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B2B GUIDE:

Crafting a Focused International Go-to-Market Strategy

As more nations worldwide begin to modernize, there is a near-limitless number of opportunities for brands that are well-placed to take advantage of the gaps in products and services that this rapid growth can create.

- Forbes Business Council

Introduction: Why tailor your international go-to-market strategy?

We live in a crowded digital world, making it difficult to lift your message above the noise. That's especially true if you plan to expand internationally, as global teams also face nuanced cultural differences, norms, and expectations. And the global marketplace is only getting more congested – nearly 80 percent of international marketers say generating more leads is their top priority, according to research from eMarketer.

A strong go-to-market strategy acts as an international navigation system with a clear direction, routing your sales team through the traffic and steering your brand message to the right audience.

But expanding your business into a new country is not as simple as replicating what worked somewhere else. A successful international go-to-market strategy will be tailored to each country being served. If going global fits your business goals, you must consider several factors in your international sales and marketing approach.

How to Build a Go-to-Market Strategy

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Steps to develop your international go-to-market strategy

Expanding a business into global markets is a substantial undertaking. While it's true that every new sales and marketing venture deserves a level of due diligence, the nuances of international communications demand special attention.

Market research and analysis

When planning for growth abroad, assess the markets you'll operate in and determine where your business fits on the playing field. Here are some areas to consider:

- **Market share evaluation:** What is the total potential market share for your product in the new territory? How much can you expect to displace from competitors? What is your revenue potential?
- **Buyer persona development:** Your buyer may not be the same across each region. What is your ideal customer profile (ICP) for this new audience? How will you apply your personas in this new market? Consider the decision-making structure and hierarchy in your target market.
- **Competitive positioning analysis:** Who are your primary competitors in this new market? They may differ by region or product. How do they position themselves in the market? Identify what your company brings to the table that is new or different.
- **Market conditions assessment:** Are there economic or cultural barriers to entry in these new markets? What nuances do they have that are the same or different from your current markets?
- **Budget planning:** What is needed to market, sell, and continue to develop your product or service in this new audience? This includes hiring domestic or international employees to support the expansion. What tax and legal regulations will you need to work within?

Customer Story: Global technology provider iProov took the guesswork out of finding new opportunities and allocating resources. With accurate data in hand, their revenue team drove more predictable, accelerated, and sustainable growth. [Read the story.]

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Marketing mix adjustments

Geographic differences can play an important role in how you engage with target audiences. Consider these factors as you plan your marketing approach:

- **Channel mix optimization:** What modifications should be made to your marketing mix for a new market? For example, in some countries, blogs and webinars are not viewed as reputable compared to analyst reports and customer testimonials. Are there local channels you can tap into?
- **Localization and translation:** Many regions in the world prefer to conduct business in a language other than English, which could make local marketing and sales content a key part of your strategy. A/B test and monitor performance to optimize your strategy and spending.
- **Brand perception:** Are you a known player in the target market? Are you stacked up against local competitors? What will help this new audience choose your product over these competitors? Consider a brand lift study to develop strategies for brand recognition and awareness in a new market.

4 Pillars of an International Marketing Strategy

Sales and support adaptations

Global considerations don't end once the deal is signed. Make sure to plan for the level of local sales and support the market expects to optimize the customer experience from start to finish:

- **Sales cycles:** Will you need a local sales team right away? What does your ramp-up plan look like? You can't expect to start selling everything in the first month. Prepare a plan that enables your sellers to expand in new markets and then expand and grow regional teams and revenue over time.
- **Customer success:** Sustainable revenue models extend to the entire customer journey. How will you approach customer success in this new market? What does the audience need to effectively use your product or service? Be sure to research cultural factors that may influence their product adoption.

Customer Story: The popular video conferencing platform Zoom grew revenue by 300 percent within the first year of using ZoomInfo. Now, 90 percent of Zoom salespeople rely on ZoomInfo to gain a depth and granularity that answers questions quickly and with minimal effort. Hear from Zoom.

