

GETTING CLIENTS OVERSEAS, BY ADVERTISING: SEA, SMA and Other Acquisition Channels

SILVIA CARTER

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[The Digital Exporter Series](#) consists of seven independent books with more than 100 international case studies, each sharing the best tools, actionable solutions, and step-by-step explanations on how to sell online across channels and borders.

- Book 1 – [STARTING THE GLOBAL DIGITAL JOURNEY: How to create the best international web strategy.](#)
- Book 2 – [GETTING CLIENTS OVERSEAS, ORGANICALLY: How to set up local, international & global SEO.](#)
- Book 3 – [GETTING CLIENTS OVERSEAS, BY ADVERTISING: SEA, SMA and other acquisition channels.](#)
- Book 4 – [SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY: How to set up & manage a cross-border e-commerce.](#)
- Book 5 – [SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY: How to sell on local & international marketplaces.](#)
- Book 6 – [DEVELOPING A STRONG INTERNATIONAL BRAND: Multilingual social media & social selling.](#)
- Book 7 – [DEVELOPING A STRONG INTERNATIONAL BRAND: Multilingual inbound marketing & marketing automation.](#)

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...

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The Author

Silvia Carter has been active in international multichannel sales for more than 20 years. She has developed her career in cross-border trade and global digital marketing for both consumer products and B2B sectors.

As an entrepreneur with a dual expertise in export development and online sales, she founded and manages ToWebOrNotToWeb, a service provider specialized in multichannel export growth to help businesses increase sales and brand awareness in several countries, online and beyond.

In her work as an author, Silvia contributed to *Le marketing des start-ups* by Véronique Hermann-Flory (Eyrolles, 2017) and is a co-author with Jean-Éric Pelet of *User Experience in Web 2.0 Technologies and Its Impact on Universities and Businesses* (IGI Global, 2020). She is also the author of *Développer son business à l'international grâce au webmarketing* (Eyrolles, 2019), which inspired The Digital Exporter Series.

Silvia holds an Executive MBA from HEC Paris, where she is the pro-bono chair of the Alumni Advanced Technologies Club, and a degree in web development and digital strategy from the Digital Campus Paris. She also teaches courses in the field of global web marketing at the EMLV Business School and at ISCOM in Paris. Silvia decided to start teaching, in addition to her other professional activities, to share her expertise and develop new professions in digital export management.

Introduction

Marco Polo, Amerigo Vespucci and Christopher Columbus are just a few examples, among so many others, of international Italian spirits It is a fact that Italians are particularly 'international'. But I have had to learn how to become so: when I was young, I was marked by a total phobia of German and a deep allergy to other languages, all combined with a real aversion for any foreign cultural universe. Too complicated! Why bother when I had everything I needed near my home in Italy and in Italian?

Until the day when my home filled up with travelers: almost everyone around me spent time traveling, for work, study, holidays. So much so that remaining Italo-Italian became a handicap. So, there I was, launched for an Erasmus year at Trinity College in Dublin with an English vocabulary of ten words! Since then, my international journey has also become part of my work. First as an international marketing manager, then as an export and international sales director. As an expatriate in France, I started dealing with all the internet-related issues on the international scale. That was in the late 2000s when the internet was not as 'easy' as it is now. The level of confusion was the normal thing almost everywhere. Fed up with that confusion, I wanted to understand how the internet worked technically and to learn the best practices. That is why I decided to take a master's degree in web marketing in 2012 and, after that, to create ToWebOrNotToWeb. Today, I help companies sell internationally online on the several digital channels that the internet offers.

Nowadays more and more affordable and simple digital tools are available for entering foreign markets in a way that would have been unthinkable ten years ago. The recent 'Future of Business Survey' carried out by Facebook, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank about companies active on the internet, shows that two out of three exporting companies achieve more than half of their international turnover through the web and that 45% of them achieve even more than 75% of their

international turnover. The OECD also argues that, since these online tools are available to any type of business around the world, even microenterprises can now achieve significant business overseas¹.

That was the situation before the Covid-19 crisis. The coronavirus brought lockdowns, social distancing and an unprecedented drop in traditional business. That forced people to enter a new digital age where the web, the social networks and all the other digital applications are the key tools they can use to have an almost normal life. Digital technologies are therefore essential, now more than ever, to preserve a business as well as to develop it in new markets. Companies that are behind with these digital technologies will risk losing their business at home and abroad. And many of them are still struggling to understand how to use these digital technologies on the international scale. Consider the case of a French business that wants to develop its online sales in Germany. It can choose among different options for the website domain to use, such as www.example.de, or www.example.com/de, or de.example.com, or www.example.fr/de, or fr.example.com/de. However, each one of these options will reach a different number of people depending on the different digital technologies applied to the website, as you can see in the following table.

¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017), https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/entrepreneurship-at-a-glance_22266941.

Domain type & SEO techniques	The target that search engines understand	Segment	Number of people that the website can reach
www.example.de	Country = Germany	German people in Germany	79,127,551
www.example.com/de + geolocalisation & hreflang	Country = Germany Language = German	German people in Germany	79,127,551
www.example.com/de + hreflang	Language = German	German-speaking people around the world	92,304,792
de.example.com + geolocalisation & hreflang	Country = Germany Language = German	German people in Germany	79,127,551
www.example.fr/de	Country = France Language = German	German people in France	130,000*
fr.example.com/de	Country = France Language = German	German people in France	130,000*

Why digital technologies are important².

Helping those companies is critical and it is the purpose of these books. The Digital Exporter Series brings immediate actionable solutions on how to grow a B2B, B2C and C2C online business and on how to do that internationally. It consists of seven books, each on a different topic, with more than 100 case studies that describe step-by-step all the web tools and techniques for cross-border digital business.

The idea for The Digital Exporter Series came from my French book, *Développer son business à l'international grâce au webmarketing*, which was published by Eyrolles in France at the end of 2019. I wrote that book mainly for French-speaking digital exporters. Although inspired by it, this new series is very different from the French book. It is not just a simple translation from French into English: it is a full adaptation to the digital environments around the world. And, for that reason, The Digital Exporter Series, instead of being one book, is seven independent books, each on a different topic.

[The Digital Exporter Series](#) is for all entrepreneurs that want to start or accelerate their cross-border online business in the most effective way at the lowest risk during the Covid-19 crisis and beyond.

That's also what motivates me in my professional life: contributing to value creation around the world by increasing the number of companies selling online beyond their national borders with the

² The sources of the numbers followed by * are

[&](https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats18.htm#german)

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communaut%C3%A9_allemande_en_France.](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communaut%C3%A9_allemande_en_France)

innovative digital tools that are available today. Because, for everyone and everywhere, growing export sales is much easier nowadays, thanks to digital tools used the right way. So, for all entrepreneurs around the world, I have a piece of advice: don't miss the train!

P.S.: I am always fascinated by the experiences of international business expansion and would love to read yours if you want to share them with me here: silvia.carter@towebornottoweb.com.

Disclaimer

It took me several months to research and write The Digital Exporter Series, even a bit longer than originally planned.

