

*Tops & Tips  
for  
Meeting  
the  
Buyer!*

## Meet the Buyer

**"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." - Benjamin Franklin**

Congratulations! You've managed to get a face to face meeting with and a chance to present your foods to a supermarket or food service buyer! Well done!! These opportunities do not come easily or often, so you want to make the most of it as you might not get this chance again for a couple of years.

So in preparation, what are the ten top things you need to consider? First of all, ask yourself what you *hope* to gain from this meeting. There are no guarantees, but you really want to put your best foot forward. Buyers see a lot of suppliers and producers And it is generally accepted that people buy into the person, i.e., you! not the product.

So, your objectives are:

- Make a good impression – one that they will remember for the right reasons!
- Be clear - about the finances, about your USP (Unique Selling Points), about ability to supply;
- Come away with a name, contact details and clarity around next steps.

### ***Ten Top Things to Remember:***

(1) Do your homework – where exactly is the place? How will you get there? Is there parking? Are there heating / cooking facilities if you need them? How much time are you being given to present?

Get there in good time to relax, don't put yourself under pressure because you're rushing. Dress appropriately – it's a business meeting. Look business-like. Bring business cards – if you don't have business cards, then get some printed up.



(2) Try to control the nerves - give yourself a couple of minutes to sit quietly and get your head together before you go in. Calm down. Breathe deeply three times in and out - it really works!

(3) Know who you will be meeting – get their names, roles. Understand that there are different buyers for different parts of the business – chilled, ambient, grocery and so on. Make sure you know all about the company too –check them out online visit their stores, show that you are familiar with their business (it's a bit like going to an interview and finding out what you can about the company first).



(4) Calculate your prices - know your costs (keep them to yourself) and the margin you will offer them. This is REALLY important. It never ceases to amaze me that so many food producers who have been in business for some years, still don't exactly know what their margins are. Don't wing it – be precise!



(6) Bring samples to display and some taste, preferably in final packaging. Bring plates, cutlery, napkins, whatever might be needed;



(7) Practice your presentation - try it out on an audience of people who don't know your product too well. Do they understand what you are talking about? Keep to time and make sure you get the key points across clearly. Make your main points sooner rather than later in case they cut your time. You should:

- Introduce yourself – name and a little about yourself (not your life story!)
- Make an impact in the first 15 seconds: "Did you know....*statistic about market size....*" or something similar - do some research in advance and bring this into your presentation. You're trying to show them that there is a big market for your food;
- Tell the panel about your products. Be careful about using jargon – don't use it! You might know what you mean but the panel might not.
- Your USPs - what makes your product different /better and make sure you mention these in your presentation. Buyers are always looking for something different to attract new shoppers, increase sales and get one up on their competitors;
- Know who your competitors are - why you are better / different;
- Recommended Retail Price / margins – you're not telling them your costs, just how much you will sell it to them for, and how much you think consumers would pay for it.
- Now offer samples to taste.



(8) Know what questions you want to ask them – it's ok to have them written down, it's

not an exam!



(9) Be willing and ready to negotiate on price. Know your margins and how low you can go and still be happy. It's ok to ask for a break to think things over.



(10) Follow-up - always a good idea to drop them an email afterwards thanking them for their time, summarising what was discussed and outlining what was agreed / next steps. Ask for their business card and give them yours, don't be shy about asking for these, just make sure you get them!



***And afterwards....***

Review how it went and try to capture what went well and what perhaps didn't go so well. Use the experience as a learning opportunity to do even better next time.

*Good Luck!*