

Marketing to a global audience: Four things you need to know

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Marketing is a complex business. There's a lot of psychology involved, since you have to craft offers and promotions to entice and intrigue. Beyond the offers, you've got to have a top quality product or service, backed by guarantees and great customer service. You also need to have the sales funnel built just the right way to nudge the conversion rate.

Getting marketing right takes time and effort. When you add the global aspect to it, marketing suddenly becomes even more complex because of the additional variables. Here's some guidance on how to set your global marketing campaigns up for success.

Launch a globally-appealing brand

Branding is critical no matter where you are marketing your services, but it can be trickier when you intend your brands to work on a global level. For instance, colour theory plays an important role, because people have associated thoughts and feelings with certain colours. To illustrate, what people may feel with colours in the U.S. may not necessarily be the same with someone in Japan.

For instance, in the U.S. [yellow](#) is associated with cowardice, but in Japan, it's associated with bravery. You'll definitely want to take time to research global meaning and cultural context, so you're consistent with your messaging across the board.



Consider symbol-based branding. Brands like Apple and Nike have gained global recognition with their symbols. Visually powerful symbols bypass the need to deal with translation from one language to another.

Focus on your brand story. At the core of every brand, no matter the niche, product, service, or audience, is the story. When the story is compelling, uniquely crafted, and consistently presented, it helps to build a brand people will remember and engage with. Go with a globally-appealing story, in order to expand your reach.

Optimise your infrastructure

Improving your website speed is important in marketing to a global audience. Thus, your IT infrastructure needs to be setup for maximum performance. Since you'll have traffic coming to your website from different parts of the world, you'll need to make sure you can reach them in the fastest time possible, regardless of location. Here, a content delivery network (CDN) will greatly benefit a business looking to serve a global audience.

Using a [CDN scales up your network topology](#), instantly providing you with global reach by hosting mirror versions of your website in multiple data centres across the world. Each of these regional data centres is responsible for communicating with users in its own vicinity, thus it cuts down on the round trip time and vastly improving page load times and website's responsiveness.

In addition, using a CDN helps you deal with an influx in traffic that may occur when you go from local to global. With CDN's, much of the content is being served from the provider's cache servers, instead of your host. This usually helps reduces your bandwidth consumption by 30% to 50%.

Localise your messaging as needed

Thinking global also means acting "local" especially when it comes to engaging with your customers on an individual basis. It's important to make sure everything supports the global market – or at least the countries you're working with. Your email marketing, social media marketing, CRM, and other automation tools should include multiple languages, and your payment solution should work with your target countries' local currencies.

Without localisation, you are not able to personalise campaigns, which can negatively affect the way your customer perceives you. You must be able to display pricing information in local currencies, email customers in their own time zone, and speak the same languages as theirs. Make sure that the platforms and tools you use are able to handle that work for you.

Respect laws and regulations

Internet marketing laws vary from country to country. Make sure you're familiar with the rules and regulations in all the areas you're promoting products and services in. If you're unsure, consult an attorney in the area.

For instance, South Africa has [three laws to regulate spam](#): the Electronics Communications and Transactions Act of 2002, the Consumer Protection Act of 2008, and the Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013. These laws state that anyone needs to be able to opt out of email communications at any time, and that users have a right to pre-emptively block direct marketing, which must be respected by marketers. There is a Do Not Contact Registry. The laws also place great limitations on the circumstances marketers can use personal information to make unsolicited marketing contact.

In the United States, The Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing or [CAN-SPAM Act of 2003](#) sets forth a set of rules. Subscribers must opt-in, and have the option to opt-out at any time. Opt-out requests must be processed within 10 business days. In addition, there must be accurate sender and subject information, proper adult

content labeling, an unsubscribe option, and a physical address, among other requirements.

In addition to federal laws, each State also has its own laws, many of which are related to telemarketing and advertising via other media, such as text messaging.

In other countries, laws may vary, so craft a marketing strategy that meets the requirements of all countries you operate in. Generally speaking, as long as consumers are opting in to receive communication from you, you're okay. You must also honour the consumer's wish if they choose to opt-out at any time.

Regardless of what the laws and regulations require of marketers, it's important to follow the guidelines exactly. There are potentially steep penalties for failing to abide by the law. Consumers are able to report anyone who sends unsolicited marketing communications.

Conclusion

Your global marketing campaigns can be just as successful as your regional and national campaigns, if you focus on creating an omni-channel experience with the right branding, logistics, and infrastructure. Remember, scaling on a global level means you need to address the needs of users on a local level. This includes branding, messaging, infrastructure improvements, and following the local rules and regulations.

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