During the same time, the internet and the web ecosystems did not stop. That might have produced some discrepancies between what I wrote and what you can find on the web.

While I will do my best to update the content of The Digital Exporter Series as regularly as possible, I am not able to keep it perfectly updated all the time.

If you find something that should be changed or added or if you cannot find something specific in The Digital Exporter Series, contact me at silvia.carter@towebornottoweb.com, and I'll be happy to help you out.

All the companies that I have mentioned as examples or as tools or for other reasons relevant to the purpose of The Digital Exporter Series are totally independent from my work. They do not have any direct or indirect interest in The Digital Exporter Series, nor do I in their business.

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use of, or reliance on, any information contained in The Digital Exporter Series is solely at your own risk. Accordingly, before you take any action based on such information, I encourage you to consult with a qualified lawyer in the relevant jurisdiction.

SILVIA CARTER

GETTING CLIENTS OVERSEAS, BY ADVERTISING: SEA, SMA and Other Acquisition Channels

Both SEO & SEA are key entry points for your digital export project: they allow internet users to find your business and get in touch with you from anywhere in the world.

But, unlike SEO, which is free, SEA requires an additional budget to finance each advertising action. This book explains the main concepts of online advertising and paid levers that you can use for your digital export development.

Book 3



CHAPTER 1

THE KEY CONCEPTS OF INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL ADVERTISING

“

Global advertising is expected to grow 5.8% in 2021, reaching almost \$580 billion across 59 markets, a significant increase, although not enough to recover the drop of 8.8% in 2020. But the key point is that companies are spending almost 60% of their budgets on digital advertising³, with a growth rate of more than 10%, and less than 30% on traditional TV, which had a growth rate of only 1.7%, after a drop of 13.6% in 2020! The preferred channels for digital advertising are social media (18%), search engines (11%) and video (10.8%)⁴. Here is an overview to help you understand the main levers you can use for your digital export project.

FREE AND PAID WEB MARKETING

The scope of web marketing involves a lot of different digital tools, which can be classified into two main categories:

- **Organic**, also referred to as free: they allow you to achieve your goals on the internet without spending money. For example, the SEO work you do to get your website to rank well on google.co.uk does not generate additional costs beyond the time spent or the remuneration of a web agency if you do not have the technical skills to do it in-house.
- **Paid**: this is digital advertisement. Thanks to it, you can achieve the same objectives as you would with organic tools, but you need to spend an advertising budget in addition to your time or the remuneration of a web agency, again if you do not have the technical skills to do it in-house. For example, if you run a Google Ads⁵ campaign to get your website to rank in the first positions on the search engine results pages (SERPs) of google.co.uk, you have the additional costs associated with paying the clicks on the keywords used for the campaign.

For a more or less limited budget, paid levers offer several advantages on the international scale, from which any type of business, from any sector, and from any country, can benefit:

- They allow you to reach a very large and qualified audience more quickly in several geographical areas.
- They help you better and faster understand your foreign prospects' behavior, which is an important piece of information for making sure your value proposition is adapted to local expectations.
- They allow you to monitor the performance and the ROI of each digital action in each market at any time, which is impossible with offline marketing actions.

³ Brad Adgate, 'Ad Agency Forecast: Expect The Advertising Market To Rebound In 2021', *Forbes*, 14 December 2020,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2020/12/14/ad-agency-forecast-expect-the-advertising-market-to-rebound-in-2021>.

⁴ Global Ad Spend Forecasts, Dentsu, January 2021,

https://www.dentsu.com/us/en/reports/global_ad_spend_forecasts_2021.pdf.

⁵ Formerly AdWords.

- They can help you effectively differentiate your brand and your business from the local competition.

While it is quite possible to use only free tools, or only paid tools, using them together increases synergies that can accelerate the development of your digital export sales.

Internationally, you should pay special attention to these three points:

- 1) The choice of the most relevant tools in your foreign target country.
- 2) The consistency between the messages you send through the free tools, the paid tools, your home-country website, and your international websites.
- 3) The quality and relevance of the multilingual messages you send to your prospective and current clients.

**Total Media Ad Spending Worldwide, by Region,
2017-2022**
billions and % change

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total media ad spending						
North America	\$218.16	\$232.48	\$248.09	\$263.53	\$276.12	\$289.04
Asia-Pacific	\$190.05	\$210.43	\$232.14	\$253.87	\$274.34	\$293.67
Western Europe	\$101.68	\$104.57	\$107.35	\$109.82	\$112.22	\$114.76
Latin America	\$35.01	\$38.04	\$40.05	\$41.61	\$43.07	\$44.35
Middle East & Africa	\$23.77	\$24.91	\$25.99	\$27.02	\$28.05	\$29.03
Central & Eastern Europe	\$16.77	\$18.19	\$19.32	\$20.36	\$21.29	\$22.40
Worldwide	\$585.45	\$628.63	\$672.94	\$716.21	\$755.09	\$793.25
Total media ad spending growth (% change)						
Asia-Pacific	11.4%	10.7%	10.3%	9.4%	8.1%	7.0%
Latin America	8.7%	8.7%	5.3%	3.9%	3.5%	3.0%
Central & Eastern Europe	7.0%	8.5%	6.2%	5.4%	4.6%	5.2%
North America	7.2%	6.6%	6.7%	6.2%	4.8%	4.7%
Middle East & Africa	4.6%	4.8%	4.3%	4.0%	3.8%	3.5%
Western Europe	2.8%	2.8%	2.7%	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%
Worldwide	7.7%	7.4%	7.0%	6.4%	5.4%	5.1%

Note: includes digital (desktop/laptop, mobile and other internet-connected devices), directories, magazines, newspapers, out-of-home, radio and TV
Source: eMarketer, March 2018

236090

www.emarketer.com

Figure 1: global ad spending by region, 2018 forecast.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In the digital age, print and TV advertising have started to decline, while digital advertising is opening the doors to a global audience, which is a gold mine for your digital export business.
- Internationally, the sensitive points to watch out for are:
 - 1) The choice of truly relevant tools in your foreign target country.
 - 2) The consistency of your messages throughout the free tools, the paid tools, your home-country website, and your international websites.
 - 3) The quality and relevance of your multilingual messages for your prospective and current clients.

CHAPTER 2

MANAGING THE SIX 'Ss' ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE

“

Beyond SEO (Search Engine Optimization), there are other 'Ss' that you need to manage in web marketing: SEA, SEM, SMO, SMA, and SMM, where the 'S' does not always have the same meaning of 'search'.

Let's take a look at what is behind these terms and at how to identify the most useful 'S' for your digital export development.

