

## The Premier Sales Agent Register in the UK

Looking for extra sales?

Who in their right mind would say NO?!

in association with

**agentbase**<sup>®</sup>  
THE UK SALES AGENT REGISTER

But the dilemma is how to do it profitably, without spending more than the profit you generate.

**Reps?** They're expensive: recruitment, training, salary, expenses, overnight stays, holidays and sick days, and now the new pension regulations. Plus, there's no guarantee of success.

**Advertising?** Old media, new media, social media? It's a minefield, and tough to get a return on investment these days.

**Sales agents?** Self-employed sales agents working on a commission-only basis. Only charging a portion of the extra profit they bring you. No fixed overhead. No costs if they don't sell. Cheap to recruit. Cheap to manage. Hang on... doesn't that sound a bit more interesting?

***Scorpio Connect and ibd in partnership with AgentBase can bring this opportunity to you.***

AgentBase helps companies to recruit and manage sales agents and is the UK's leading sales agent register. They have been in business for 25 years and have 10,000 UK sales agents registered with them, all looking for new lines to sell. These could be goods or services, from simple widgets to capital items, from FMCG to engineering and everything in between, from simple services to complex concepts.

There's a hidden army of B2B sales agents out there selling to all market and industry sectors, in all areas of the UK. Some have helped catapult previously unknown brands such as Pandora, Hunter and Crocs to huge success, and work with many others that you haven't heard of, yet.

Scorpio Connect and ibd together with AgentBase can help you to explore whether this is an option for you. If so, it could be the answer to your sales needs. You could have a UK-wide network of self-employed, commission-only, independent sales agents out there talking to new customers and selling more of what you produce in a matter of a few months. And it won't cost you very much to set up and manage.

**AgentBase** - works with clients throughout the UK, and from all around the world. We work with clients small, medium and large. Wherever you are based, and at whatever stage in your growth, we can help you to establish a proactive, results based, and highly cost-effective sales presence in the UK using commission-only sales agents.

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## Planning

### Help with your sales agent strategy

Do you understand sales agents? What they are looking for? How they work? How to 'recruit' and manage them? The legalities? How to structure and present your agency opportunity in the best way?

If there are any gaps in your understanding, AgentBase can advise you.

For example, AgentBase run a monthly seminar to steer you away from the obstacles and traps, and towards success. AgentBase also provide a range of private consultation services to suit all budgets and circumstances.

Working with UK sales agents is a specialised task, and there can be pitfalls. The planning stage is critical to success.

Are you:

- new to using agents?
- experiencing difficulties with existing agents?
- looking to enter new UK markets?

In all cases, AgentBase will help you to understand the essentials of sales agent strategy, identify the challenges, fix the problems, and move forward with confidence.

### AgentBase can help you plan for success with sales agents.

Are you considering the use of sales agents, but have unanswered questions?

Such as...

- Is the agent route the right route to market for YOU?
- Where could you go wrong?
- Or where are you going wrong?
- What is the success formula?
- Etc

Would you like to:

- understand the basics & process of sales agent recruitment & management?
- have a balanced, strategic view that explains the pitfalls as well as the obvious benefits?
- know all the key factors for success?
- benefit from our decades of hands-on experience of actually and successfully recruiting and managing agents?
- receive impartial advice from the established market leader who maintains the UK's most extensive contact base of sales agents?

AgentBase have several consultation options giving various depths of input at different price points:

## Options

### Seminar & Workshop on Agent Strategy

In summary, AgentBase will give you the knowledge and tools required to formulate and implement an effective and successful sales agent recruitment and management campaign.

### Personal Consultations on Agent Strategy

You are looking for some bespoke advice on your sales agent strategy, then consider a personal consultation.

## Advertising

AgentBase has a membership of 10,000 sales agents. They can get your message to some or all of them.

There are 3 options:

- **Magazine & Website Adverts**
  - Reach all 10,000 members with simple, traditional advertising
- **Direct Mail to Agents**
  - Pinpoint agents by areas and/or markets, and send them a bespoke message
- **Agent Introduction Services**
  - Just pay for introductions to relevant, interested agents

## Recruiting

### Hand-on help with interviewing and recruiting

AgentBase provide hands-on help with recruitment - handling initial enquiries from agents, sending out your information, following up, profiling and short-listing agents for interview, giving presentations and then personally interviewing your prospective sales agents. Finally, AgentBase report back to you with our findings and recommendations. You remain in control at all times and make all the key decisions, with our support and guidance all the time.

