Many buyers (retailers, restaurants, institutions, etc.) are often willing to purchase directly from producers – if producers are able to deliver a product preferred by their customers. Below are tips on successfully working with buyers.

1. **Familiarize yourself with the market.** Talk with other producers who are already operating in your general market. Get a sense of the products demanded by that market, potential level of interest and typical prices offered. Know your processing and transportation costs.

2. **Select an appropriate market for your capabilities.** Try first to establish yourself with a buyer and a specific market that you are 100 percent certain you can supply and satisfy. When your product is known and you are assured you can meet the quality and volume needs, you can approach other buyers and larger volume accounts.

3. **Prepare written materials.** If targeting restaurants or stores, keep in mind that most buyers like to see two sets of materials.

   - First, they like to see in writing what products you have to offer and at what prices. This sheet should also summarize the claims and characteristics of your product in an easy-to-read and attractive manner. These include the production characteristics that distinguish your products from others. You may also want to provide a website, where they can obtain daily quotes if the product is sensitive to market fluctuations.

   - The second type of written materials that most buyers like to have is a brochure that will help them sell your product to their customers. This type of point-of-sale material should positively outline the characteristics of your product for customers who may need some explanation of the advantage of your product over others.

4. **Initiate contact with a telephone call.** Most buyers would like to receive a call in which you clearly state your intentions. Rehearse. By the time the buyer picks up your call, he or she may already have another one waiting. Professional salespeople often have a 50-, 100- and 200-word explanation of their products ready to be delivered. Never just drop in on a buyer. Setting up an appointment will ensure you that you have the buyer’s time and attention.

5. **Clarify the details of the business relationships.** If a buyer expresses interest in buying from you, be sure to clarify the terms of the sale. Review the exact item(s), volumes, price, delivery date and conditions and any other requirements.

6. **Deliver what you promise.** Promise only what you are sure you can deliver and then follow through. If at any time you cannot meet the terms of your agreement with the buyer, notify him or her as early as possible and be prepared to help the buyer meet commitments.

7. **Be persistent without being a pest.** It will be pure luck if you nail a big sale on your first try. Learn from each attempt. Never grow angry or stop asking questions about what you can do to help meet buyer needs. You are in business to meet your buyer’s needs, not to push the product you need to sell. Don’t just drop a product on the buyer’s desk – deliver a solution for their needs.

**Basic Steps to Set Yourself Up for a Sale**

Below are some ways to help you succeed when you
call potential buyers.

- Give your name: “This is Lynn Doe from Anytown.” Ask: “Could I please speak to your buyer?”
- Let them know you are calling with the intent to provide a great product.
- Ask when might be a good time for you to come and talk about your product. (Some buyers may ask you to send written material to review before setting up an appointment.)
- Ask if you can send information ahead of time. Or, in case of a negative response regarding a meeting, ask: “Can I send product brochures and some information about our quality?”
- Ask if the buyer wants you to bring samples.
- Find out if there are new products you can show them.
- Whatever the outcome, say, “Thank you!” Thank them if they say, “Yes.” Thank them if they say, “No.”

Once you have your foot in the door, keep it open for the next time.

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