SEO, SEA, SEM, SMO, SMA, SMM: DEFINITIONS

If you have read [book 1 of The Digital Exporter Series, Starting the global digital journey: how to create the best international web strategy](#), you are probably familiar with the definition of international web marketing. But web marketing has several different domains. The key ones are:

- **SEO, for search engine optimization:** these are all the free techniques to use for making your international website rank high in the SERPs⁶ of the search engines used by your foreign prospective clients. [Book 2 of The Digital Exporter Series, Getting clients overseas, organically: how to set up local, international & global SEO](#), describes the best SEO techniques for your international website.
- **SEA, for search engine advertising:** this refers to paid advertisements made on any search engine around the world. SEA is, therefore, the practice of buying some digital space to show an ad dynamically in the SERP, such as when you run an ad on Google Ads, the former AdWords. These ads are shown on the SERPs but not just anywhere: they appear in the top three to eight positions of the SERPs, depending on the search engine, the country, and keyword bidding.

⁶ Search Engine Results Page

Figure 2: example of SEA on Search with Google Ads.

The digital space bought for the ad generally has a price per click, and it is billed per click⁷, which is why you often see the terms CPC, for cost per click, or PPC, for pay-per-click. Although primarily relevant to search engines, SEA nowadays has a broader meaning and it can refer to other forms of paid online advertising, such as banners, retargeting, etc.

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pay-per-click>.

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BY CHRISTOPHER MICHEL JAN 10, 2021

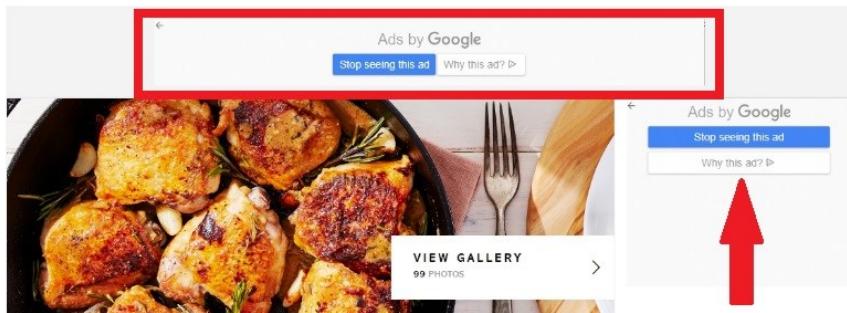


Figure 3: example of SEA on banners with Google Ads.

- **SEM, for search engine marketing:** this acronym stands for all SEO and SEA techniques altogether. In SEO and SEA, the letters 'SE' refer to the search engines, and that is not a coincidence: for both, the main objective is to increase the visibility of a website in the SERPs and, therefore, the chances for the website to be clicked and visited. The difference between the two is in the 'O' for optimization, meaning free, and the 'A' for advertising, meaning paid. Together, they form SEM.



TIP

Some people use the term SEM to define paid Search, SEA. But it is more accurate to use it to refer to all SEO and SEA actions on search engines, especially when communicating with international providers.

For the other three key domains of international web marketing, the ‘S’ is a different one. You are no longer in the ‘search’ environment but in the ‘social’ one, although the concepts are the same:

- **SMO, for social media optimization:** these techniques, like those of SEO, are free. They help you optimize your business performance on social media, whether it is a Facebook page, a Twitter account, a blog, etc., with the aim of acquiring and retaining internet users, prospects and customers.
- **SMA, for social media advertising:** this is like SEA. It includes all forms of advertising and promotion on social media, which can be of any type around the world.
- **SMM, for social media marketing:** as for SEM, this acronym corresponds to all SMO and SMA techniques.



CASE STUDY

Let's take a pragmatic example to illustrate the difference between SEO vs. SEA and SMO vs. SMA for a producer of red bikinis.

If France is your foreign target country, you might start by searching for ‘red bikini’ in French, ‘bikini rouge’, in google.fr: you will probably see that the first few lines in the SERPs are occupied by ads from Google Shopping, followed by fr.zaful.com and fr.shein.com, two Hong Kong e-commerce retailers selling around the world, including in France. Then, you will probably see laredoute.fr, missguidedfr.fr, amazon.fr, etc.

You can immediately spot the results of SEA not only by their first positions but also by the label ‘Ad’ in bold type. Results without this label are, therefore, those of SEO.

Now let's open Facebook and enter ‘bikini rouge’ in the search box: the result is going to be very different from Google. You will get the list of posts, photos, videos, and pages that have received the most engagements, i.e., likes, comments, and shares, and the higher their position, the better their SMO. Here you don't see ads like those you would see after a query on Google.

On the other hand, after doing that search, Facebook will start showing you, in your News Feed, between your friends' posts, updates, photos, videos, etc., ads related to ‘bikini rouge’, which are recognizable by the label ‘Sponsored’: this is SMA.

SEO/SMO OR SEA/SMA FOR DIGITAL EXPORT SALES?

As you have seen, SEO and SMO are essential for your business to be found in the search engines and social networks of your foreign target markets in an organic way. When it is done well, it can allow you to position your website or your company page among the first results of search engines and social networks around the world. However, it is a long process. To obtain positive results with SEO and SMO, it generally takes between three and 12 months, depending on the actions, platforms, sector, country, etc.

On the other hand, with SEA and SMA, you can achieve the same results much faster, almost immediately, by means of a budget. But SEA and SMA are not enough: advertising campaigns are of little use if your website and your pages are invisible, with poor SEO/SMO, with content that is irrelevant or is not translated for your foreign users. In this situation, the advertising budget that you spend can still help you increase your visibility on search engines and social networks, but it will not help you convert your foreign prospects into customers.

It is only when your international SEO and SMO are done well, and beforehand, that your SEA and SMA campaigns will be able to maximize their performance in synergies with SEO and SMO by extending the duration of the sessions and by reducing the bounce rate, among other things.

So, don't think SEO/SMO versus SEA/SMA: free and paid methods are synergistically complementary. A rational combination of SEO + SEA for search engines and SMO + SMA for social networks will allow you to achieve the best results for your digital export sales.

FOUR TRENDS TO FOLLOW IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning:** AI and ML analyze internet users' behavior and identify patterns to help businesses understand how their customers and prospects find and shop online. They improve both the management of organic and paid web marketing as well as the measure of their performance. Thanks to the AI and ML algorithms, web-marketing managers can be faster and more efficient.
- **Augmented Reality:** AR was first deployed to enhance online user experience. Then, it was adopted in digital advertising to make ads more informative, since users can directly interact with the content, instead of just viewing it and scrolling past. Snapchat was one of the pioneers in AR ads by allowing its users to view items in real life. This made them boost AR in digital advertising and beyond.
- **Personalization:** 90% of internet users say they find personalized ads more appealing. Netflix and Spotify are examples of personalization: consider the way your music experience adapts to your tastes once you have listened to some tracks on Spotify and built up your library. In the same way, personalized commercial emailing or newsletter campaigns are much more effective than the standard ones, having approximately 25% higher click-through rate (CTR) than non-personalized emails.
- **Voice search:** According to Gartner, voice search was expected to represent 30% of web searches in 2020. But, since with Covid-19 more people are home more often, this share is expected to be much larger. From Siri to Alexa and Google, people are searching more and more by voice! This phenomenon is transforming SEO & SEA around the world, although its global adoption will be gradual, because, depending on the difficulties in adjusting the software to the voice accents and languages of each country and region, voice searches require a totally different SEO & SEA strategy.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

When you think about web marketing, you must distinguish between two main categories of media that you can use internationally:

- *Search engines: Google, Bing, Yandex, etc.*
 - *Social networks: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.*
- Once this distinction made, you have two ways to develop your performance on the web:*
- *Free actions thanks to optimization techniques that do not require any additional budget.*
 - *Paid actions by means of additional advertising budget.*

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO USE INTERNATIONAL SEA ON GOOGLE TO GROW EXPORT SALES

“

Although 2020 was the worst year on record for global advertising, digital advertising and SEA did not perform badly. The money spent on ads on search engines is forecast to grow 7% in 2021 up to \$130 billion, which represents 22% of all advertising spend⁸. SEA is the biggest medium of digital advertising, and the second biggest of all the advertising media, just behind TV advertising. These global advertising trends are very similar around the world. Here are some best practices that you can deploy on Google, to help the performance of your digital export project.

