

10 tips for finding buyers in the metal parts and components sector

The CBI Finding Buyers study gives you a list of tips for finding buyers within the EU sector Metal Parts and Components. The tips will not a guarantee that you will find the buyers you are looking for. Success in finding buyers also depends on how pro-active you do your market research. Field research, by meeting with people from the market, offers much better chances on finding the right buyers compared to desk research only. Other important conditions for success are your social skills and ability to communicate.

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1. Find Buyers by doing your own market research

You need to do market research based on your selected product/market combination if you want to find the right buyers. In the start you should review the available Market Intelligence on the sector [metal parts and components at the CBI website](#).

CBI might already have done research on your product/market combination. The more you know about the market the easier it will be to find and select the right buyers for your company. An excellent way to start with finding the right companies is to review the participants list at the website of trade fairs. The outcome of your market research should be a list of EU based companies that relate to the development, manufacturing, importing or trading of the product you want to export. The buyers you want to find are employed within these companies. Some companies have the name and contact details of the buyers at their website.

2. Visit trade fairs in the EU

A visit to a trade fair in Europe will give you good possibility to meet with people from the sector. Before the visit you should review the participants who relate to your business and make a selection on which companies you want to meet. In most cases you will be meeting with the sales representatives from the company. If you want to know their buyer(s) you'll have to ask them. Most sales people are happy to share their buyers contacts with you but you have to convince them about the advantages your company can offer to them. A visit to a trade fair is also important to review if you would like to participate next year. Interesting trade fair for subcontracting are [Hannover Messe](#) and the [Midest](#) in Paris . Hannover Messe is an international technology event including trends and developments within European Industrial markets. Midest in Paris is a trade fair on industrial subcontracting mainly focussed on France market.

3. Participate at trade fairs in the EU

Participating at trade fairs is one of the best options for finding buyers. It is the market place where buyers go to on exploring new opportunities and advantages suppliers are able to offer to them. Most important in a new

business relation with a buyer is to get to know each other. Face to face meetings are essential also to share information and to gain trust from the buyer in what you can offer. Announcement of your participation prior to the trade fair is important to attract more buyers. These pre-announcements can be done to the buyers you already gained by doing market research and visiting fairs. The trade fair selection for your company should be based on your product/market combination.

4. Contact EU companies based in your country

A very good option to find EU buyers is to contact a company within your product/market combination which has facilities in both your country and the EU. In most cases this concerns multinational companies, which in some countries like China and India have their own international purchasing offices. These companies are in general easier to approach in your country. Chances to be introduced to their EU buyers increase when you are able to supply to their facilities in your country at a good quality and price level.

5. Use an agent in the EU

Finding EU buyers via an agent can be very effective. A good agent who has a fast experience and wide network within your product/market combination can be a good choice. If you want to get a considerable amount of buyers in a short period of time you should use an agent. It is important to select the right agent who is interested in your company and is a professional who you can trust. Finding the right agent is not simple. Agents can be found at trade fairs where they offer their services in case they see good opportunities for your company. Some of them are only out for their own wins and therefore you should get to know the agent before starting any agreement. More information on working with an agent can be found on the [CBI Market Intelligence Platform](#):

6. Use the Members Lists of Sector Associations

Finding buyers can also be done via websites of sector associations. Many associations public their members on their website. Some associations have an extended list of companies which makes it difficult to select the ones who match to your product strategy. Most sector associations will not be very open to help you in finding the right buyers as in many cases your company is a competitor of their members. The role sector associations play is to provide benefits to their members in terms of services like business development, organisational matters, export promotions, improve earnings, technology, innovations, trainings, HRM and environmental issues. Some National associations have their website only in the local language.

Some examples of Associations:

- **FME** – Netherlands: Members from metal, electronics, electro technology and plastics sectors. 2300 members and 100 branch organisations. [Member list](#).
- **Metaalunie** – Netherlands: Largest Dutch organisation for small and medium-sized enterprises active in the metal industry. 13.000 members and 50 branches. No member list accessible.
- **NEVAT** – Netherlands: Ambitious leading companies in width range of markets with 200 members. [Member list](#).
- **Euroforge** – European association; members are national forging associations. The overall objective is to support these national member associations in their assistance to their members and to represent them on an EU level. [Member associations](#).
- **CBM** – UK, member of Euroforge: Trade association for UK manufacturers of fasteners, forgings, pressings and fabrications. [Member list](#).
- **IMU** Industrieverband Massiv Umformung, Member of Euro forge – Germany. [Member list](#).
- **Agoria** – Belgium. Association of companies in the technology industry. 1700 Members. Use search option for finding members.
- **IBU** Industrieverband Blechumformung – Germany. Association of sheet metal fabrication to width range of industries. 230 members. [Member list](#).
- **Eurospace** – Members from 14 EU countries are within the European space systems manufacturers and

launch services providers. [Member list](#) .

- [EHEDGE](#) – European Hygienic Engineering & Design Group (EHEDG) is a consortium of equipment manufacturers, food industries, research institutes as well as public health authorities. [Member list](#) .

7. Use LinkedIn for connecting to EU buyers

The people you meet in the market are in many cases not the buyers you are looking for. Most of the people you meet have an LinkedIn account in which they show their contacts. Try to get connected to them via LinkedIn and review their contacts. They might be connected to their colleagues of the purchasing department, or other prospects.

8. Professionalize your website to attract buyers

Beside trying to find buyers it is also possible for buyers to find you via your company's website. You can establish interest from EU buyers if your website clearly explains your products, competitive advantages and if it includes a customer reference list. Your website should contain following information which buyers are looking for:

- Company information (about us)
- Product information (professional product pictures, technical capabilities, accuracy, materials).
- Certificates or information about certifications.
- Production capacity.
- Production process.
- Contact details (including the name of the direct contact person).
- References/success stories.

9. Participate in Trade missions

Join incoming or outgoing trade missions from or to Europe. Contact business support organisations or national trade promotion organizations in your country about upcoming trade missions. Trade missions provide you the opportunity to get in direct contact with EU based companies.

10. Be prepared before contacting any EU buyer

Get to know buyers and their company before contacting them.

'Finding the right EU buyers for a company is not an easy thing. In the beginning it all depends on how active you are in finding the buyers as well on face to face meeting with people from the business. Personal contact is in the start the most effective way on developing mutual trust. It should be the focus when starting a business relation with buyers. The key to successful export development is your own drive to meet and communicate with buyers, to show your face in the market and not to manage the business from behind a desk,' Peter Lichthart (CBI expert).

Tips:


Check the company's website to obtain all essential information about the company.

Prepare by writing down what you want to discuss.


Formulate on paper the reason(s) for which you contact the buyer, what you will tell about your company and what kind of advantages your company can offer.

Read our [tips for doing business with European buyers](#).

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