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Tips to engage Supermarket Buyers

- 1 **Be ready for a multiple retailer** and don't be afraid to declare that you are not if you have been approached directly by them. If you accept orders that you cannot sustainably deliver, you risk losing the opportunity as often you only get one chance.
- 2 **Plan and navigate** your growth path and be clear who you are most aligned with within the larger retailers. When climbing this ladder, only take the next step when you are ready.
- 3 **Know the retailer**, their mission, purpose and values. Many start with new brands in trial stores or regional produce sectors, so check this out. A demonstration of your understanding of their business, and how you fit with them, is a potent way of aligning your brand with theirs.
- 4 **Be prepared:** By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail [Benjamin Franklin]. A multiple retailer will expect you to understand the shelf space that you are pitching to inhabit. They will have to reduce or de-list another brand to accommodate you. Be clear about margins, rate of sales, your capacity to deliver and how your product will benefit them. Rate of sales is a key discussion as this is the income you can mutually generate from their valuable shelf space.
- 5 **Grab the buyer's attention**, be informed on their category review calendar and connect in inventive ways. Whether you choose a digital approach or lumpy mail, make it interesting, make it relevant, make it count.
- 6 **Tell your story** to demonstrate the depth of your brand as this is what makes you unique. Your story can be communicated in many ways in store with innovative point of sale and tasting/demonstration stands. Paint a picture of where you see the brand in the future and invite them on the journey with you.
- 7 **Dedicate time to the relationship.** Buyers are busy managing many suppliers and expect answers to questions quickly and efficiently, so you and your team should be on call to ensure the smooth running of supply and information.
- 8 **Understand your price point.** You will need to demonstrate your understanding of the relevant category and what you are asking of consumers. There will be a price point expectation largely determined by the choices currently available.
- 9 **Budget for their marketing fees** and required price promotions. It is helpful to raise the expectations with a buyer early in the relationship so that you are prepared.
- 10 **Stay several steps ahead** of your competitors and the buyer's expectations through innovation and marketing. Become the eyes and ears of your category, after all, you are asking them to invest in your brand.

Bonus tip:

When you need to raise your prices, expect a tactical response that is known as the 4D's: Dismiss, Defer, Detail, Deflect. This is a typical process prior to either de-list or deal. Understand the process, your task is to speed through it rather than fight against it!

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