



### **5. Work with people you like.**

If you like people, they usually like you right back. In selecting U.S. distributors, first establish their competence at delivering access to the market. Of those who remain, select the distributor you like the most. You will do your best for them and they will do their best for you.

Do not buy the “I can’t stand them but they’re really professional” line. You have to live with these people and sometime soon you will have your first dispute. It will be much easier to resolve it if you like each other.

### **6. Talk about what “the big boys” don’t say.**

Highlight reasons for the customer to buy your product. Make it stand out. Large publishers have advertising, volume sales, author events and stellar names. Make sure you have humility, commitment, product knowledge, personal service, patience and an obvious mission. Be flexible—the big boys are usually bound by policy and rules.

### **7. Eliminate excuses for people not to buy.**

Offer promotions and discount structures that are simple and familiar to your customers. Reinforce that familiarity by changing the look of your marketing and designs to suit the market, but do not feel obliged to change or compromise the content of your books.

### **8. Offer the most value.**

Our products particularly suit independent retailers. The good, solid content of the books coincides with the reasons they had for starting their bookshop. We built their loyalty by attending the trade events they attend, which are smaller, local and regional ones. You may only influence 100 stores, but you can see their interest grow when you track their repeat orders. This strategy means a publisher may have to attend more events, but this will also allow them to meet more customers and be more immersed in the culture.

### **9. Send in the boss.**

You do not have megabucks marketing but you do have personal service and, if you are small, a boss who knows all about everything that goes on. If the director of your publishing house is traveling to see big clients, encourage him or her to schedule appointments with the managers of smaller retail stores as well. The boss will then be able to make decisions with knowledge of real customers.

### **10. Be selective in what you show.**

Do not feed the stereotypes that your potential customer is likely to have. If they think that all companies like yours publish only certain types of books, then surprise them. Do not show your other products until after they have confidence in your range of products. Show them that it was worthwhile to meet with you.

### **11. Supply, supply, supply.**

Once you have started to “conquer the market,” focus on keeping your products in stock with your U.S. distributor. It takes Christian Focus two months to restock its U.S. distributors, because we ship products by sea. We have not yet found an economical way of addressing fulfillment problems by air, so instead we rely on weekly electronic data transfers to recognize sales trends and minimize shortages. We re-stock on a monthly basis.

### **12. Be committed.**

It takes time and enormous amounts of energy to maintain a U.S. presence. Do not expect your relationship with American partners to flourish if you are not prepared to work at it. We scoff at alchemists who sought the secret to turn lead into gold; yet we do not recognize that we are looking for the same thing in business solutions. However, building strong publishing organizations usually means that gains are small and incremental. Build upon your gains and you will eventually succeed.

### **13. The biggest surprise is—there are no surprises.**

People always ask, “What are the differences between the U.S. market and other markets?” There are many details and subtleties. However, if you are doing the job right, the differences disappear as you begin cultural assimilation. ❖

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