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# Sales missions & overseas representation

*“Using insights to the overseas markets, I select those with an interest and propensity to include the palaces in their programmes and excursions. Investing time to meet these potential clients on their own doorstep is highly appreciated and goes a long way to establishing relationships that bear fruit, all being well, for years to come.”*

Ann Wilson, Head of Sales, Historic Royal Palaces

### What are sales missions and why consider attending?

VisitBritain regularly conducts sales (or trade) missions into key overseas markets. These missions are useful for first time entrants into the market as well as operators already established in the market looking to further develop their business. Visiting the market allows you to present your product to the travel trade. Travelling as part of an organised sales mission allows you to present your product and destination alongside other complementary products to a targeted group of distributors.



For a full list of VisitBritain's sales missions visit [trade.visitbritain.com/trade-events/](https://trade.visitbritain.com/trade-events/)



Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland ©VisitBritain/Yin Sun Photography



## Top tips for sales missions

The golden rule for international sales missions is ‘do your homework first’. The more preparation you do, the greater the return on your investment.

During a sales mission the audience will vary from retail travel staff to wholesale or tour operator product managers so make sure you are aware of who you are meeting and tailor your presentation to suit their needs.

The guiding principle in a successful sales mission is not the amount of ground covered or even the number of meetings held. It is in seeing the right people from the right organisations that have an interest in seeing you and the potential to sell your product.

Develop a sales kit for sales calls, sales missions and staff training to include: brochures, product fact sheets, your sales presentation, a collection of images on DVD/USB, online tools such as podcasts and video-casts, display banners and posters. When developing your sales kit, keep the look and feel consistent and ensure information is accurate and up to date. Make sure that you have full rights and permissions to the images and video footage that you share (see *Section 17 - Creating engaging content*).

Always check with the host organisation what the format of each event during the sales mission is and what marketing material is required and will be allowed. For example, at some events banner space may not be available, or you may be required to deliver a group presentation rather than having one-to-one appointments so be prepared.

Certain countries have customs not usual to England; observing local courtesies and morals will be highly appreciated by your hosts and significantly enhances your chances of success.

Refer to *Section 6 – Cultural considerations*.

Remember you are travelling with a group and you need to be timely, as per the assigned schedule and mindful of travel etiquette. Consider your luggage, keep it minimal and be well organised.

As with all types of sales activity, follow up is vital. Don’t forget to send a follow up thanking them for their time and include any information that may have been requested.

Refer to *Section 13 – How to get the most out of trade shows* for tips on effective follow up.

## What can a General Sales Agent (GSA) or Product Representation Company (PRC) offer?

A general sales agent (GSA) can represent and market your product in key international markets and provide a local booking service for retail agents. It is essential that you consider all channels of distribution and the needs of your business before signing a GSA agreement.

Many businesses choose to appoint an international sales representative or product representation company (PRC) to actively promote their product in their key international markets. However, unlike a GSA, a PRC doesn't provide a booking service.

### PRCs can:

- Make sales calls to wholesalers and retail agents
- Train wholesale and retail agency staff
- Provide representation at trade and consumer shows in the market
- Give feedback and advice on market trends



## Key factors to consider when appointing product representation

- Do they have experience in destination and product-type representation?
- Do they have other clients with English product? Have they represented similar products to yours in the past?
- Do they hold other contracts and are they complementary or competitive?
- Can they provide trade contact records and reports? How will you measure their effectiveness and how will they report on their activities to you?
- Do they have established relationships with the clients that you want to reach?
- What is their reputation in the market? Are they respected by the industry?
- Does the GSA retail products and how will this impact on their ability to sell your product?
- Consider the cost versus the level of business from the market and balance these against the cost and benefit of making calls and attending trade shows yourself





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