

Using SEO To Capture Growth Opportunities In Emerging Markets via @sejournal, @motokohunt



With the increase in AI-generated search results and the growing popularity of answer engines, multinational businesses experience declining organic traffic and revenue from organic searches in more established markets.

It might be time to take a page from the investment market's playbook and focus resources to target emerging markets.

Market Opportunity

Market volatility in the U.S. and the potential for trade wars have many multinationals diversifying production away from China, resulting in analysts advocating a significant shift in capital investments into emerging markets.

Emerging markets and developing economies are expected to

drive global economic growth through 2035 at an average rate of 4.06% compared to 1.59% in advanced economies.

India is one of the fastest-growing major economies, with projections of 6.5% growth. It is closely followed by Southeast Asia's 5% growth.

India

- India represents one of the world's fastest-growing digital markets, with a 27% CAGR. India's ecommerce market is expected to reach \$350 billion by 2030. The market presents unique revenue opportunities due to its massive scale, rapid digital adoption, and evolving consumer behaviors.
- With over 750 million active internet users and over 600 million with smartphones, this mobile-first market favors app-based shopping (60%) rather than using websites.
- Strong marketplace presence in Amazon and Flipkart.

Southeast Asia (Particularly Indonesia, Vietnam, And The Philippines)

- Southeast Asia offers significant growth potential, with high ecommerce adoption rates representing a \$100 billion ecommerce market projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030.
- With 64% of internet users shopping online and purchasing \$73 billion in goods in 2023, Indonesia represents a significant addressable market of high-intent customers.
- By 2030, the region's median average age will be 30.5, with a growing middle class with disposable income.
- Mobile-first markets, with 80% of online purchases made using mobile phones.

Latin America (Brazil, Mexico, And Colombia)

- Latin America represents a compelling growth opportunity, with its digital market reaching \$57.7 million in 2023 and projected to grow at a 27.1% CAGR from 2023 to 2030.
- The region's rapid digital transformation post-Covid has created a strong ecommerce infrastructure, with 74.63% of internet users regularly purchasing online.
- A mobile-first region with over 85% of ecommerce via smartphones.
- The online marketplace Mercado Libre (Meli) controls over 25% of ecommerce transactions, representing 40 million monthly transactions, offering a solid entry point into the region.

Organic Traffic Diversification

Gartner has predicted a 25% decline in traditional search volume by 2026 to as much as 50% by 2028 as consumers embrace generative AI-powered search, including various AI agents.

Organic traffic diversification through SEO and AI optimization in less saturated markets will help mitigate traffic and revenue risks associated with algorithmic and click volatility in established markets.

As AI-powered search adoption grows globally, emerging markets offer a unique landscape for early movers to capitalize on.

In emerging markets like India, China, and Vietnam, generative AI adoption outpaces developed economies as countries' investments in digital transformation leverage AI to leapfrog traditional growth paths.

Businesses can tap into new audience segments and gain a competitive edge by focusing on SEO strategies tailored to

emerging markets and including AI agents.

Moreover, by establishing a strong presence in emerging markets early on, companies can build brand recognition and authority, which are increasingly important factors in organic search engine rankings.

First-Mover Advantage

All companies are wrestling with leveraging AI-driven search and new platforms, and globally focused CMOs cannot do this in a vacuum, only for mature markets but for all markets simultaneously.

Making AI optimization a global initiative creates a significant opportunity for multinationals to benefit from first-mover advantages in emerging markets.

1. **Establishing Authority:** By being among the first to optimize for emerging search platforms and AI-driven search in new markets, CMOs can establish their brand representation as authorities in their respective industries.
2. **Capturing Market Share:** Early adoption of AI optimization and advanced SEO strategies in emerging markets allows CMOs to capture a larger share of the search landscape before competitors enter the space.
3. **Building Brand Recognition:** As search engines increasingly favor recognized brands, early in the market can help CMOs build strong brand recognition, translating into higher search rankings and increased visibility.

By focusing on SEO to capture growth opportunities in emerging markets, CMOs can drive significant revenue growth and establish a strong presence before competitors.

This approach aligns with the evolving role of CMOs, who are

increasingly expected to focus on revenue growth and collaborate across departments and markets to drive business success.

Resource Allocation & Budget Planning

To capture this opportunity, businesses need to think globally and refactor their search marketing budgets, strategies, and programs to be more globally focused.

This will require a shift in the size and types of investments in talent, tools, and research to support the following key areas:

- **Product Insights:** Identify products and solutions that can be adapted and aligned to the needs and wants of local market consumers.
- **Local Language Optimization:** It is critical to localize your content as 73% want reviews in their local language, and 40% will not buy from websites not in their local language.
- **Mobile-First SEO:** In emerging markets, smartphones dominate internet access and purchases, making mobile-first websites and optimizing for mobile commerce critical for success.
- **AI Optimization:** Expertise is needed to create and refactor content and optimize their web infrastructures for AI results, leveraging emerging platforms like ChatGPT, Perplexity, or AI-enhanced region-specific search engines and marketplaces, gaining a competitive edge in these markets.
- **International & Technical SEO:** Expertise and collaboration will be essential for implementing a team to manage international SEO architecture.
- **Regional And Local Consultants:** Local experts will be a great addition to your team for local market nuances,

regional search behaviors, localization, and link building.

The Strategic Imperative For CMOs

For forward-thinking multinational CMOs, the shift toward AI-driven search should not be viewed as a threat but as a strategic inflection point.

The traditional search landscape is evolving, and emerging markets present a unique opportunity to future-proof SEO efforts while driving long-term business growth.

Companies that proactively invest in SEO and AI optimization in high-growth regions will position themselves ahead of competitors who hesitate to expand beyond their core markets.

The digital transformation unfolding in emerging economies creates an environment where early movers can establish dominance, capture market share, and future-proof their search visibility.

This is not just an SEO initiative – it's a strategic business imperative.

As AI continues reshaping search behaviors, those who recognize and act on the potential of emerging markets today will reap the rewards of sustained digital growth tomorrow.

By allocating resources to SEO in these regions, CMOs can help their organizations mitigate risks associated with declining search volumes in traditional markets while building new revenue streams in markets poised for explosive digital adoption.

Now is the time to pivot, invest, and lead the charge in capturing the next wave of organic search-driven growth.

More Resources:

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