

10 tips for finding buyers on the European market for Medical Devices and Laboratory Equipment

Due to the wide variety and specific segments in the medical and laboratory field, it is not always easy to find buyers. The following ten tips will help you to find buyers in Europe more effectively. The rate of success however is very much dependent on an active and persistent attitude.

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1. Start at the CBI Market Intelligence Portal

Your own market research starts at your office. By surfing on the internet you can gather a lot of interesting details about products, markets, and potential customers. A good start is the [CBI market intelligence portal](#). There are several documents available, offering a wealth of intelligence on the European medical and laboratory equipment market. For a few examples, please read the following:

- [Trends in the European medical devices market](#)
- [Market channels and segments](#)
- [Competition in the medical devices market.](#)

The Product Fact Sheets offer an overview of all 'need-to-knows' for certain promising export products. Examples are:

- [Surgical Instruments](#)
- [Anaesthetic apparatus and appliances](#)
- [Orthopaedic appliances, instruments and implants](#)
- [Syringes, needles, catheters \(Benelux\)](#)
- [Electro-diagnostic apparatus \(Benelux \)](#)
- [Endoscopic devices \(Germany, Austria and Switzerland\)](#)
- [Bandages, gauzes and dressing \(Germany, Austria and Switzerland\)](#)

2. Optimise your website

When you target and contact potential (new) customers, you can expect them to visit your website.

For this reason your website must have a professional look and contain up to date information about your company and your product range. Your website should include at least the following content:

- Company information and details 'about us', also showing contact details
- Product range, technical capabilities, specifications
- Certificates and accreditations
- Production process and capacity

- References of customers (often the end user asks for references in order to get information about results and practical experiences).
- Make sure your website is available in English, and preferably also in the languages of your target markets.

3. Check websites of sector associations and industry directories and portals

European companies are often member of a sector association. Some associations are dedicated to the surgical equipment industry, while others are related to the manufacturing of medical disposables and medical/industrial components. In many cases, these sector associations publish lists of members on their website. These members could be potential clients. Check the website of the sector association in the specific country or segment that offers opportunities for you. Some examples are:

- [European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers \(EHPM\)](#)
- [MedTech Europe](#) – an alliance of European medical technology industry associations founded by the European Diagnostic Manufacturing Association (EDMA) and the European Confederation of Medical Devices Associations (EUCOMED). Through MedTech Europe's member area, it is possible to find a list of distributors/importers in Europe.
- The portal [MedicalDeviceIndustry.com](#) provides a list with links to many medical device companies and medical device associations worldwide.
- [European Medical Device Distributors Alliance](#) is the association of the independent European medical device distributors. Search on the members page to find prospective buyers.
- [Medical Device Network](#) is an international news portal for medical devices. You can read information about latest market trends, ongoing projects and analyses. Search under the companies tab to find potential distributors and subcontracting possibilities.

4. Link to prospects through LinkedIn

[LinkedIn](#) is a good tool for making contact with people who are influencers within their company. LinkedIn is a networking tool for professionals. As soon as you have an account you can search companies, people and [groups](#) and you will be able to connect with them. The largest relevant group on LinkedIn, [Medical Devices group](#), has already more than 340.000 members.

5. Visit trade fairs in Europe

A trade fair visit will offer a good opportunity to meet potential buyers. The website [Events Eye](#) is a good starting point for finding trade fairs. One of the options the site offers is a [keyword search](#).

The most important trade fairs in the world for the medical industry are:

1. [MEDICA](#) – Düsseldorf, Germany
2. [Arab Heath](#) – Dubai
3. [Hospitalar](#) – Sao Paulo, Brazil
4. [Medical Fair Asia](#) – Singapore
5. [Medical World Americas](#) – Houston, USA

The leading trade fair in Europe is MEDICA. MEDICA has an exhibitor database, offering visitors the possibility to select the companies they would like to meet. You will also find European buyers on the leading trade fairs outside Europe.

Other interesting international trade fairs that take place in Europe include:

1. [OTWorld](#) – in Leipzig, Germany, is the world's leading event for prosthetics, orthotics, and orthopaedic footwear technology.
2. [IDS \(International Dental Show\)](#) – in Cologne, Germany, is the world's leading trade fair for the dental industry.
3. [Labvolution/Biotechica](#) – in Hannover, Germany, is the international laboratory equipment, technology and life sciences event.
4. [MT Connect](#) – a new trade fair that will be held for the first time in June 2017 in Nuremberg, Germany. The trade fair will cover every aspect of medical technology, medical devices and medical technology research.

6. Visit a medical conference

If your company targets a specific market segment, for example in surgical instruments, anaesthesiology, minimal invasive surgery or total wound care, there are several conferences in Europe that serve those industries. At a conference, you can meet many different stakeholders (doctors, specialized technicians, nurse practitioners and product managers) who are often the decision-makers when it comes to purchasing equipment.

One example is the conference of the [European Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery \(ESCRS\)](#), which is moving through Europe (London-Paris-Lisbon). If you attend conferences, always buy the conference catalogue, as this will give you a lot of information about markets and companies.

7. Participate at trade fairs in Europe

Although trade fair participation can be costly, it can be worth the investment if you are well prepared and organized. For example, you should have a list of potential customers ready in advance (found with help of the tips listed here), and make personal invitations for them to visit your stand. Before deciding to exhibit at a fair, it is wise to experience the fair as a visitor first.

8. Participate in trade missions

Trade missions (both incoming and outgoing) give you the opportunity to get in contact with European or other foreign companies. For this matter it is important to have a good relationship with business support organisations or national trade promotion organizations in your country.

Commercial counsellors at the embassies of your European target countries and also regional Chambers of Commerce will usually be able to inform you about upcoming trade missions. They can also provide other information about doing business in their countries.

9. Prepare in advance

Before you contact a company, collect as much information as possible about the company; for example: what it says on the company's website, if the company has a LinkedIn profile or employees on LinkedIn, etc. Also read [CBI's study on Doing Business with European buyers of Medical and Laboratory Devices](#).

10. Tailor your offer to the needs of prospective buyers

In your search for new buyers you will learn a lot about their needs and requirements. All this information must be recorded in visit reports, trade fair reports etc. Even more important than recording the information is to translate it into action. Adapt your product and services so that they match the needs and requirements of the potential buyer the next time you meet!

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