



Questions to ask when interviewing potential brokers

Learn whether there is a good fit between your objectives and what the broker already does by understanding their niche, their team, their territory and what lines they represent (and whether those are complimentary or competition).

1. What territory do you cover?
 - a. Which do you personally cover?
 - b. Which reps cover other parts?
 - i. How often do you communicate with each rep?
 - ii. Do you have sales meetings?
 - iii. Do you ride with them? How often?
 - iv. Can I ride with them?
 - c. Do you have an admin person?
 - i. What are her responsibilities?
2. What channels of trade do you cover?
 - a. Examples are gift, natural, supermarket chains, candy/confection, specialty grocery, gift basket, food service, coffee and tea.
 - b. Do you sell direct to retail or primarily through distributors? (They can't do a good job on all channels. This is an effort to define an agreement to work together. For example, most specialty brokers don't cover food service, i.e., Sysco type distributors.)
3. Who are your key accounts?
 - a. How often do you see them?
 - b. What % of your lines do you sell to each?
 - c. What are the key programs for each key account that will insure our success with them? (If you can't afford the programs, why enlist the rep?)
 - d. Will you make appointments for me to see them with you or your rep?
4. How many lines do you currently rep?
 - a. What are the top 5?
 - b. Which are your favorites and why?
 - c. Which are your least favorites and why?
 - d. What lines are most like mine? (Discuss if this is a conflict.)
 - e. How often do you talk to your principles?
5. What kind of marketing do you do to reach your clients?
 - a. Examples included web-site links to manufacturers, trade shows, direct mail, e-mail, trade shows and telemarketing. Ask about specific programs and their effectiveness.
 - b. What will our expected contributions be?
 - c. Can we mail directly to your client list? (This can be through a third party to protect proprietary information.)
6. Do you set goals by line and by rep?
 - a. What are your expectations for a new line?
 - b. How do we insure our success with you, your reps and your accounts?
7. How do you handle prospecting?
 - a. Is there a procedure you follow to identify and pursue new business in your territory?
 - b. How do you follow up on leads provided by principles?
 - c. Are there goals set for your reps to acquire new accounts?