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Technology to optimize international expansion

Successful leaders invest in technology to scale businesses with speed and efficiency. But technology itself isn't always the answer. The potential for platform bloat and resource exhaustion is real. Without a holistic plan in place, tech stacks can become inflated, eating up unnecessary resources, especially as you take your company global.

The goal is to find the right balance of tools and platforms that add value to your business objectives and optimize your processes. It's important to assess how your technological ecosystem can support a global GTM strategy, no matter where you are in your digital transformation and business journey.

Here are some of the foundational tools for a modern go-to-market operation:

- **CRM:** A customer relationship management solution is a standard sales and marketing tool. As you scale your business globally, upgrading to an Enterprise CRM system could be your next step. A few common tools include Salesforce, HubSpot, and Microsoft Dynamics.
- **MAP:** The evolution of the marketing automation platform has enabled marketers to automate the efficient delivery of localized, personalized content. Leading MAP brands include Marketo, Eloqua, and HubSpot.
- **Sales automation**: You want to enable sellers to spend less time updating records and more time connecting with your audience. Like a MAP, sales automation tools can create targeted campaigns infused with personalization, allowing sellers to scale yet stay personalized.
- **Team productivity:** Working globally and remotely means juggling multiple time zones, projects, and teams. A good project management tool can keep your teams collaborating, sharing files, conferencing, and communicating.
- **CMS:** A content management system is how teams edit, stage, and publish new information on your website. Consider vendors that can help you translate key pages into local languages for your global audiences. Common platforms include WordPress and Drupal.

- **Business intelligence:** Make sure you can access and analyze data from every platform you use. Important metrics include click-through rates and engagement, buyer intent data, firmographics, technographics, location, language, average deal size, and average sales cycle length.
- **Third-party data:** Bad data affects your bottom line. A static list of business data fails to keep up with the estimated 2-3 percent rate of data decay each month. To counter this decay, data orchestration platforms automate much of the previously manual tasks of enriching, cleansing, and unifying data records. Data orchestration makes it easier to maintain high data quality, coverage, and ensure privacy compliance.
- **Additional tools to support specific channel activities:**
    - Display ad platforms, such as Google Ads, to orchestrate ad campaigns, and engage and retarget key audiences.
    - Analytics platforms, such as Google Analytics or Adobe Analytics, to understand your web traffic and user behavior to improve the customer experience.
    - A means to produce and manage content, graphics, and webinars.
    - The ability to conduct and compare A/B testing.
    - A data segmentation solution with predictive modeling tools
    - SEO audit tool.
    - A social media management platform.

Customer Story: The UK-based Stone Group achieved an estimated 90 percent contact coverage within their CRM, gaining a clear view of their best-fit prospects. They now have the tools and technology to engage with their prospects in a more effective way. Read the story.

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Pitfalls to avoid when going global

Pitfall: Cultural differences impact sales and marketing in many ways. A common pitfall is to overlook these differences and assume you can replicate a successful strategy from one region to another.

What to Do: Leverage market research, industry insights, and trends to the fullest. Seek to gain a deep understanding of your persona, then go a layer deeper. Connect with your customer's needs and wants. Make sure you can define the key differentiators between you and your competition. Then, refresh your data often. Check-in with third-party data providers regularly, to help expand your total addressable market (TAM) and incorporate new records.

Pitfall: Another common pitfall is not reviewing campaigns after launch. Campaign performance varies depending on the timing, audience, product, and message.

What to Do: Review your activities and results to identify aspects that can be improved, changed, or optimized. Push the boundaries of what you can achieve. Consider new possibilities with your budget. Ask your vendors and partners for their input. Round out any blind spots.

Customer Story: To keep up with growing demand, LeanData's marketing team needed to increase the number of contacts and accounts in their database. With ZoomInfo, LeanData added 7,000 new accounts and 18,000 new names. See how.

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