



## Getting Started

Marketing to international audiences requires tailoring your approach, strategy, and maybe even your solutions to accommodate differences in language, values, business cultures, communication preferences, etc.

However, the same overall strategy holds true whether marketing locally or internationally: thoroughly understand your audience. Research which countries' businesses need your product, then localize your strategy to best illustrate these needs.

Ultimately, treat global customers as you would treat your home-country clients, taking their specific needs, pain points, path to purchase, etc., into consideration.

## There's More to Going Global

Before diving into the details of building a global marketing strategy, ask yourself these questions.

**Is your business model flexible enough to adapt overseas?** Say you're marketing a cybersecurity solution. Will you only be selling the software or delivering services as well? If the former, is the potential market sophisticated enough to make your current SaaS business model work? If not, what changes do you need to make? What are the regulatory requirements that your solution needs to address? Can your development team have it ready in time for the launch?

**Will you face country-specific constraints?** Providers of EV charging platforms, for example, face smart charging regulations put in place to meet the challenges of over-strained power grids resulting from the drastic growth of EV use. In the UK, for example, EV chargers must have a certain level of smart functionality. Other countries, with a less-developed infrastructure, will pose other issues.

**How will customer behavior in your prospective market impact your product?** If you want to expand your ag-intel platform market beyond your current borders, the question is *where* are the strongest markets for your offering? Will your product thrive in more- or less-developed regions? *Where* do farmers have the necessary tech/digital knowledge or receive adequate corporate support to be able to derive value from your platform?

*Analyze who the best targets are* - Individual smallholder farmers or the global food and beverage companies who depend on them for their supply chains. Think about that the next time you open a chocolate bar...

**Which marketing channels work in the new marketing landscape?** If you're selling an indoor GPS technology to retailers, you'll need to research which media your target audiences frequent. While social media is essential for retailers, you'll want to know where social media is king or simply a "must have," while information and influence comes from analysts and trade journals.



**Who are your competitors?** By conducting a thorough competitive analysis, you'll learn when and how they penetrated the market, their market share, why people are adopting their offerings, and how they're addressing customer pain points. Discover competitors' weaknesses and which customer needs they're not meeting, so you can define your positioning and value proposition.

**What technology solutions are trending or needed?** Gain insights into technologies that businesses have recently installed or are looking into. You'll want your technology offering to be relevant to businesses in your targeted region. Does your solution make it easier for the clients in your new potential market to comply with new regulations? You'll want to be able to answer prospective clients' questions in every activity you conduct, from your content strategy to your sales initiatives. Consider regulations like CCPA and GDPR: while certain companies may find these irrelevant, others must take these into account or lose their livelihoods.

**What barriers do you anticipate?** The first thing that comes to mind, of course, is the language barrier. Avoid embarrassment by hiring a local agency to manage translation and localization of all marketing materials.

- *Next is legal barriers* - Ensure that everything is fair, square, and legal as far as hiring/firing/managing practices, as well as compliance with data protection, workers' rights, and security regulations. You don't want the local tax authorities to come knocking before a single sale is made.
- *Another is geographical/cultural barriers* - Aging-in-place technology can work in conservative markets like India or the Philippines where families still take care of elderly parents instead of placing them in senior facilities since most can't watch their elders constantly but want to be alerted to any possible negative events.
- Last, but far from least, are trade barriers like tariffs, quotas, and exchange controls on currency movement between countries. While foreign currency fluctuations and local banking regulations may not affect day-to-day operations, they have a major impact when you try to bring those international profits home.

## The Strategic Decision-making Process

Research the global marketing environment for factors that impact your marketing activities

- Internal factors - suppliers, customers, and financial resources
- External factors – technology, politics, standard business operating procedures
- What are the benefits and drawbacks to your brand?
- Which is/are the most feasible and profitable market/s to enter?
- How should you enter this market?
  - Consider export, licensing, franchising, joint ventures, and company ownership, among many others.



