asociaciones de Transformados Vegetales y Alimentos Procesados (The National Federation of Associations of Processed Vegetables and Processed Foods) – is active in the canned vegetables sector in Spain
- [FWS](#): Nederlandse Vereniging Frisdranken, Waters, Sappen (Dutch Association Sodas, Waters, and Juices) – is active in the fruit juices and concentrates sector in the Netherlands
- [KUPS](#): Krajowa Unia Producentów Soków (Polish Association of Juice Producers)– is active in the Polish fruit juices and concentrates sector
- [NDFTA](#): National Dried Fruit Trade Association – is active in the dried fruit sector in the United Kingdom
- [UNIJUS](#): Union Nationale Interprofessionnelle des Jus de Fruits (National Union of Fruit Juices) – is operating in the fruit juices and concentrates sector in France
- [VIGEF](#): Vereniging van de Nederlandse Groenten- en Fruitverwerkende Industrie (Dutch Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Industry) – is active in the sector of processed fruits and vegetables, frozen fruits and vegetables, dried fruits and vegetables, jams and jellies in the Netherlands

Tips:

- Search through the [member list of the European Fruit Juice Association AJIN](#), and find out contact names and contact details.
- Look at the [members list of PROFEL the European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Industries](#).

7 . Participate in trade fairs and conferences

Trade fairs are a great place for meeting potential buyers. You will find that many trade fairs include a section dedicated to processed fruit and vegetables.

For your first time at an event, it is a good idea to go as a visitor not an exhibitor. This is a good way of getting to know your target market. Make sure you are well-prepared before visiting or exhibiting at a trade fair.

You will find that many countries exhibit in these trade fairs with a national pavilion. Find out if you can exhibit in this national pavilion at a reduced cost. Alternatively, the next step might be to book your own individual stand directly with the organisers.

The most important international trade fairs are:

- [Anuga](#) - the largest trade fair for food and beverages in Europe. It is held every other year in Cologne, Germany and hosts relevant sections for processed fruit and vegetables, including the beverages section for fruit juice concentrates (FJC), frozen food section (for frozen fruit and vegetables), and the fine food section (for edible nuts, dried fruit and canned produce).
- [Salon International de Alimentacion](#) (SIAL) - held every other year in Paris, France. It is a general trade fair of food and beverages, with a strong focus on France. It has similar sections for processed fruit and vegetables as Anuga, including Pavilions of the World, Infood and

Organic Food.

- [Food Ingredients Europe](#) (FIE) - a smaller trade fair focussing exclusively on ingredients, including raw materials and semi-finished products offered for sale to the food industry. The trade fair is held at different locations in Europe every year.
- [Natural Ingredients Trade Fair](#) (NIE) - organised by the same organisers as FIE, and is held every year, either together with FIE in odd years or with HIE in even years.
- [Biofach](#) - a trade fair focused exclusively on certified organic products. It is surprisingly large for such a specific niche and held every year in February in Nuremberg, Germany. Processed fruit and vegetable exporters can be accommodated in the sections with international pavilions. Biofach also includes an annual conference on developments in the global organic industry.
- [ISM Sweets & Snacks](#) - the world's leading trade fair for sweets and snacks held every third year in Cologne (Germany). It is especially relevant for dried fruit and edible nuts industrial suppliers.

Tips:

- Use lists of exhibitors as a source for contact details for potential buyers. [Here is the exhibitor list for Anuga](#).
- Make appointments in advance, use email and other media to inform people that you are coming; prepare samples, brochures, business cards, website and price lists.
- Some trade fair organisers have local, national events, to which international buyers are invited. In Asia, for example, FIE organised trade fairs in Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand in 2015 and will continue to do so in 2016 and 2017. [Follow this link for more information on these local Asian events](#). In Peru, the [Expoalimentaria](#) has become a major commercial event held annually in September in Lima.

8 . Network and meet buyers face-to-face

In addition to international trade fairs and conferences, you will find smaller events being organised by sector associations and other organisations. A good example is the frozen business-to-business (B2B) event organised every year in Barcelona, Spain, by the matchmaking and trading platform [Frozen B2B](#).

The International Nuts and Dried Fruit Council organises an [annual global event](#) which is an important venue for this industry. The European Fruit Juice Association organises the [Juice Summit](#) conference, which is held every year shortly before the SIAL and Anuga trade fairs, but at a different venue. In 2017 it will be held in Antwerp in Belgium.

These events are also a good opportunity for finding out the latest developments in the industry.

Tips:

- National governments may organise trade missions or B2B meetings. Contact the trade departments of European embassies in your country or the trade departments of your country's embassies in Europe.
- Contact (national) associations of processed fruit and vegetables and general trade promotion agencies in your country to find out if any events are being planned.
- Cut the costs and become more efficient by uniting with colleagues from the sector and organise mutual matchmaking events.

9 . Conduct an email marketing campaign

Email is a powerful tool for getting into contact with potential buyers, but use it wisely. Make sure your emails are as follows:

- Personal: use your contact's name
- Individual and relevant: one email for one person, in the right industry (buyers do not like blanket emails or irrelevant information)
- Creates a link to your website. Make sure your website is up to date, in English, and consistent with your product offering;
- Provides product and company information
- Includes a follow-up phone call. An email campaign will be most effective if you can follow up with a personal phone call.

Tips:

- Be honest. Do not try to attract buyers with unrealistic or low prices. They know what good quality costs, so focus more on quality, food safety and your strongest capabilities.
- Send a presentation that introduces your company, your products and your strengths and skills. This is a good starting point, which can be followed by additional information such as quotations, packaging options or delivery terms.
- Do not send mass mailings. This is considered as Spam (Unsolicited Commercial E-mail) in Europe and is an unwelcome form of communication.

10 . Make sure you can be found online

It is important that buyers can find you online. You need a website that contains information about your products, your facilities and relevant documentation, like certification for example.

Make sure that your website is informative, accurate, well written and looks professional. Pay attention to the [issue of sustainability](#), since this issue is receiving more and more attention in the PFV sector.

Join social media like [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#). These are increasingly popular as a way of promoting products and ideas. Adapt your style to your audience, but make sure that your message and the information you distribute is consistent across all of your chosen (online) media.

Tips:

- It is a good idea to ask or employ help from someone who can write well in English, and someone who understands your target audience. A professional editor is one choice. S/he will be able to help you find the right style, and remove or avoid spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. This adds to your professional image. Mistakes do not.
- It is also a good idea to post your product offerings on online trading platforms, yellow pages, databases such as [Alibaba](#). These are widely used by buyers and sellers. Buyers are often looking for contact details here, not services.
- [Organic Bio](#) is an interesting platform for finding buyers if you offer certified organic processed fruit and vegetables.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).

Follow us for the latest updates

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[RSS](#)