



Marketing and Sales Toolkit

Building Trust in a Competitive Market

A practical resource for moving professionals navigating longer sales cycles, price-sensitive buyers, and a marketplace where trust determines who wins the business.

In IAM's most recent Industry Needs Assessment survey, sales and marketing ranked as the top area where members said their companies needed to innovate. This toolkit is IAM's direct response to that feedback, developed during IAM Member Day at the International Mobility Alliance (IMA) conference in Bali, Indonesia, where members gathered to discuss how buying decisions in international moving are changing.

What the Room Agreed On

Buyers negotiate on price. That is expected. But in a service where so much can go wrong, the decision usually comes down to trust. The negotiation is about price. The decision is about confidence.

Where This Toolkit Comes From

IAM thanks Patricia Jade Ooi, Founding Partner of the International Mobility Alliance (IMA), for providing the platform for IAM staff members Julia O'Connor and Matthieu Odijk to convene this discussion.

During the session, members compared notes on a shared challenge: buyers are harder to win, price pressure is increasing, and long-term success increasingly depends on a company's ability to demonstrate credibility and reliability early in the decision process. In relationship-driven markets, movers without a referral or established reputation often never receive the call. In digital-first markets, the dynamic is similar. The research buyers conduct before making contact increasingly replaces the traditional referral. This toolkit reflects what experienced movers across multiple markets said works when the business is on the line.

The Decision Starts Before You Do

What the Data Tells Us

Buyers today enter sales conversations having already researched, compared, and formed a view of what feels credible. The decision does not start at first contact. It starts in what buyers see before they ever reach out, the clarity they experience, and the confidence a company creates before anyone speaks.

The Asia Perspective and What It Tells the World

In many relationship-driven markets across Asia, buyers often begin with a referral or trusted connection rather than an open search. A company's reputation within a professional network frequently precedes the first conversation. By the time a buyer contacts you, someone they trust may have already vouched for your company, or they are deciding whether the relationship is worth pursuing. The same dynamic is increasingly visible in global markets. Digital research has become the modern version of the referral. What buyers find about your company before contact now shapes whether the conversation begins at all.

What Has Changed

- Buyers filter and compress information rather than engage with it. Most marketing messages are ignored.
- Price is easy to compare online. The risk of a bad move is not.
- Buyers are moving with less. Smaller shipments mean higher scrutiny on value, not lower.
- Customers arrive knowing more, but understanding less about what professional moving actually requires.

What Has Not Changed

- Relationships still matter, especially in markets where trust is built over time, not at first contact.
- Buyers still need to feel safe before they commit.
- A single poor experience travels further and faster than ever before.
- The companies that explain the process clearly win more often than those that compete on price alone.

Key insight: When everything looks professional online, what rises to the top is not who sent the most communications. It is who created the most confidence before the conversation began.

Actions for Your Team

✓ **Audit your digital presence as a buyer would**

Search your company name as a prospect would. What appears? Does it communicate credibility, or capability without proof?

✓ **Make your credentials visible before they are requested**

Earned designations, memberships, and verified reviews should appear where buyers look first, not buried in an About page.

✓ **Address the risk, not just the service**

Buyers know a lot can go wrong. The companies that name those concerns and explain how they are managed win more trust than those that only promote what goes right.

✓ **Communicate the skill behind the work**

Moving is a profession requiring trained judgment, logistical expertise, and regulatory knowledge. Most customers do not know this. Help them understand what they are actually buying.

If Your Team Is 1 to 5 People

You likely do not have a marketing function. What you do have is a reputation, a network, and a name that either means something or does not.

- This week: search your company name as a customer would and fix the first thing that does not reflect how you actually operate.
- Ask your three best customers what they would tell a friend about working with you. Use their exact words in how you describe yourself.
- Make sure your earned designations, such as IAMTrusted, are visible on every email signature and your Google Business profile.

Discuss With Your Team

1. What does a buyer see about your company before they ever speak to anyone on your team?
2. Where in your current marketing do you explain the complexity and skill of what you do?
3. If a buyer compared your company to three competitors today, what would make them choose you?

Your Salespeople Are Selling a Process They Don't Fully Control

What we heard from members

In international moving, sales teams often represent a process that runs across operations, customs, timing, and handoffs, most of which they do not directly manage. Confidence in the sale is not just about the person selling. It is about the system standing behind them.

Your Sales Team Inherits Your Reputation

In many markets, the salesperson is not the beginning of the relationship. A senior figure, a referral source, or a long-standing contact has often already established trust before the salesperson enters the picture. The salesperson's role is to honor that trust, not create it from scratch. For global teams, the lesson is the same: the credibility your company has built through its network, its ethics record, and its professionalism is what the salesperson inherits. Give them something worth inheriting.