- Finally, decide on your international marketing strategy - the roadmap that guides your marketing efforts and includes budgets, goals, target audience, strategies and campaign tactics

## Eight Steps for Building an International Marketing Strategy

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### Step 1 - Do due diligence

Conduct complete and thorough market research to learn not just which markets are ideal for your product or service, but also to acquire market share and competitive information, discover cultural dos and don'ts, and gather insights into which B2B or technology solutions are trending.

All these will help you tailor your messaging and communicate better with prospects.

### Step 2 - Build or hire your international marketing team

Choose team members who are familiar with your targeted foreign market and are sensitive to their concerns. From online marketers to GEO specialists, from database experts to marketing technology pros, choose those who live and breathe customer-centricity, global scalability, and agility. Moreover, don't overlook competent local teams; their input in strategic decision making is invaluable.

### Step 3 - Thoroughly understand your market

You not only have to literally and figuratively speak your prospective clients' language, but you also must understand their business values, corporate culture, management practices, and decision-making processes.

Plus, don't forget info such as time zones, fiscal year, industry segment, preferred channels, digitization level, pain points, and barriers to purchase.

### Step 4 - Craft your marketing plan

If you've determined that there's enough demand for your solution at your desired price point, identify your company's goals to see how they fit into the local landscape. Build your ideal customer profiles and customer personas and see how your product's value proposition and strengths address their needs and pain points and consider your competitors' positioning.

### Step 5 - Determine your international marketing mix

Influence potential customers' purchasing decisions by strategically deploying product, price, place, and promotion to maintain focus to replace "luck" with a carefully considered and calculated marketing strategy. After all, "luck" is where preparation meets opportunity.



### Step 6 - Create your digital marketing plan

Define marketing goals you want to achieve within a given time frame to reach your business objectives. This includes content marketing, email marketing, mobile marketing, paid search, reputation marketing, conference appearances, inbound marketing, GEO/AEO/SEO, social media marketing, video marketing, web analytics, webinars, and advertising: marketing tactics that help engage your target audience and can be tested and quickly modified to see what works and what doesn't.

### Step 7 - Translate your brand message into the local context

Remember that what works in your home region may not work elsewhere. Customize your brand message to the new market. This way, you can better connect with prospective customers. Localize your messaging, perhaps referencing popular cultural experiences or events to reflect their desires and pain points and be much more personalized.

### Step 8 - Build a local presence

This means not just hiring and getting the local influencers, managers, and salespeople on your side. Ensure that the communities that now host you share in your success via nonprofit partnerships, charity, volunteerism, and other activities that help strengthen the local market, improve the business climate, and give back to the community in which you're now operating.

## Now, Just Do It

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Building an international marketing strategy can be a daunting challenge - in terms of resources, expertise, and the sheer complexity of working in and with the unknown.

If you're a startup or SMB who wants to expand beyond your borders, it makes sense to hire marketing experts with experience in foreign markets.

K2 is an American-staffed marketing communications agency with 20+ years of broad experience in the global business community. Connect with us to take advantage of our team's more than 100 years of combined experience. We've shepherded tech companies to establish credibility, expand sales, establish key members of the C-suite as influencers, and successful buyouts. Let our experience in international markets work for you.



## Step-by-Step Guide to International Marketing Strategy



### About K2 Global Communications

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K2 Global Communications is a premier American-run, boutique B-to-B public relations, marketing, and customer and internal communications company. We communicate *your* value using highly targeted account-based marketing combined with niche-focused inbound & content marketing, PR, and social media, delivering targeted, clear, and persistent communications to establish and reinforce your position of trust and authority, directly driving growth.

• Communications strategy	• PR outreach
• Messaging & persona development	• Analyst relations
• Inbound & content marketing	• Social media
• GEO/AEO-focused blogs, white papers, and thought leadership content	• Internal communications consulting
• Award & speaking applications	• HubSpot management
• Trade show support	• Content - web, press releases, articles, brochures, data sheets, etc.