

# 10 tips for finding buyers on the European electronics and electrical engineering market

The European market for the electronics and electrical engineering is estimated at around €700 billion. Here are 10 tips to support you in finding buyers for your products in this market. These tips do not necessarily guarantee success, however, because much depends on your approach and, most importantly, on your ability to meet the buyer's requirements.

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## 1. Meet the buyer requirements

It only makes sense to look for buyers in the electronics and electrical engineering (E&EE) if you can meet their requirements. Get to know the requirements that your products need to meet. There are two types of product requirements:

### a. Legal requirements

The most important requirement is the CE marking by which a manufacturer declares that a product meets all the legal requirements and has been assessed to meet high safety, health and environmental protection requirements. CE is not a certification; it is a declaration by the manufacturer that the product complies with the applicable EU legislation. Detailed information on implementing EU product requirements, conformity assessments and procedures is set out in the [Blue Guide](#).

Do the testing according to the appropriate CE directives and demonstrate to the buyer that your product meets the requirements. Although CE marking is not legally required for product components, your buyer will require you to show that your product meets the CE directives. This is the case particularly when your product is a "critical component" of your buyer's final product and its failure could cause failure of the final product.

Since June 2016, the "Radio and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment (R&TTE) Directive" has been superseded by the "[Radio Equipment Directive](#)" (RED) 2014/53/EU. As not all standards of the RED Directive have been harmonised yet, the use of a "Notified Body" will be essential for RED testing.

### b. Market-driven requirements

There are many voluntary certifications on quality, social accountability and environmental issues. While you are not required to meet all of them, buyers will require you to comply with the management system ISO 9001 and ISO/TS 16949 for the automotive industry.

Review all legal and market-driven requirements in the CBI [Buyer Requirements Electronics and Electrical Engineering](#).

List the market-driven requirements for your product and be prepared for buyers to demand one or more additional certification. Have the list at hand when you are in discussions with a buyer.

## 2. Obtain ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 and ISO/TS 16949 certification

ISO certification is essential. To obtain both ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/TS 16949 certification or any other ISO certificate combination, consider and negotiate a lower-price “ISO package deal” with your certification body.

## 3. Use the lists of trade fair exhibitors

The exhibitors and product lists for the following two global fairs for the electronics and electrical engineering industry provide the names of more than 1,500 companies, and also their addresses and product details:

- [electronica](#) is a biennial exhibition and the last complete participants list is for 2016. Go to the [electronica](#) website and scroll down to “Continue to exhibitor directory 2016”. You can download the complete exhibitor directory.
- The [Hannover Messe](#)/Hannover Fair link takes you directly to the list of participating companies, which can be sorted to your requirements.

Select all European addresses and crosscheck the German companies with the ZVEI data (see tip 4). This will be a “Who is Who” of the European electronic industry.

## 4. Use the member lists of sector associations

The European Union has many sector associations for the E&EE industry. Many associations list their members on their website.

[ZVEI](#) is the German umbrella association the E&EE industry. This website gives direct access to [22 sector](#) associations with over 1,600 member companies. One of the sector associations, ZVEI Electronic Components and Systems/PCB and Electronic Systems, issues a yearbook with detailed market data on electronic components & systems in Germany, Europe and worldwide. The yearbook lists some 500 member companies. Use this [link](#) to download the yearbook.

Other European associations for the electronics and electrical engineering sector are:

- [FBDI](#) – Association of German Electronic/Electrical Distributors
- [ESIA](#) - [European Semiconductor](#) Industry Association
- [EPCIA](#) - [European Passive](#) Components Industry Association
- [FME](#) - Dutch Association for the Technology Industries
- [ANIE](#) - Italian Association for E&EE

## 5. Meet buyers at international trade fairs

There is no better place to meet buyers all at one location than at an international trade fair. However, the company representatives in exhibition pavilion are usually sales people. You might want to meet the technical manager or engineering manager to present the unique features of your product and the benefits that you are offering. Make appointments with buyers and/or executives of exhibiting companies, agents, distributors, importers and associations at least 6 to 8 weeks ahead of the fair.

A visit to one of the five key global trade fairs for electronic/electrical products is a MUST:

- [Hanover Fair](#), Hanover (Industrial Electronics, Electrical Engineering Products)
- [CeBIT](#), Hanover (ITC and Telecom)
- [electronica](#), Munich (Electronic Components & Systems)

- [Salon des Composants](#), Paris (Electronic Components + Systems)
- [Productronica](#), Munich (Manufacturing Equipment for Electronics)

Other trade fairs to visit are:

- [IAA Internationale Automobil-Ausstellung](#), Frankfurt (Passenger cars), Hanover (Commercial vehicles)
- [IFA Internationale Funk-Ausstellung](#), Berlin (Consumer goods and Telecom)
- [Light + Building](#), Frankfurt (Lighting and related electronics).

## 6. Find local European partners at trade fairs

To serve the European market, you need to have a local European partner such as an agent, distributor or importer. Many of these potential partners also exhibit at international trade fairs, or are represented by their associations. They should be your number one target group but their executives are unlikely to attend the fair for the full duration.

In preparing for these meetings, you need to know about the various types of possible partners offering different service levels:

- Manufacturers' representatives (reps, agents): bundle your product, have no own stock, marketing is done by the manufacturer, low customer support.
- Importing houses: bundle products, brand name and/or private label, typically bonded warehouse and low customer support.
- Distributors: serve low-volume business from own stock, handle many lines, only larger ones do their own importing but very often still handle established products only.

## 7. Get contacts from European companies based in your country

Use European and international companies that you are supplying in your home country as references. Obtain from your contacts in the home market the names of the buyers in their European headquarters and/or their European manufacturing units.

## 8. Get coverage from professional journals

Various trade journals also exhibit at the trade fairs listed above. Make contact and ask the journalists to cover your products and applications.

Top professional journals in Europe:

- [Markt & Technik](#): weekly German newspaper for electronics
- [Elektronik](#): German biweekly journal and website about industrial electronics
- [EE Times](#), Electronic Engineering Times: online magazine for the global electronics industry
- [Electronics Weekly](#): weekly trade journal for electronics professionals
- [EDN-Europe](#): industry website for electronic design engineers

As an exhibitor, invite journalists to your booth; as a visitor, discuss your products and applications only. Talk about your references and propose writing a technical article and placing an advertisement parallel to the article.

## 9. Do not spend money on advertising without further coverage

As a new and unknown company, do not spend money on advertising only. This will be a waste of money.

## 10. Do market research to identify target markets, countries and

## local marketing partners

Start your desktop market research on the [CBI](#) website to find market information and trends in the E&EE sector. Screen information available from various European associations to gain an overview of the European market and the potential for your products. Follow up on this research with a visit to one of the top 5 fairs listed above. During your visit, concentrate on verifying the results of your market research. You should now be ready to prepare a timely action plan to find buyers in the E&EE sector.

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