RUN EFFECTIVE GOOGLE ADS CAMPAIGNS ABROAD WITH T.O.S.C.A.B.

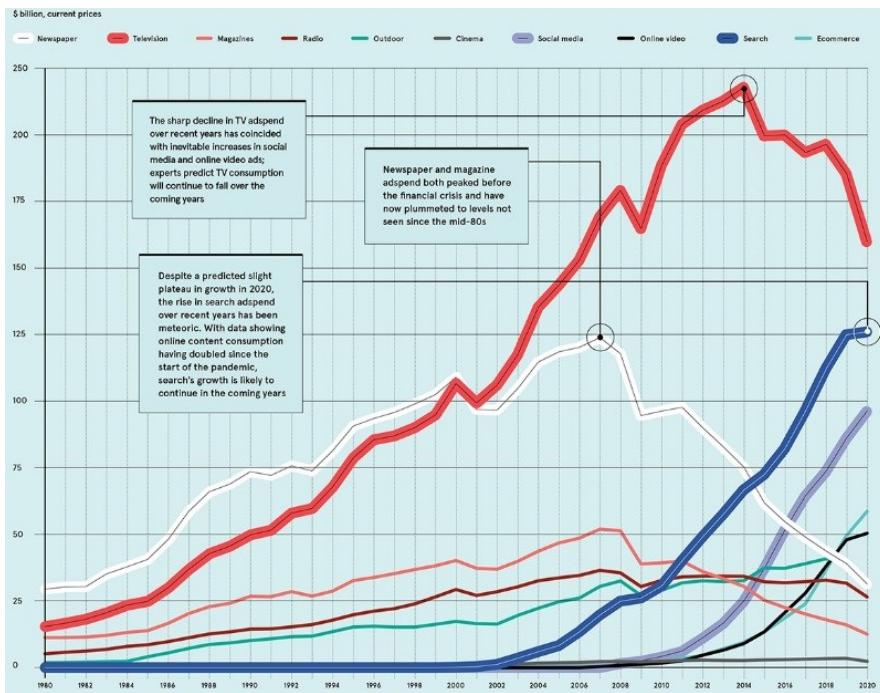


Figure 4: global ad-spend evolution 1980-2020⁹.

Google is the most used search engine in almost every country in the world¹⁰ and is, therefore, essential as a medium for advertising. It offers

⁸ 'Global ad market will take years to recover from COVID-19', WARC, 30 November 2020, <https://www.warc.com/newsandopinion/news/global-ad-market-will-take-years-to-recover-from-covid-19/44417>.

⁹ Therese Wood, 'Visualizing the Evolution of Global Advertising Spend (1980-2020)', Visual Capitalist, 10 November 2020, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/evolution-global-advertising-spend-1980-2020/>.

¹⁰ We do not know the official number of searches on Google. An estimate per day and per year is offered by the site <https://www.internetlivestats.com/> with other interesting counters such as those for social networks.

a large number of tools¹¹ for defining, implementing and monitoring advertising campaigns and for optimizing keywords. It even allows retargeting according to the visitor's search scenario: it means that your ad can be classified by audience lists, and adapted according to the web pages internet users have visited (see in the next pages for more information on retargeting).

Advertising campaigns carried out on Google or on other search engines in foreign countries and in foreign languages are technically identical to those carried out in your language and in your own country¹². But there is one major difference, which is that the campaigns for a foreign country in a foreign language will not be effective if they are simply the translation of a domestic ad. The form and content must be adapted to the targets of your digital export project.

These are the steps you should follow, using the T.O.S.C.A.B. approach:

1) Target - Prioritize your export markets

This is what is explained in [book 1 of The Digital Exporter Series, Starting the global digital journey: How to create the best international web strategy](#). Based on your strategy and on whether your website is targeting by country or by language, in the settings on Google Ads you can choose to show your ad to either specific locations or specific languages or a combination of both.

On top of that, you can also restrict them, which means you can choose specific countries, specific languages, or a combination of both where you definitely don't want your ad to appear.

¹¹ Training for these tools is, therefore, important if you want to use them correctly. You can find many training solutions online, including Google's own training platform <https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage>.

¹² The aim of this book is not to explain how to carry out an SEA campaign technically but to explain how to optimize it for international ads.



TIP

Before starting to advertise on the international scale, if you have never used Google Ads, you should train yourself first in your home country and in your language to make sure you fully understand all the tool's features. On the other hand, if you have already used it, start with one country and one language at a time to learn how to follow all the local results and how to optimize the performance of your ads.

2) Objective - Carefully choose the keywords you need to achieve your objective

Brand awareness, traffic, sales, leads, app promotion, ... You can set different objectives depending on your digital export project. And, for each one, you must choose the most relevant keywords.

These keywords and phrases will be the ones that appear in Google's foreign SERPs. So, they need to be adapted to the local culture. It is the only way you have to encourage people to click on your ad!

You can use the tools presented in the first two books of The Digital Exporter Series¹³ to make sure that the keywords and key phrases you have selected are:

- Consistent with those you used for SEO in the version of your website that your ad is linking to.
- Those that your target foreign internet users use in their language in their country.



TIP

Instead of the individual words for which there is often a lot of competition, favor expressions each made up of the three words that are the most relevant for your objective.

3) Segment - Make sure your ads match your foreign personas

¹³ [Book 1, Starting the global digital journey: How to create the best international web strategy](#) and [book 2, Getting clients overseas, organically: How to set up local, international & global SEO.](#)

You can do that not only by demographics but also by seasons, festivities and technical data in each foreign country and foreign language.

For example, Mother's Day is not celebrated the same day everywhere in the world: in France it is on the last Sunday of May or the first Sunday of June, while in Norway it is the second Sunday of February, in the United States it is the second Sunday of May, and so forth. Your ads for selling gifts abroad on this occasion will, therefore, have to follow the precise dates of each country. As for the technical data, you need to know what type of device is used most by your foreign target audience. For example, if the use rate of desktops is much smaller than that of smartphones, you should invest most of your Google Ads budget in ads displayed on mobiles.

On Google Ads, you can choose your segment, or audience, by affinity and intent:

- Affinity settings: you create this segment by choosing the criteria you want based on your prospective customers' profile or personas.
- Intent settings: with these options, you can choose to reach people when they are making buying decisions related to your keywords.