What Helps Salespeople Sell with Confidence

- Clear, consistent messaging about what the company does and how
- Verified credentials they can reference without explanation
- Documented proof including process summaries and service standards
- Alignment with operations so what is promised matches what is delivered

What Reduces Buyer Hesitation

- Honest, plain-language explanation of what can go wrong and how it is handled
- Evidence that other buyers in similar situations chose this company
- A named contact who stays with the customer through the process
- Responsiveness at the inquiry stage. Speed signals reliability.

What Trust Looks Like in Practice

- Teams that sound aligned when a buyer asks questions across departments
- Follow-through on small commitments during the sales process
- Transparency about pricing components rather than a single opaque number
- Referencing ethics commitments naturally, not defensively

Key insight: Whether it is the owner or the salesperson, someone is always the visible face of the company to your customers and partners. Your job is to make the systems behind them clear so buyers and partners trust the organization, not just the individual.

Actions for Your Team

✓ **Build a one-page company proof document**

A simple, professional summary of your credentials, standards, and differentiators that salespeople can share at the right moment. Not a brochure, but a trust document.

✓ **Align sales and operations on what gets promised**

Conduct a regular review of what sales is telling buyers versus what operations is delivering. Gaps here erode trust faster than any marketing can rebuild it.

✓ **Use your earned designations actively, not passively**

Designations like IAMTrusted signal verified accountability. Train your sales team to explain what they mean and why they matter, not just display the logo.

✓ **Prepare your team for price objections with value language**

When a buyer compares on price, the response is not to lower the price. It is to make the risk of choosing the cheaper option visible. Practice this conversation before it happens.

If Your Team Is 1 to 5 People

In a small operation, the owner often is the salesperson, the operations manager, and the customer relationship all at once. That is both a strength and a risk.

- This week: write one paragraph that explains your process, your credentials, and what a customer can expect. Use it in every inquiry response starting now.
- Your biggest trust asset is that buyers are dealing with the decision-maker directly. Name that advantage explicitly in how you sell.
- When you cannot be available, have a clear plan for who the customer contacts. Silence at the wrong moment costs more than any price difference.

Discuss With Your Team

1. What does your team say when a buyer asks why your price is higher than a competitor's?
2. Does your sales process include a moment where you explain what could go wrong and how you handle it?
3. What proof do your salespeople currently have access to, and is it easy to use in a real conversation?

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The Operational Reality

Consistency Is the Only Thing Buyers Can Evaluate Before the Move Happens

The principle behind this section

Before a move takes place, a buyer cannot evaluate your actual service. What they can evaluate is everything around it: how your team communicates, how consistent your messaging is across offices, and whether small interactions suggest that a larger system is in order.

What Makes the Experience Professional End to End

- Consistent language across inquiry, survey, confirmation, and delivery stages
- Introductions between team members so the buyer never feels handed off without context
- Written confirmations that summarize what was discussed and what happens next
- A clear escalation path the buyer knows about before they need it

Small Things That Create Confidence Without Explanation

- Responding within a defined window and meeting it every time
- Using the buyer's name and referencing their specific situation in follow-up
- Correcting errors quickly and without defensiveness
- Sending a brief update when nothing has changed, so silence does not create anxiety

Key insight: Buyers cannot see your warehouse, your training program, or your claims history. They can see whether your team is consistent. That consistency, or its absence, becomes the proxy for everything else.

Actions for Your Team

- ✓ **Map your buyer's experience from first contact to delivery**
Identify every moment where a buyer forms an impression. Which of those moments are managed deliberately? Which are left to chance?
- ✓ **Standardize your responses without making them feel templated**
A consistent response time and structure signals reliability. Personalized details within that structure signal care. Both matter.
- ✓ **Identify one thing your team does inconsistently and fix it first**
Consistency improvements compound. One reliable change adopted across the team builds more trust than ten partial improvements.
- ✓ **Use the IAM network intentionally as a trust signal**
When working with partner agents, your buyer is watching how you coordinate. A seamless handoff between IAM members signals a professional network, not just a professional company.

If Your Team Is 1 to 5 People

Consistency is harder when one person handles sales, operations, and customer communication simultaneously. The solution is not more staff. It is simpler systems.

- This week: create one standard email template for inquiry responses and use it for every new lead starting today.
- Set a response window you can actually keep, whether that is four hours or one business day, and hold it without exception.
- When a handoff to a partner agent happens, introduce them by name in writing. That single step eliminates most buyer anxiety about international moves.

Discuss With Your Team

1. If a buyer followed your process from first inquiry to move completion, where would they experience inconsistency?
2. What is the one thing your team could simplify or standardize that would most improve buyer confidence?
3. How do you currently use your IAM network membership as a visible trust signal, not just an operational resource?



IAM thanks the members who participated in the session and contributed their insights to the development of this **Marketing and Sales Toolkit.**

Content Authors:



Julia O'Connor, MBA
Vice President
Marketing & Communications



Matthieu Odijk
Director of Sales