

motionpoint

Your Brand Across Borders

Learn how to build a solid foundation for your global marketing strategy.



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Introduction

Expanding your brand into international markets takes a lot of work—you must research your target markets, develop localized strategies and much more.

Successfully establishing brand presence and credibility in new markets often requires two key components:

- 1 Understanding the market
- 2 Researching the customer

Each requires a clear strategy, and a cohesive vision to successfully implement them.

1 Understand the Market

With the Internet making it easier than ever to sell across borders, savvy brands are expanding into new global markets. But generating significant international growth takes more than just showing up.

The brands that do best in new markets are meeting customer needs better than their competitors. How? It starts with research. Brands that study new markets and get to know their customers are better positioned to set strategies that drive growth.

Let's take a closer look at what works.





CLOSELY EXAMINE MARKET DATA FOR INSIGHTS

Many businesses approach brand expansion as if it's a simple matter of translating existing slogans and tweaking ad campaign imagery. But converting prospects into loyal customers doesn't happen by accident.

Research consistently shows that today's customers want more than effective products and services—they want *connection*. They want to be understood.

Brands that bridge this vital connection between what they offer and how they make customers *feel about what they offer* can win big globally. To build that bridge, successful companies study the markets they're seeking to enter. They analyze what customers in a given market actually want and respond to—and what turns them away.

And then they use the insights to set clear, measurable strategies.



MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON DATA

Many companies make decisions based on past strategies, closely-held beliefs about the brand, assumptions about customers, and even emotions. But savvy brands ground their marketing strategies in current, verified data.

There are numerous benefits to performing thorough, ongoing market research and using the results to drive strategies and inform pivots. This research:

- ✓ Suggests areas where brands should focus efforts
- ✓ Helps marketers develop talk tracks and battle cards against competitors
- ✓ Guides the allocation of resources
- ✓ Reveals how to address your product in-market



ALIGN EFFORTS BETWEEN MARKETING AND SALES

Of course, brand strategies produce better results when all teams are making a coordinated effort—for instance, when marketing and sales divisions are working together to set up a recipe for success.

As brands seek insights into new markets, it's important to go beyond sending a local sales team to work. To complete the picture, deploy the marketing team to build a foundation that equips salespeople to convert leads.

To create in-market strategies that drive growth, marketing teams should analyze the market to determine the following:

1 IDEAL CUSTOMER PROFILES

- ▶ Create Ideal Customer Profiles (ICPs) for each specific market your brand is entering.
- ▶ Focus on how local customers behave, and what unique needs they have that other marketplaces may not.

2 MARKETING COLLATERAL

- ▶ Use market data to develop talk tracks, ads and other materials that sales teams can use to convert customers.

3 IN-DEPTH COMPETITIVE STUDIES

- ▶ Look for ways that your brand can stand out against the crowd.
- ▶ Remember, competitors you've already faced in one market may use different strategies in different markets, requiring you to adapt to counter them.
- ▶ Pay attention to new players, too. Each new market may have competitors you've never faced before.

4 EXISTING IN-MARKET EXPECTATIONS

- ▶ Consider the education the market already has received regarding your niche. What do they expect from your products/services?

5 PRODUCT ANALYSIS

- ▶ Consider your current offerings, especially as they relate to new markets.
- ▶ Look for ways to address perceived weaknesses and turn strengths into hooks that draw in customers.



WHAT TO ASK

As you enter new markets, evaluate the following areas to gather real-world data and develop actionable market insights:

COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

- ▶ How are competitors marketing products/services to this market?
- ▶ What language and tone do they use to speak to their clients?
- ▶ What is their strategy in-market?
- ▶ How does their strategy differ from other markets they're in? How is it the same?

IN-MARKET BUZZ

- ▶ How is the culture, the media and other industries reacting to your product?
- ▶ How have similar products been received?

ASSESS THE DEMAND

- ▶ How are your products/services likely to perform?

EVALUATE BRAND IDENTITY

- ▶ What are the strengths and weaknesses of your brand identity in this new market?
- ▶ How can you emphasize strengths, and support—or pivot—weaknesses?