4) Check - The quality of your international ads

These are the key elements you need to check:

- Translations: for an ad to be effective on a foreign search engine, you need that ad to be understood! And for that you need it to be translated. If you don't have the time or the budget for a real translator, at least use Google's translator¹⁴, or Deepl, or other free online translators. These tools can be an ally, as long as they are only used for:
 - Short and simple texts, which is the case for Google Ads campaigns.

¹⁴ This advice, which may trigger criticism from professional translators, deserves further explanation: Google Translate translates an average of 100 billion words per day and uses artificial intelligence to exploit the volume of texts already translated. The result is that, since its start in 2006, Google Translate's translations have reached a very good level of quality that, although not perfect, is especially suitable for an export business. After all, can a translation ever be considered perfect?

- Languages that can be easily compared with similar content published online in the target foreign country. For example, comparing a French ad translated into Spanish is easier than comparing it translated into Japanese, unless you are fluent in Japanese, of course.
- Currency, measurements, symbols, etc. This is particularly important for ads with promotional offers on e-commerce sites that mention price, sizes or capacity.
- The consistency of the landing page with the keywords and the ad's objective. To maximize the conversion performance of your ad, it should not redirect people to the homepage or another page of your website. That will distract your prospects with other links and content, reducing the likelihood that they will take the action you want to achieve the objective of your ad. Instead, a specific landing page will have no other links or content than those exclusively focused on your ad's objective. Your prospects will not be distracted, and the chances that they take the action you need for your ad's objective are higher.
- Google's Quality Score. It impacts the ad's position in all SERPs. The more your ad matches this QS, the better your ad will be positioned in foreign SERPs for the same price or cheaper. The QS is based on the relevance between your ad, your keywords, and the content of the landing pages, which is another reason to link the ad to a specific landing page instead of to your website. Apart from Google, most of the other search engines around the world have a similar QS, and it is important for you to check how that works for the search engines that are most used in your target foreign country.

5) Analyze & adjust

By linking your Google Search Console, Analytics, and Google Ads accounts, you will get integrated reports for your SEA performance together with your SEO performance for each country. This joint analysis allows you to understand how to optimize the synergies between SEA and SEO for each country¹⁵.

These analyses must be done and followed regularly. Only in this way can you see whether the performance of your keywords in the foreign

¹⁵ <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/7529561>.

country is not as expected and quickly exclude those that are underperforming or add new ones, managing your advertising budget in a way that's more focused on the ROI.

6) Budget - Allocate it rationally to all countries, home and foreign

It is not rational to allocate 90% of the advertising budget to your home country and 10% to foreign countries. It should be allocated according to the business potential and objectives of each country. By constantly checking the ad performance, you can adjust the bid amounts at any time.

The cost systems on Google Ads are mainly three: CPC¹⁶, CPM¹⁷, and CPV¹⁸. The most used is the CPC, and it can be set with either manual bid, in which you decide the exact amount of money you want to pay for each click on your ad, or automatic bid, in which you select your maximum amount of money per day and Google adjusts it per click based on traffic, on your ad performance and on Google machine learning.

The final price of the CPC is determined during Google's auctions where advertisers, manually or automatically, bid the amount of money they want to pay for a click on their ad.

The final outcome depends on your Ad Rank, which is the result of the amount of money you bid combined with your ad's Quality Score, a metric on the relevance of your ad to the people you target.

Therefore, to avoid expensive CPC for your international ads, you need to be very careful about the consistency between:

- The location and language targeting of your ad.
- The location and language targeting of your landing page.
- The keywords you use in both your ad and your landing page.
- Your bid.

¹⁶ Cost Per Click.

¹⁷ Cost Per Mille, that is the thousands of ad views.

¹⁸ Cost Per Video viewed.



TIP

You can check on WordStream's website the global average CPC for Google Display ads per sector. It is \$0.63. For comparison, the average CPC on the Search network is \$2.69, more than four times greater. That is because Search network clicks are generally more valuable, as we saw earlier¹⁹.

¹⁹ <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks>.



CASE STUDY

As a quick reminder on how SEA works, consider, for example, an ad on google.de for a red bikini:

- 1) Define the keywords for your objective and for your German segment/personas, for example by using the free online tools of Google Trends, Google Keyword Planner, etc.
 - 2) Once you have your keywords, start creating or adapting your ad for German internet users.
 - 3) Optimize the ad text and the landing page to which your ad links, by adapting it to the local needs of people that might be interested in red bikinis.
 - 4) Choose your daily budget and how much you are willing to invest for getting a click from a qualified German internet user on your ad. This will directly impact your transformation cost and profit for each red bikini you sell in Germany.
 - 5) Start the online auctions. If you are the highest bidder, if you have a good QS, and if you have not spent all your daily advertising budget, you will win the auctions: your ad will show on the top of the SERPs on google.de every time someone searches for your keywords or keyword phrases related to red bikinis.
 - 6) Once your ad is running, analyze its performance and adjust your spending if necessary.
- This ad system, which involves bidding, or real-time bidding, and is charged by the clicks, through CPC or PPC counting, is pretty much the same for any other search engines around the world.



TIP

If your Analytics show that one of your export ads is performing above average and exceeding your campaign goals, don't be shy! Go for it and increase your advertising budget, while remaining attentive: if this was only a temporary phenomenon, you will need to adjust your advertising budget as soon as possible.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Search advertising, whether on Google Ads or on other search engines, will not be effective for foreign markets if they are simply the translation of a domestic ad. Effective international advertising needs to be adapted to the audience of the target foreign country, and for that you can simply follow the T.O.S.C.A.B. approach:

- 1) Target – Prioritize your export markets
- 2) Objective – Carefully choose the keywords you need to achieve your objective
- 3) Segment – Make sure your ads match your foreign personas
- 4) Check – The quality of your international ads
- 5) Analyze & adjust
- 6) Budget – Distribute it rationally over all countries, home and foreign.

CHAPTER 4

GOOGLE SHOPPING & GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS FOR EXPORT SALES

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Google is one of the first places people go to find products online, whether they want to buy them, or compare prices, or watch a video on how to use them, etc. And that is the case all over the world.

So, it is crucial that you know how to grab their attention in the countries you target for your digital export project. Google Shopping and Google Shopping Ads are among the most effective of all paid levers, and in the next pages you can find why.

GOOGLE SHOPPING VS. GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS VS. GOOGLE ADS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Google Shopping and Google Shopping Ads can be very effective for your digital export project. Since they work differently from international Google Ads, and the features differ from one country to another, you need to understand the differences.

Google Shopping, the one without the word *Ads* next to it, is not about advertising. It is a specific search engine tab that you can see on Google and that is fully dedicated to people that want to search, browse, and compare products.