This is a flexible outsourced interviewing and recruitment service provided by experienced sales agent recruiters (who are also active, seasoned sales agents themselves). Recruiting sales agents is very different to recruiting employees.

### How? Why?

The agent 'recruitment' process is generally tricky.

For a start, technically you are not 'recruiting' them as agents are self-employed. Instead you are forging more of a partnership with them. And the whole process needs to be handled in a particular way.

Firstly, you need to respond to their initial enquiry in a highly timely manner – delays can be fatal. Next you need to provide them with specific information (the agent information pack) before you can expect them to tell you much about themselves or attend an 'interview'. And then the 'interview' stage is fraught with pitfalls.

First of all, it is not wise to call it an interview. Agents are businesses, a bit like you, and so you are entering into a kind of partnership with them. Often the agent is risking a lot more than you are in this arrangement: remember you are asking this other business to sell for you with no fixed fee and no guarantee of success.

### Key Points:

- Agents aren't looking for 'jobs'
- Agents generally don't have CVs.
- Agents will want specific information from you (via an 'agent information pack')
- Agents will want to see that you are prepared and understand their way of working
- Agents will want to vet you as much as you want to vet them
- Agents will want a 'meeting' as opposed to being 'interviewed'

Many agents are wary of being taken advantage of. And then there is the matter of:

- Where to do the 'interview'?
- Should you offer expenses?
- What sort of questions to ask the agent?
- What questions is the agent likely to ask you?
- What about commission?
- Or territory? Or exclusivity? Targets? And so on.

AgentBase can expertly handle this process for you.

At **AgentBase**, we have been working with sales agents since 1993. We have recruited teams of sales agents on dozens of occasions. Let us bring our extensive experience to bear to help you through this crucial stage of agent recruitment.

### **Our Service**

- Discuss and advise on general recruitment strategy. Preparation is key.
- Advise and assist with advert wording to generate best possible response
- Advise and assist on preparation of agent information pack (literature and materials explaining agency opportunity in detail)
- Handle advertising response
- Profile all applicants, screen and shortlist for initial interview
- Send out agent information packs
- Conduct initial interviews (includes presentation to agents on your company, products / services, and the agency package on offer)
- Report to company management on all contacts made, with recommendations
- Provide ongoing advice, guidance and assistance with all aspects of agent strategy, as required
- Help with ongoing management of agents, if required

All our recruitment consultants are highly experienced SALES AGENTS themselves. This gives them a unique ability to build rapport, break down barriers, and get an incisive insight into the calibre, motivation and circumstances of all your candidates. They will advise you on which are the very best candidates to progress with.

Furthermore, you avoid distracting yourself or senior management from other important tasks, and our involvement injects a formal professionalism to the agent recruitment process, where psychology is so important.

The service is tailored to your budget and requirements and provided on an hourly rate, so you only pay for what you need.

### **Cost**

£POA

## Contracting

### Get a sales agency agreement and understand the law.

It is strongly recommended that you put a formal agency agreement in place with your new sales agents. The EC Commercial Agents Regulations govern the relationship between you and your sales agents. (This is highly likely to continue to be the case after the UK leaves the EU).

AgentBase provide a Legal Pack that contains a specialist agency agreement template. This represents your best interests. The pack also provides key facts about the Regulations and gives you all the information you need to fully understand agency law and make it work for you. It is an extremely cost-effective alternative to going to a lawyer.

The legal relationship between principal and agent is governed by the EC Commercial Agents Regulations. This legislation came into effect in 1993 and cannot be ignored. Sales agents have a set of inalienable rights under the regulations that are akin in some ways to employment rights. They protect the agent against unfair treatment, especially unfair termination, and they generally help clarify the relationship. They also provide a professional and secure environment for principals and agents to work together.