FURTHER THOUGHTS

As you move forward in your market research, keep in mind a fluid approach is best. Keep gathering data, and shifting strategies as needed.

Also understand that B2B marketing research tends to be more complex than B2C. To address this issue, take a multifaceted approach that addresses the challenges of gathering data from B2B buyers.

And finally, consider a variety of sources—primary, secondary and tertiary—as you gather information and make decisions.

Most importantly, you must use data to understand your customer.

2 Research Your Customer

Today's customers—whether B2B or B2C—increasingly prefer to buy from companies that understand them. So when your business is looking to grow its customer base or expand into new markets, your brand's messaging must be nuanced and localized.

The key to a localized approach is found in a three-word mantra: **Know your customer.** It's a simple idea, yet takes a well-planned strategy, based on real data, to execute successfully. Brands that do so stand to gain significant market share.

What data should you look for? And how can you use it to direct your marketing? Here's the need-to-know strategy to get you started.



HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR TARGET MARKETPLACE

Each local market has its own flavor that brands can leverage to create relevant messaging and campaigns. Learn these nuances. Not knowing a market's laws, preferences and cultural expectations can impede your marketing success, and put your brand reputation at risk.

To gain a thorough understanding of your target market, research several key areas, including:

LOCAL CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES

Find out how local customers prefer to communicate, what beliefs and values they hold, and what they consider appealing or offensive.

REGIONAL DISTINCTIONS

Market traits can vary by region, not just country. Customers in Africa, for example, are often more mobile-first than customers in the U.S.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Brands doing business in Europe must comply with GDPR privacy laws, for example, while those marketing in Quebec must comply with French-language marketing regulations.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

The way customers connect with your brand may be similar from market to market or very different. Consider questions such as:

- ▶ Does your product solve the exact same need in every market? Or does it solve different problems in different markets?
- ▶ What unique concerns do local customers have?
- ▶ What technologies do customers use as they search online?
- ▶ What social media channels do they use most often?

Understanding these differentiators can equip your brand to make insightful decisions about all your outbound marketing strategies—from high-level sales approaches and strategies to granular details like the design of your website and what tone to use in email campaigns and social media.

GAIN INSIGHTS FROM EXISTING CUSTOMERS, TOO

While a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work in today's international marketplace, you don't have to completely reinvent the wheel. Your existing customers can provide valuable insights into how your product solves their pain points and what keeps them connected to your brand.

To gain an understanding of how your customers are really behaving, mine website analytics data and customer feedback for your:



Flagship website



Social media channels



Subsidiary or localized websites



Anything else relevant to your marketing effort



Blogs and other web-based content

Old-school methods such as focus groups, customer audits and concept testing are useful—but don't neglect today's technology tools and techniques like Google Analytics, Buzzsumo and others.

Research your options and choose the approach that best fits your team, bandwidth and budget. And then test customer responses with low-budget, high-impact tactics like PPC to maximize results at a reasonable cost.

ASSUME NOTHING, RESEARCH EVERYTHING

When entering new markets, many businesses make the critical error of assuming that strategies and tactics they've used in their flagship market will work everywhere. But no two markets are exactly alike. Local laws and regulations, cultural expectations, and regional preferences vary—often greatly.

One size simply doesn't fit all in global markets.

A failure to understand and respond to local differences can lead to pitfalls that damage your bottom line—such as regulatory fines, cultural offenses, a sense among locals that you don't speak their language (literally or figuratively), and poor performance in online searches.

Conclusion

Each of these key components supports the others: understanding your market and researching your ideal customer will help you formulate a clear brand identity; choosing the customers you want to reach and the brand identity you want to broadcast will help you understand how to approach the market; and formulating the right brand identity for the market will help you understand which customers you want to target.

Don't be intimidated by new markets. Focusing on each of these components in turn will allow you to forge your brand's path with confidence and success.

About MotionPoint

MotionPoint solves the operational complexity and cost of website localization. Unlike all other approaches, our technology and turn-key solution are built specifically for this purpose.

We translate, deploy, and operate multilingual websites, optimizing the customer experience across all channels.



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