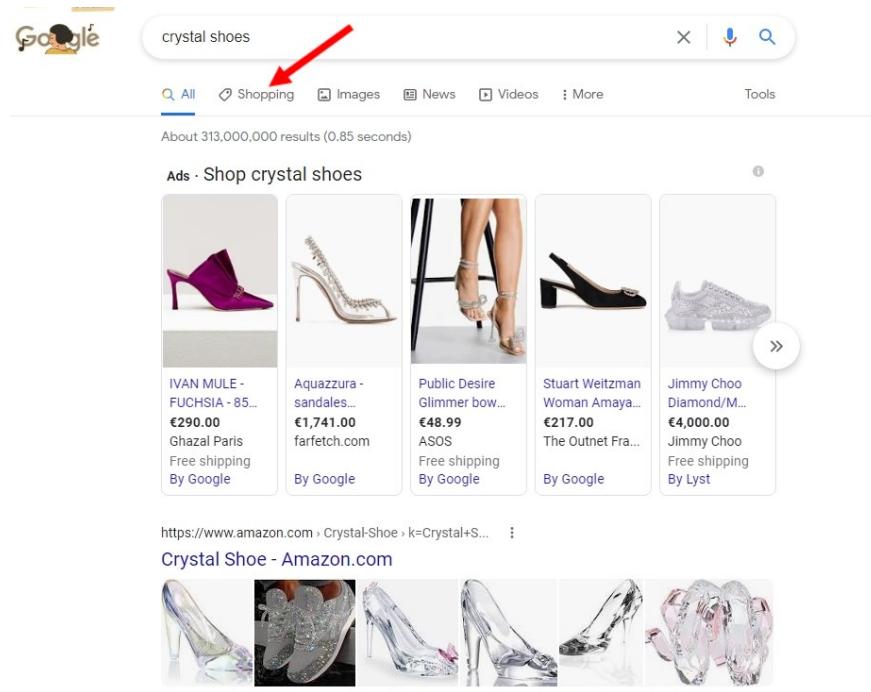


Figure 5: Google Shopping tab on Google.

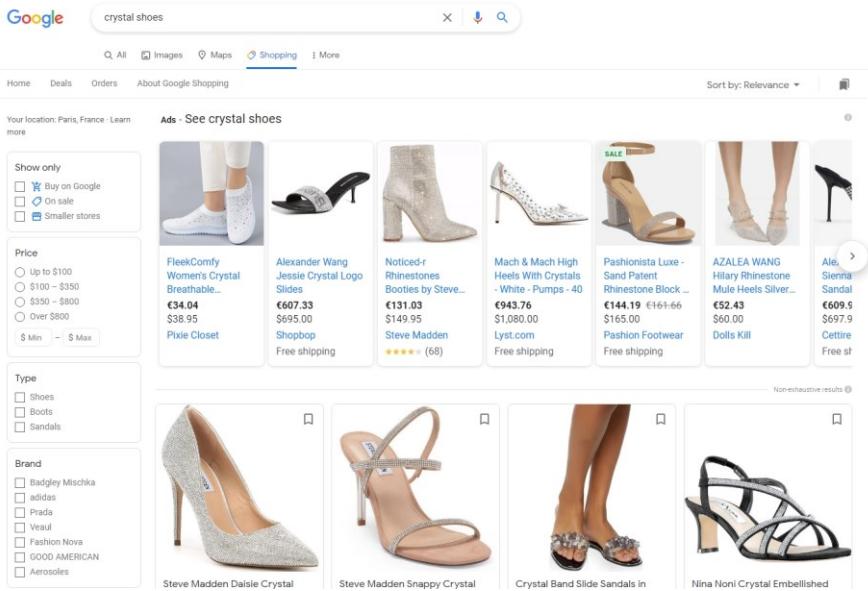


Figure 6: Google Shopping.

Google Shopping has been around for a while. It was born in 2002 as Froogle, then became Google Product Search, Google Express, and eventually Google Shopping in 2012²⁰.

Originally available in a few countries, and with a business model that required companies to pay to use the service, it is now available in 121 countries, and it has been completely free since 2020. When people click the Shopping tag on Google, they can search for products, compare prices from different sellers, and buy what they like.

Google Shopping can look like other marketplaces but has additional features:

- Any business can list products on Google Shopping, not only small sellers, but also retailers and other marketplaces.
- The checkout can be on Google Shopping, by selecting the 'Buy-on-Google' option²¹, or on the seller's e-commerce.

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Shopping.

²¹ Only available in the U.S. and France in 2021.

- For the listing, you must use Google Merchant Center. Previously conditioned to the payment of fixed fees, this listing is now free.
- Since Google Shopping's algorithm doesn't work with keywords but with products' features, the listing on Google Merchant Center must be done particularly carefully, especially when it is done in multiple countries.
- In Google Merchant Center settings, you can choose the countries to target for your digital export project.

Unlike Google Shopping, Google Shopping Ads, now the one with the word *Ads*, are about advertising. Also known as Product Listing Ads (PLAs), they are special ads that allow people to view products in a better visual way and to compare them directly from the SERPs.

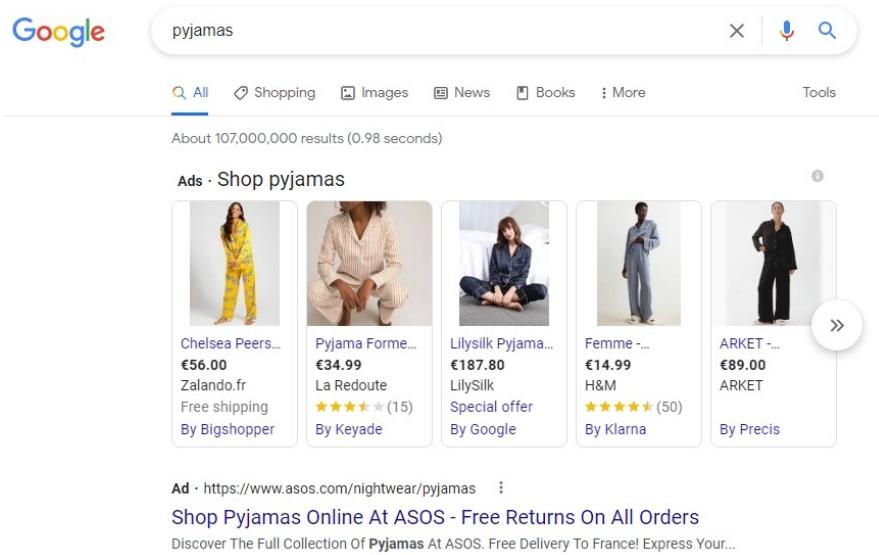


Figure 7: the difference between Google Shopping Ads and Google Ads.

As you see in the figure above, a simple query on Google can provide Shopping Ads in the first row of the SERPs that are directly comparable, since they are next to each other, and their key elements, i.e., price, picture, description, are clearly visible before people click on them. This is the major advantage of Google Shopping Ads that makes them

different from normal text ads: although both Google Ads and Google Shopping Ads are intent-based, meaning that they only appear to people that are actively searching for the advertised item, with Google Ads text format, people need to click on it to see picture, price, and more information, while with Google Shopping Ads they don't.