As a principal, you are strongly advised to put a formal agency agreement in place between you and your sales agents. Without an agreement the EC regulations will apply in their raw form, and these are designed to protect the sales agent, not the principal. Besides, it is best practice. Most sales agents will expect an agency agreement, and some will refuse to work without one. A good agreement will lay forth the terms of engagement so there are no misunderstandings. A poorly drafted agreement will either leave you under-protected or may be too aggressive and undermine an agent's security, and therefore commitment, and ultimately performance. It is counter-productive to be too one-sided. As the principal you have the opportunity to ensure that this agreement protects your own interests in the key areas, whilst remaining reasonable to both parties.

There are a small number of lawyers in the UK that specialise in agency law. AgentBase has been associated with many of the most prominent lawyers for many years, and many contribute legal articles to our website and monthly magazine.

Having a bespoke agency agreement drawn up for you by a specialist agency lawyer is of course the best option. It is however rather expensive. So, in order to provide a more cost-effective solution AgentBase have teamed up with several leading specialist lawyers to develop our Legal Packs. They all contain a template agency agreement plus lots of other useful information and resources. They will suit the vast majority of situations and will save you around 80% compared with going to a lawyer.

#### Options

- Legal Packs for UK companies who are contracting with:
  - UK sales agents for the sale of Goods
  - UK sales agents for the sale of Services
  - EU sales agents for the sale of Goods

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## The Solution – The AgentBase ‘Legal Pack’

### Our Legal Pack will:

- Provide a template agency agreement from an expert lawyer
- Save you 80% on going to an expert lawyer
- Protect your business
- Help you understand commercial agency law
- Enable you to take control
- Limit your liability
- Give you access to free legal assistance from an expert lawyer

### Pack Contents

#### A Model Agency Agreement

This is a templated agency agreement. It represents YOUR best interests. It is up-to-date and ready to go – just top and tail it with your details and those of the agent. Or you can tailor it to your specific requirements using the Guidance Notes (see next point).

#### Guidance Notes

Written in plain English, to explain the meaning and effect of key clauses in the sales agent agreement, to guide you in fine tuning your agreement with agents.

#### UK Agency Law Detailed Briefing

This summarises the key legal and commercial considerations when appointing a sales or marketing agent, including the application of the Commercial Agents Regulations 1993 as amended (in particular in relation to indemnity or compensation upon termination) and UK and EU competition law.

#### UK Agency Law Q&A

Written in plain English, in an easily digestible Question and Answer (Q&A) format (these are often also known as FAQ's). This is invaluable.

#### Full and Summary Details of EC Regulations

The Commercial Agents (European Council Directive) Regulations 1993 – the original governing law on all agency relationships throughout the EC.

#### A Direct Introduction to the Lawyer

The Lawyer with whom AgentBase developed the pack can assist you to put in place your tailor-made agency agreement by, for instance: - checking the legality of any minor amendments that you have made, answering any specific questions that you may have, and filling in any gaps in your understanding of the law. (Limited to 15 minutes).

#### Articles

Relevant articles from our magazine relating to key contracting issues.

#### Cost

**£495.00**

## Agent Management

Once you have your new sales agents in place, they will need to be managed.

As with recruitment, management of sales agents is very different to management of employees.

### How? Why?

AgentBase can assist you with this process. We provide cost-effective, hands-on expert assistance that will help ensure the success of your agent recruitment program.

At **AgentBase**, we have been working with sales agents since 1993. We have helped manage teams of sales agents on dozens of occasions. Let us bring our extensive experience to bear.

All our management consultants are highly experienced SALES AGENTS themselves. This gives them a unique ability to build rapport, break down barriers, spot issues, prevent problems, and build the most productive relationships possible with all of your agents.

### Our Service

AgentBase will act as your outsourced sales agent management function, leaving you to focus on your core business activities. This service not only keeps things running smoothly, but also gives us the insight to be able to prevent and cure issues before they become serious problems. If you are inexperienced in sales agent management, one of the main challenges is seeing problems coming; and by the time a problem has been identified, it is often too late to fix it and the whole project can be at risk. Benefit from our extensive experience in managing sales agents and enjoy the services of an expert sales agent manager.

