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WHITE PAPER

Beyond the Basics:

Fundamental Questions to Answer Before Going to Market with a New Product

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Lars Mellander has over 18 years of experience in the compliance industry working with customers to help them gain access to global markets. Lars is highly experienced in account management and global regulatory requirements with a history of consistently maintaining trusted relationships with several of the largest information technology and medical companies in the world.

Introduction

Launching a product globally can be a challenging process for a manufacturer, particularly if they are new to the market. There are several important concepts to consider in order to avoid overlooking crucial pieces of information that are required for a product to get approved to go to market.

Early in the process, it's crucial to be aware of all the relevant standards, additions, and other considerations that must be known in order to develop a strategic testing and certification plan to get the product live.

Going into a project from the testing and certification standpoint means facing a few considerations in order to get to market: electromagnetic compatibility testing, safety testing, radio equipment directive (when applicable) and other relevant certifications according to the product classification.

When testing a product for safety, there is a wide range of standards that may apply to a particular product, however, there are some that are foundational as the basis of this safety testing. For example, the International Electrical Committee (IEC) based standards will grant access to countries across the world.

European Norm (EN) standards are used to grant the CE marking for products that are legally sold and imported within the European Union, and are included in the official test report and EU Declaration of Conformity.

Here are a few common questions to be aware of that are essential to know and have answers prepared upfront in order to ensure a timely and successful launch of a given product into the global market.

Identifying and Categorizing the Product

The most obvious first step is to clearly identify the product in question, including its established category.

Is it classified as information technology equipment (ITE)? A tested measurement or laboratory device (MEAS)? A piece of audio video (AV) equipment? Or perhaps a medical device (MED)? It's crucial to clearly define all relevant categories that the product may fall into in order to understand all possible directives that will need to be addressed.

It's also important to check the Harmonized Shipping (HS) codes (also referred to as tariff codes or CC codes), as these will drive the testing and certification process to grant access to certain countries around the globe, such as China, Mexico, etc. It must align with the recognized HS code of the country the product is going to be shipped and sold within, otherwise it will not be granted access to that particular market, so it's very important to have this accurate information at the start of the process.

The more information you can offer the laboratory prior to the start of testing allows the team of experts to properly categorize and test the product to get it to market as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Identifying the Market

It's very important for project managers to communicate effectively with all sales, engineers, OEMs, and other stakeholders to ensure they understand the possible markets for a product, not just initially but in the future. By encouraging clear communication between all viable parties early on in the process, the project management team can ensure that their reporting, testing, and certification efforts align with the organization's goals for this product.

If there is any potential for the product to be launched in multiple markets, it's wise to have all safety and CB certification scheme reports to be prepared well in advance.



Other Market Considerations

Local Importer Requirements: Some countries will require a local importer, which is another element of preparation when determining which countries' markets your product will be present in.

Sample Testing Requirements: Some countries will require in-country testing of samples, particularly for electrical or electronic devices before they can go to market, so it's important to have a few samples prepared in case you are seeking clearance in more than one country.

Manual and Labels Requirements: Final manuals and labels are required to be in place by the time certifications and reports are issued, however these will mainly need to focus on the safety implications of the device as opposed to its complete operation.

Software Implications: Some countries and products will require software validation, so it's important to understand if this will affect this particular situation.

Identifying the Power Source

Identifying the power source of the device and its associated risks and requirements is another important consideration for market preparation.

Is the product powered by AC or DC — or dual redundant with both? Standard USB or USB3?

Battery powered? And what is the life expectancy of said power source?

When the CB report is conducted, everything will be tested on the critical components list as well as the power supply.

A large percentage of the required testing is going to be based off of the product's power supply, so in a best case scenario, the CB report and certification for the power source will have been completed prior to the device's turn at testing. This will eliminate the issues that can occur if the power supply does not meet the required standards, is expired, or the trademarks don't match.

The Certification Body Testing Laboratory (CBTL) rules are clear: in order to issue a CB report for a product, the power supply's CB report must be on file with a certification agency prior to completion.

Most global countries will also require the complete report rather than just the certification, so it's important to have this information readily available and reviewed well in advance.

Identifying the Product Category

At the top of the report, there will be an area that asks for the "Test Item Description", which must be completed with a description of the actual product rather than the product's branded name. Inserting the correct classification of the product is highly recommended as there are distinct requirements for certain product categories globally.

Be sure that both the Test Item Description and the General Product Information is uniform, and include data sheets and technical specifications when possible to reduce the risk of costly oversights.

Identifying the Label and Trademarks Requirements

The Regulatory Model Name, which is not the same name as the marketing brand name, serial number, or parts numbers, must be clearly stated on the product label.

Trademarks are also important to note, especially in instances where there are multiple or a particular country requires a trademark registration to be included with the test report. Be sure to get a clear understanding of what trademark requirements are in place for the product and the country whose market it will be looking to enter so the legal department can file for trademark registration well in advance.

If there is a series of products, indicate that in the Regulatory Model Name and elaborate on the other encompassed products in the series throughout the test report. If the product is one that will be updated on a regular basis, or it is a series of products, use a variable in the model name. However, when using a variable, it is absolutely necessary that these devices fall within the same product category.



Critical Contact Information

There is key information, such as the Applicant, Manufacturer, Factory, Trademark, Made in Country, as well as Names and Addresses, all of which must be correct on the test report.

Applicant: Contact who is filing the application.

Manufacturer: The person within the organization who is responsible for manufacturing the product.

Factory: The factory with exact location who is manufacturing the product in-house.

Trademarks: All the most recent trademarks and correlating paperwork and registrations.

Made in Country: Geographic location of manufacturing.

Names and Addresses: All contact information throughout the report must be correct and valid at the time of filing. For many international certifications, the addresses can make or break a certification, so it is critical to carefully review all information multiple times to confirm its accuracy.

It's important to note that some countries will also request a business license, so be prepared to provide that information as well.

Factory Certification

Factories are vital to the certification of a product, particularly in countries like India and China. However, if the organization manufactures out of multiple factory locations or offices associated with these factories, the one that **must** be listed is the physical location in which the product is produced, assembled, and the final label is awarded.

Critical Components

Any time the Critical Components list is altered in any way, the correlating CB report must be updated accordingly. This list should be as limited as possible while still encompassing all relevant information.

About Nemko

Starting the process to bring a product to market can seem overwhelming at first glance — that's why Nemko is available to assist! As a market leader in global market access, Nemko can assist your organization with entry into more than 150 countries' markets. With short lead times and personalized customer service, Nemko offers unparalleled expertise and knowledge across a wide variety of services including safety, electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) testing and certification solutions. Visit [our website](#) for more information.

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