As a result, people that click on Google Shopping Ads are generally in a more advanced stage of the purchasing funnel than those clicking on text ads. Also, since the key elements of Google Shopping Ads are visible without clicking, they are directly comparable, while Google Ads are not.

Because of this feature, Google Shopping Ads have higher conversion rates than Google Ads.

Google Shopping Ads are also managed via Google Merchant Center, and these are the key points:

- You need to connect your Google Merchant Center to your Google Ads to run Google Shopping Ads. These ads are not only displayed on Google Shopping, but also at the top or on the right side of Google's search results pages and include the picture, the price, and the description of your products.
- The cost of Google Shopping Ads is based on the same cost-per-click (CPC) model as for normal Google Ads.
- Once clicked on, Google Shopping Ads direct people to the product's landing page either on your e-commerce or on Google Shopping if you have set it up and if you are selling in one of the eligible countries.
- Through the same Google Merchant Center, you can also choose to use the Comparison Shopping Services (CSSs), which can place Google Shopping Ads and free listings on Google for your products as well.
- When you set up your Google Merchant Center and your Google Shopping Ads, you can choose the countries where you want your ads to run according to the target of your digital export project.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO RUN GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS INTERNATIONALLY?

To run Google Shopping Ads, you need to have an account on three Google tools: Google Merchant Center, Google Ads, and Google Analytics. You might think that Google Analytics is not really needed because it does not actually do anything at all in the creation and management of Google Shopping Ads.

However, to measure the performance of all your acquisition channels, whether organic or paid, on the international scale by country, Google Analytics is the only way to go.

Before you start with Google Shopping Ads, make sure you meet these requirements:

- Your accounts on Google Merchant Center, Google Ads and Google Analytics are operational under the same Google user and linked together.
- You comply with the specific Shopping Ads policies, which are different from Google Ads. To comply with Google Shopping Ads policies, there are four points you need to check:
 - 1) Your ads must not include prohibited content, such as counterfeit or dangerous items.
 - 2) You must not run prohibited practices, for example, inappropriate data collection.
 - 3) Your ad content must comply with some specific restrictions, such as those for alcohol or adult items.
 - 4) Your ads and website must meet the editorial and technical standards that Google requires, such as providing high-quality and professional-looking content.

- Your product data must comply with Google Merchant Center specifications, the most important of which for a digital export project are the following²²:
 - 1) All your landing pages must clearly show your products and the key elements, i.e., title, description, image, price, currency, availability, buy button, in a way that perfectly matches the rest of the product data you submitted in Google Merchant Center.
 - 2) Google Shopping Ads must be consistent with the landing page's content, i.e., the content people see after clicking the ads. You indicate your landing pages in the product data you submit in Google Merchant Center. If these landing pages are on your international e-commerce, they must be stable and clearly targeting by location or by language, which means that the URL structure of your e-commerce must be fixed for each location and language and not adapting on the fly based on the user's location or language. You can read [book 2 of The Digital Exporter Series](#) to find out the best practices on URL structure for international websites and cross-border e-commerce.
 - 3) The product you want to show in your ad must be the most important on the landing page. For example, if your landing page presents many products because of color variants, then the product for your ads must be the most important of all. If you use a landing page that is for a category of items, your ads will not run.
 - 4) The price you want to show in your ad must be clearly visible on the landing page and match the price in the product data you submitted to Google Merchant Center.
 - 5) Based on your foreign target country, your price must include VAT, or other taxes, in all your ads, your landing page, and your product data²³.
 - 6) You need to show information about the shipping cost and delivery time²⁴.

²² You can find all the details about all the requirements here:

<https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6275312>.

²³ Find out more here: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/7052209>.

²⁴ Find out more here: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/7050921>.

- 7) You must provide an effective checkout and payment system on your landing pages for the countries and in the languages that you target²⁵.
- 8) Your product data must be updated frequently and at least once per month, always following Google Merchant Center specifications.

Once you are ready with the above requirements, the next step is to start Google Merchant Center. If you are setting up your account from scratch, click on the button highlighted in red in the next figure and fill out everything with your business data.

By clicking on ‘Linked accounts’, you can link your Google Merchant Center with your Google Ads. You need to pay special attention when filling out the ‘Shipping and returns’, ‘Regions’, and ‘Sales tax’ fields, because they need to be consistent with your digital export project and with your Google Ads landing pages.

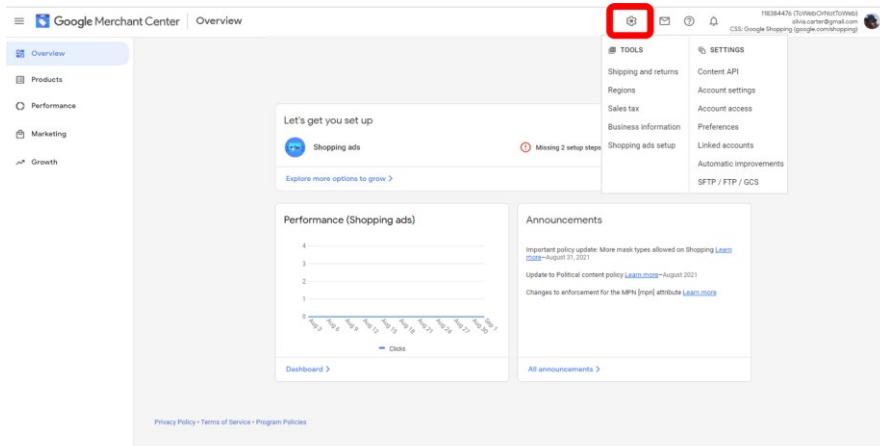


Figure 8: the account settings in Google Merchant Center.

When your account on Google Merchant Center is ready, you can start uploading your products, and, to do that, you have several options:

²⁵ Find out more here: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/9158778>.

- **Manually**, one by one, by clicking on the + in the following figure. This is the ideal way if you have up to 30 items. If you have more than 30 items, you should use the following method.

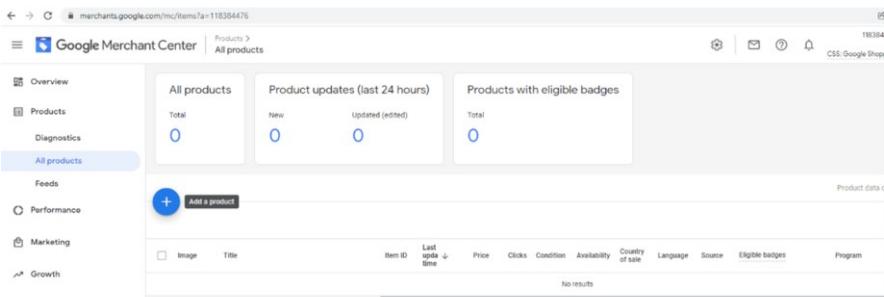


Figure 9: adding products to Google Merchant Center one by one.

