

# The team dynamic in international markets

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**M**anufacturing and marketing poultry houses successfully in countries around the world is a challenging business.

There are the obvious issues that need to be faced, such as geography (climate considerations, earthquake or hurricane zones) and economics (size and cost).

These are routinely handled and most of the time do not pose major hurdles. In other words, if you produce a well designed, homogeneous and quality house that fits the needs of most producers, it will find its own audience.

The secret then becomes fourfold. How do you reach your prospects, how do you get them to sign a contract, how do you keep them satisfied, and how do you make sure they become repeat customers?

## Technology sets the pace

Certainly technology plays an important role in whether your product survives in multi-diverse countries around the world.

In fact, there are instances where even the most modern designed farms need built-in obsolescence simply because technology changes, and within a certain number of years, a poultry house needs to be replaced with a more updated version.

When that time arrives, new construction is not always handled with an eye towards quality, especially if the farmer is independent. Too often, poultry farmers in certain countries have become cheap improvisers.

They see a structure, copy the design for their own use without a clear understanding of the technology involved. Predictably, problems arise because while the copied structure looks good, it does not perform up to standard. It seems to be a trend in too many countries to create inferior houses because it is cheaper. In many cases, the producer may not even be aware of his true costs.

Poor quality materials and improper design might appear to save money in the short term, but



A Betco layer house in El Salvador.

will have long term negative results. So, a big part of the sales challenge becomes convincing the farmer that his ultimate goal is to be concerned with his improved cash flow and return on investment and not on short term cost cutting.

## Experienced agent's role

We mentioned earlier that technology plays an important role in staying ahead in the race for business. This is absolutely critical to the success of any business serving the poultry industry.

But in dealing with multi-cultures in multiple countries, it is the key role of the local marketing agent that becomes pivotal. In essence, the agent, the building manufacturer, and equipment suppliers form a team, capable of providing turnkey solutions for poultry producers.

It is only when the agent does his work that the team of distributors can do theirs.

Synergy starts with the agent's pre-planning. In some cases, the agent's good planning can result in a substantial increase in production. For example, understanding the

client's production goals will allow the farm to maximise and increase bird density through creative site layout.

In fact, a competent agent in conjunction with a good building manufacturer can substantially increase the production of birds.

For example, a poultry house with no insulation and poor ventilation can only expect to produce about 11 birds per square metre in a tropical climate.

Conversely, a well insulated house with a properly designed tunnel ventilation and evaporative cooling system will produce more kilos of live weight per square metre – at least 17.0-18.2kg birds per square metre or higher.

The very fact that representatives are available in specific locales allows them to monitor every phase of the building construction and equipment installation.

Not only do they provide the farmer with air tight, economical and efficient pre-fabricated buildings, ventilation, feeding and watering systems, they can, in most cases, arrange or provide construction crews, which will significantly shorten the duration of the project.

After all, lenders continue to demand assurances that projects be finished on budget and on time.

Along this same line, the agent's contacts with financial institutions can assist the producer in finding short term credit insurance programmes or project financing programmes.

This kind of help will significantly improve cash flow, especially during the construction phase of the project, and many times can be the tipping point in securing a project for the agent's team.

This kind of turnkey operation gives the farmer solid confidence in his team because he understands that accountability lies with one party – the local agent.

It is his company's responsibility to be aware of local market conditions and assemble the package that will ensure the best price, quality, building and environmental design, equipment performance, labour and feed efficiency available.

## The team concept

It is the concept of a well oiled team orchestrated by the representative that allows any and all members of the group to reach out and generate new business through traditional marketing channels, or through referrals.

They become very important, particularly when the agent uses his connections and members of the team theirs, to network new business. There is nothing like satisfied customers to pass along their positive experience to others in the same business.

Anyone who has been in business any length of time knows that the majority of new business comes from repeat customers, so it is not enough to get business, the challenge is to keep it, and grow it.

This is when any company can use its own history to paint a picture of success to existing customers or new prospects.

And its history will, in all likelihood, be inexorably connected to the history and success of the team with which it is associated. ■