### Typical Management Package

- Periodic calls to all agents
- Key staff liaison
- Training as required
- Monthly management reporting
- Monthly commission payment system check (timely prompts to agents to submit invoices, and accounts staff to produce statements and issue payments)
- Being available for advice and mentoring

The service is tailored to your budget and requirements and provided on an hourly rate, so you only pay for what you need.

### Cost

£POA

#### Agents:

- aren't employed
- are more like partners
- work remotely
- generally, don't like being managed!
- need to be managed as individuals
- don't like reporting
- don't like targets

## Free resources for Principals

### Everything you need to know about sales agents – and how to succeed with them

Feel free to browse a number of AgentBase articles at the following link -  
<http://www.agentbase.co.uk/principal-companies-area/free-resources/>

### Factsheet 1 – Working with Sales Agents – The Bare Essentials

Posted on 15th October 2017

#### Definition of an Agent

According to Terry James\*

A sales agent is a freelance, self-employed sales person who works, usually alone, for perhaps several, non-competing, companies and obtains orders for those companies and is paid a commission on those orders. Each arrangement with each company is usually referred to as an agency. A sales agent sometimes describes the company he is working for as his principal. Sometimes a retainer is paid to the sales agent but this usually comes with strings attached. He or she, usually works in a specific area of industry or commerce and usually within geographical limits. There are no limits to the types of industry and commerce where sales agents are found.

Many companies use teams of sales agents to get national coverage and some companies use a mixture of employed salespeople and sales agents

\*Terry James is author of the book: Become a Freelance Sales Agent in the UK

#### A legal definition

- A commercial agent is a self-employed individual, partnership or company who has continuing authority to negotiate the sale or purchase of goods on behalf of another business (known as the “principal”).
- A commercial agent does not need to be authorised to conclude sales on behalf of their principal and it is usually sufficient that they are authorised to introduce customers to the business.
- A party that buys products from a business and then resells them would not generally be a commercial agency.

#### Sales agents vs. distributors: the difference

There is a possible misunderstanding in the difference between a sales agent and a distributor.

The function of a distributor:

- purchases and holds stock
- solicits orders
- delivers the orders
- invoices the goods or service
- takes the credit risk
- makes a profit on the transaction

The function of a sales agent:

- solicits orders
- passes orders to the principal
- earns an agreed commission on those orders



## The Relationship Between Agent & Principal

- It is a partnership. An agent is an independent business.
- They are bound together by an 'agency agreement' (more detail later)
- The relationship can sometimes be adversarial, as principals do not understand agents' circumstances, risks, outlook, etc.
- The agent's customers become the principal's customers once an order has been placed. Although they may remain loyal to an agent, and an agent may be able to steer them away from a principal's products after a relationship has ended.

## The Upside vs. The Downside

### The obvious UPSIDE

Clearly agents offer a very attractive upside:

- Self-employed = independent, flexible, mature, grown up, serious.
- Commission only = results orientated. Hungry.
- No fixed salary. No holiday pay, sick pay, expenses, car, office, desk, PC, employers NI
- Low costs of recruitment, management, payroll
- Have their own customer base – 100-200 established trust relationships
- Wealth of experience and understanding of markets.

Cost of a rep are estimated at between £50k and £100k a year, plus recruitment costs of up to 25% of salary.

*(You probably already appreciate this, or you may not be reading this!)*

### The potential DOWNSIDE

What you really need to know is:

- What can stop me from realising all these benefits?
- Working with agents can be spectacularly effective and successful. And it IS possible.

In order to maximise your chances of success, you need to understand:

- how agents operate
- how agents run successful agency businesses
- how they think
- where their priorities lie
- how they regard you
- what mistakes are possible
- the risks for them in taking on your agency

### Possible pitfalls include:

- Lack of control and feedback
- Not understanding the agent's role, risks, strengths and limitations
- Unrealistic performance expectations
- Over-estimating your power in the relationship
- Not understanding the agent's psychology and behaviour
- Over managing agents
- Under managing agents!
- Complicating things
- Getting the legals wrong

And so on.

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## Information

For more information about how AgentBase could deliver real benefit to your organisation, then in the first instance please contact:

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