Like all prudent investors, foreign buyers entering the U.S. marketplace seek the advice of mortgage brokers, real estate agents, attorneys and other real estate professionals. In general, these investors select professionals who have offices in their country and the U.S. Unless you are already part of a multinational firm, one effective way to find foreign customers is to form a business relationship with a multinational firm.

Another place to meet foreign investors is at major international commercial real estate trade fairs such as Expo Real and Le Marché International des Professionnels de l’Immobilier (aka MIPIM). Within the U.S., other popular places to meet foreign investors are the local chapters of foreign chambers of commerce and local foreign community groups.

After you’ve made contacts, you must market your services. Start by making sure you understand special rules, regulations and underwriting requirements that apply to foreign borrowers. It is important to have a good understanding of the Patriot Act and the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act.

Learn the basic commercial lending rules that apply in the foreign customer’s home country. If you can explain U.S. requirements in a way that gives foreign investors a point of reference, you have a great marketing advantage. If you can either speak at conferences attended by foreign investors or write articles on the similarities and differences between national systems, you can distinguish yourself as an expert.

Foreign investors are an emerging customer segment in need of mortgage services. By working with other real estate professionals already in this space and by developing expertise, you can grow your business. •

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