



SEMA SHOW:

10 TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR COMPANY'S GLOBAL APPEAL

»» By Linda Spencer

Global automotive customization represents significant business opportunities for U.S. suppliers, and as overseas demands grow, so does the demand for American products. Given that 20% of the buyers at the SEMA Show are from overseas, the Show provides unmatched opportunities for exhibitors to connect with these global resellers. Here are 10 tips on developing international business at the SEMA Show.

1. Connect with international buyers in Las Vegas before the Show even opens at the Monday, October 31, international roundtables. Each of the four one-hour-long sessions focuses on a top overseas market/region: Middle East, Australian, European and Latin American (see sidebar on p. 94).
2. Join SEMA for the Wednesday November 2 International Happy Hour (IHH) bringing together exhibitors with top global buyers and international enthusiast media at this 5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m. More information is available at www.sema.org/
3. international/sema-show-info.
3. Enter your products in the New Products Showcase (NPS). Top global enthusiast journalists tapped by SEMA and part of the Global Media Awards (GMA) will be searching the NPS to identify the top 10 products that they believe will best resonate with buyers in their home market. For the hundreds of products selected, it's a great source of international publicity and a recognition of the global appeal of your products.
4. Utilize the Center for International Commerce (CIC). Exhibitors are

»» Attending the International Roundtables is an excellent networking opportunity to meet with international buyers and learn about a promising overseas market even before the Show opens.

- invited to utilize the private meeting rooms to meet with current or potential international buyers. Interpreters are also available in the CIC to translate for these private meetings.
5. Reach out to international buyers in advance and invite them to set up a time to meet with you in your booth. These buyers might be leads you gathered at previous SEMA Shows or buyers you met at various events such as the SEMA overseas business development programs or past SEMA Export Fairs.
6. Consider adding eye-catching booth



» Register for the 18th International Happy Hour where exhibitors, global trade buyers and international enthusiast media gather on Wednesday evening during Show week.

graphics aimed at attracting potential international customers and letting them know that you manufacture products to fit *their* market. Do you make products for vehicles popularly customized overseas? Right-hand-drive vehicles? Products which you already sell abroad so you know their appeal? Have signage to reflect these products/platforms to catch the eyes of passing global resellers.

7. Request a complimentary “We Export” sign at www.sema.org/international/sema-show-info or by contacting Kristin Atwan at kristina@sema.org. Let international buyers know that you are interested in doing business with them with this multilingual sign. The signs will be delivered by Freeman to your booth. We will also send you a complimentary electronic version of the “We Export” sign. Feel free to use this complimentary electronic logo in your pre-/post-Show promotion to international buyers.
8. Explore state—specifically the State Export Trade Promotion Program—for available funding to defray the cost of exhibiting at the SEMA Show. This partnership between the Federal Small Business Administration (SBA) and the states provides fund-

ing for export-generating programs for eligible small businesses. Given that more than 20% of the buyers at the Show reside abroad, the Show is considered an eligible export activity for state funding. More information is available at www.sema.org/international/step-pdf or by contacting Kristin Atwan at kristina@sema.org.

9. The leads gathered at the Show are just that—leads. Make sure to properly research and vet these potential customers just as you would domestic leads. For example, research what other products they carry (consider reaching out to some of these suppliers if they are in noncompetitive companies to see their satisfaction with the buyer) and check their capacity in terms of staff and facilities in determining whether they would be a good fit to sell your product and if yes, the agreed-upon geographic reach. If they seek to be your dealer throughout a region—for example, Europe—do they have the ability staff-wise, language-wise, etc., to handle this broad region? Typically, the geographic region is limited to the home country and perhaps a nearby market. Rarely is it to a whole continent such as Europe.

10. Once you decide the international buyers with which you want to do business, develop a proactive plan to make these new potentially lucrative accounts a win-win for all. Take into account the miles and time zones away the new customer might be. This plan should address: the customer’s preferred method of communication (for many overseas trade buyers, it is NOT email but rather WhatsApp or Telegram or other social-media apps); who/how you will build in capacity in your company to respond quickly to inquiries, problems and potential warranty issues; and explore the most cost-effective and efficient methods of delivering your products to your overseas customers (luckily a growing number of overseas resellers handle the product delivery by either picking it up at your facility or having you send it to a location within the United States from which they then tranship the product overseas).

As the global specialty equipment industry gathers November 1–4 for the SEMA Show, incorporating some of these tips to expand your appeal to domestic as well as international buyers can lead to an increased ROI without a lot more effort! ■

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31
UPPER WEST HALL, ROOM W229

• **11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

Middle East Tazweed—The United Arab Emirates and surrounding countries provide some of the best opportunities for U.S. specialty-parts manufacturers. Meet with buyers from throughout the region who will let you know what their customers want. Learn how to cash in on this lucrative region filled with passionate consumers with disposable income. Discover why off-roading, classic-car collecting and motorsports are all strong markets throughout the region. Attendees will also learn about plans for the 2023 SEMA Middle East Business Development Program.

• **12:15 p.m.–1:15 p.m.**

Connect With Buyers Down Under: Australia and New Zealand—Meet for lunch and conversation with top buyers from Down Under. Learn the latest

trends from distributors of off-road, styling, restoration and performance products and the opportunities in this country of pickup (utes) and SUV customizing fanatics, V8 lovers and die-hard hot-rod enthusiasts. Learn about the upcoming 2023 SEMA Australia Business Development Program.

• **2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.—**
NEW SESSION

Nordic/Europe: Explore the Opportunities in the Vintage Car, Pickup and Performance Niches—Learn the potential for your products in this performance and classic-car paradise. Meet with top trade buyers enabling the half-century-old craze in Sweden and the surrounding countries of Norway, Finland and Denmark to restore and upgrade American classics. Performance upgrades are among the top modifications sought for a range of vehicles. After all, the region is the headquarters of the European Drag Racing Championship and performance for street

use as well as circuit and drag racing, rally racing and drifting. Hear about the market for customized fullsize American-built pickups. High disposable income coupled with a passion for personalization makes this a very attractive region. Get feedback from the first SEMA Nordic trip and plans for future events.

• **3:45 p.m.–4:45 p.m.**

Latin America: Learn What's Hot and What's Not—Trade buyers and the media from Central and South America will discuss their respective markets and the opportunity in this pickup- and car-crazy region. Learn what's hot—and what's not. Get insider tips into which vehicles are local customizers' rides of choice and the top-selling products. Learn more about the opportunities and challenges facing U.S. manufacturers seeking to sell into Latin America—everything from language issues, tariffs and small fragmented markets to how U.S. companies have overcome these challenges.