What to get right before launching a global business



Taking your brand to an international stage is exciting. You reach untapped audiences and expose your brand, product and services to a global market!

But with every great opportunity come challenges, and a global presence means time and resources must be dedicated to understanding new buying habits, laws, and, of course, online behaviors.

Today, search results are more and more personalized, and they vary by country, even if browsers, devices and search terms remain the same. With the search engines constantly changing and evolving, what happens when you add the international component to your website?

Before you kick off a global campaign, it’s important to develop a marketing strategy with a local audience in mind. Consider the following four points on how to best engage your target audience, bridge cultural differences and successfully promote your brand globally.

Become familiar with regional laws & regulations

When you market to a global audience, your brand should be aware of all regional regulations on specific products, advertising and sales tactics. A thorough understanding of tax, customs and corporate laws is essential, as these laws can be decisive factors in determining if the expansion is worth the cost.

In many regions, advertising specific products is subject to approval by the government or various governing bodies. For example, in many countries, pharmaceutical ads must be approved by health bureaus.

In the United States, competition is encouraged, but there are very strict principles in place for competitive messaging. Wireless providers will often describe themselves as having the best service and coverage across the states. Due to the misleading sales tactics, this isn't common or even permissible in other countries.

Offering a sale or sweepstakes? There is a high likelihood it is different across borders. Make sure your sales and promotions tactics don't conflict with the nation's laws before running them. Same goes for your actual product line. When you're selling products to an international audience, those products are subject to developmental regulations concerning safety, materials, performance and sizing.

Create a global-friendly website

There are a few steps to properly optimize your site design for ultimate flexibility for global visitation. There are several considerations when developing an international website, but these few considerations are imperative:

- **On-page copy.** Your web design needs to flow well to accommodate machine translation. Test and make adjustments as needed, ensuring a language barrier doesn't cause a loss in conversions.
- **Page speed.** The speed of loading and navigating your site is very important. It becomes even more essential when reaching a global audience. Instead of serving your site from one location, you have to improve page speeds by offering it from the server nearest your visitors.
- **Design elements.** Research the perception of colors and symbols within your target audience and adapt as needed.

Also be sure to adjust any icons, graphics or logos for proper language use.

- **Currency.** If you’re an e-commerce brand offering international shipping, make sure you enable users to convert their purchases into their own currency. Give users the option, and make the process as easy as possible for them.

Customize SEO strategies

Taking your search engine marketing strategies international is a mixture of the right search engines, understanding keywords and localizing your content.

Discover which search engines are used in the markets you’re going to target. In the United States, we know Google, Bing and Yahoo to be the top search engines. Globally, however, this is very different. Often, other countries use more localized search engines, as English-language based search engines do not always work as well for niche, cultural content.

It’s important to work with native speakers with expertise in search marketing to develop content and optimize your website. This local connection will allow you to discover the best native keywords that should be associated with your site and its corresponding content. Don’t serve second-rate content to your international audiences on your website or through social media; localize your messaging for each market you serve.



Understand new cultures

When you’re looking to expand globally, it is important to become familiar with the local audience. Consider working alongside a local professional. The hands-on experience will

take you farther than reading books and reports. By getting to know other cultures and respecting their customs, you will have an easier time expanding your message globally.

Before you understand a new culture, it is crucial to improve cross-cultural competency and understand the cultural or operational barrier to marketing success. Having your content and marketing message translated is a good start, but having translated content in place is not enough.

Understanding the culture and its norms can have a significant impact on the perception an audience has of your brand.

Final thoughts

When expanding your business into global markets, your goal is to broaden your exposure and make it easy for an international audience to find your website. By understanding new cultures and tweaking your search engine marketing, site design and social media outreach, you will pave the way to successful international marketing.

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