



CREATE AN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING PLAN

A Guide to Creating an International Marketing Plan

Export Marketing

The goal of marketing is not just to get a good deal but to make others sit up and take notice as you add credible partners to your client list. Before plunging into a market, it's important to have specific targets in mind. Customer acquisition, customer retention and market research are valid objectives for your marketing program.

Research your Target market

Remember, you can only be realistic about what you can achieve by researching your target market. Similarly, locking down your key value proposition is critical to your strategic marketing plan.

Bear in mind the nature of your offer may be your most powerful marketing tool, which is why clear messaging is critical. In a competitive sector, large companies may be motivated by fear that a rival could beat them to a new product or service. Use this to your advantage.

Strategies

Opinions differ on the outlay needed for a successful export marketing strategy but all agree that, without a thought-out strategy, a big spend is unlikely to get the desired return. A heavy round of advertising, with no clear objectives and unsupported by trade show activity, is an easy way to waste resources and a key opportunity. Public relations are often the most cost-effective way of gaining attention but require investment in time. Dedicating resources to the creation of relevant content, engaging with gate keepers (editors, event organizers etc), trade show participation and developing your online strategy are key to getting results.

Trade shows remain an important part of marketing. While the cost of participation can run into thousands of euros or US Dollars, one sale may more than justify it. Finding must-attend events can be a matter of trial-and-error and a good starting point is to review the previous year's show, asking whether the attendee list matches your target customers.

Tips

- **Assess your resources**

If you have a single export marketing manager you may be stretching your resources too thinly. Better to concentrate on markets that matter most or restructure responsibilities in your marketing team.

- **Focus on your website**

Your website can make you look good, if not better, than your international competitors. However, it requires management time and resources to accurately reflect your offer. Ensure it is smart phone friendly.

- **Promote yourself**

Word of mouth, networking at events and targeting key opinion leaders are powerful methods of enhancing your company's image and winning partners in a new market.

- **Find out where your customers hang out**



A credible presence on every social networking website is unrealistic. Use web analytics to get a clearer view of where your customers are talking about your sector and focus on that platform.

- **Work with your distributor**

Good partners can be your market intelligence, advising you on what works and where the opportunities lie. Develop your sales reviews, training, marketing plans and other commitments, in partnership with them.

- **Make presentations**

Addressing a conference can provide great exposure to your target audience, at minimal cost. Once you develop a track record, conference organisers will look to you as a reliable bet. However, using the opportunity to make an overt sales pitch for your products won't get you too many invites back.

- **Think niche**

If you require the services of a PR firm, investigate beyond the major international names.

- **Market yourself**

Identify the specialist publications for your sector and find out if they carry stories on new products or are interested in technical expertise articles from your company. A small advertisement may garner considerable coverage.

- **Think smart**

Develop a short video demo that can be shown on a smart phone or an iPad. A video that explains your business concept quickly will allow more time to talk business

- **Translate your promotional material**

Make sure your website, press releases, exhibition or brochure material are professionally translated and adjusted to local business culture – and double checked. Skimping on good photography is another no-no.

“Advertising has a role to play, especially when strategically used in tandem with PR, but can you really afford to blow the whole marketing budget on it? And if so – what do you do next month?”



BAHAMAS TRADE INFO



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