- With a **product feed**, which is like an Excel sheet where the rows are your products, and the columns are the attributes Google needs, such as price, description, size, color, weight, etc.²⁶ There are several ways to send a product feed to Google Merchant Center, for example:
 - Google Sheets, which you can update any time you need, and which automatically synchronizes with Google Merchant Center.
 - Excel files, which you can upload to Google Merchant Center whenever there is a change in your products.
 - A feed application, which you can add if your products are on Shopify, Prestashop, WooCommerce, or another e-commerce platform. This is the method you should use if you have several hundred items.
 - Some e-commerce platforms offer a native sales channel for Google Merchant Center, like Shopify. That can make the product integration easier but only if your product data on Shopify, or on any other platform providing this feature, perfectly match the attributes and template of Google Merchant Center. If they don't, you will have problems in the way the ads

²⁶ You can check the full list of Google's attributes, needed and optional on this page: <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/7052112>.

will appear, or Google will not show them. In that case, you will first need to correct all the possible problems.



TIP

Whether you add your products manually, one by one, or you use another system to upload several products, your product data are strategic. Why? Because your Google Shopping Ads are not based on keywords, like the ones you choose when you run a Google Ads campaign, but on these product data: it is based on these data that Google will match internet users' queries with the Shopping Ads to show.

For your digital export project, you can use the same feed in several countries that speak the same language, such as a Spanish feed for Spain, Argentina, Mexico, etc., but also for Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. If you also want to run Google Shopping Ads in French, for example, you need to translate your feed into French.

Of all the product data, the following are those to which you must pay more attention for the translation into the languages you target:

- **Title:** this is the most strategic element, because it is instantly seen by your prospects and by Google's bots that decide which ads to show in the SERP. It must be made up of the product name on the landing page plus the most important information, such as color, material, size, etc. The words you put first in the string are considered more important by Google's bots, so you must build your titles accordingly. Then, the translations must be top notch.
- **Description:** some people think it is not important because the description doesn't show on Google Shopping Ads. But this text is visible when people click on a product on Google Shopping. Also, Google's bots check it. So, it is definitely key to fill in this field precisely and with relevant data. Make this relevant and mention a keyword or two. Think about what features and benefits are most important and mention them here. You'll need to keep this pretty short and to the point.

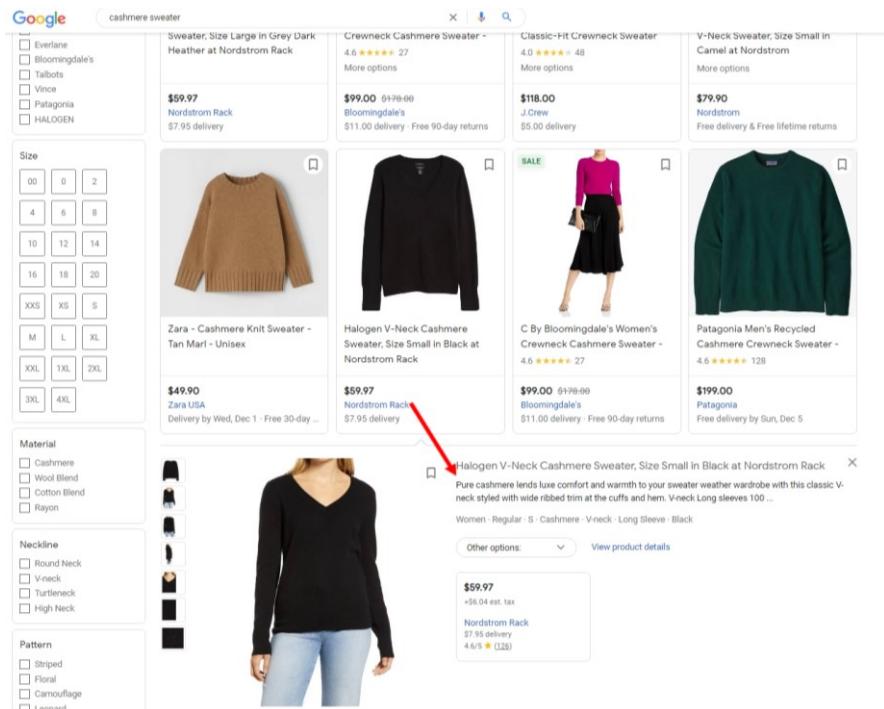


Figure 10: a product description on Google Shopping.

- Category:** it must be provided by choosing from Google's classification and it must match your products.
- Type:** this is only visible to Google's bots and not to people. The best practice is to fill it in with two or three translated keywords related to the product type.
- Pictures:** Google prefers product pictures on a white or transparent background. So, if your products meet that requirement, you don't have anything to translate in your pictures. They only need to be as beautiful as possible, because pictures can influence the purchasing decision and the clicks in the same way as prices do.
- Highlights:** they are additional product information organized in bullet points, up to ten, that will show on the right side next to the picture. They must be translated in each language of the countries you target with Google Shopping and Shopping Ads.

Vero Moda Crew Lefile V Neck L

★★★★★ (180)



Color: Green



Size: L

- Loose Jumper
- Very soft, elastic material
- 70% Polyacrylic, 27% Polyamide, 3% Elastane
- Not specified
- Fastening: Pull On
- Casual

[Less](#)



Product details

Women · Regular · L · Spandex · V-neck · Long Sleeve · Green

This classic knit jumper will add a cool & casual element to your winter outfit, especially tucked into your favourite pair of skinny jeans. With a V neck, long sleeves and super soft & stretchy material, it will become a go-to favourite for your winter wardrobe.

Figure 11: product highlights on Google Shopping.

- **Details:** any additional information about your product, such as cleaning or assembly instructions. As above, it must be translated in each language of the countries you target with Google Shopping and Shopping Ads.



TIP

As mentioned, based on the foreign countries that you target for Google Shopping and Shopping Ads, your prices must include VAT or other sales taxes to comply with the tax system in each country. For more information, refer to [book 5 of The Digital Exporter Series](#).

HOW TO START AND RUN INTERNATIONAL GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS

Before you start, you need to make sure that all your landing pages are in the same language as your Google Shopping Ads. At the time of writing this book, these are the languages supported by Google Shopping Ads: Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese²⁷, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Traditional Chinese, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese.

For the countries, you can find the precise list on this page:

<https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/160637#countrytable>.

Now that your products are on Google Merchant Center, they can be visible on Google Shopping in the country you have chosen, and you can start your Google Shopping Ads directly from your Google Ads account in the same countries.

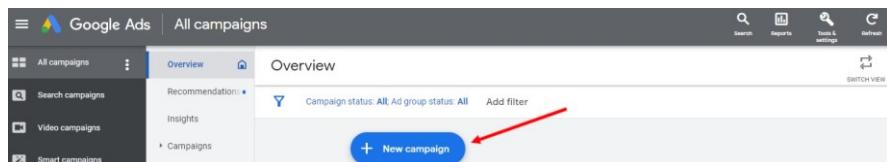


Figure 12: click on 'New Campaign' in your Google Ads account to start a Google Shopping Ads campaign.

After clicking on 'New Campaign', you need to choose the 'Sales' goal among all the options and then select 'Google Shopping Ads'.

²⁷ As mentioned on this page, <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/160637>, Google will deduce the script as Simplified or Traditional, which will impact traffic to your products.

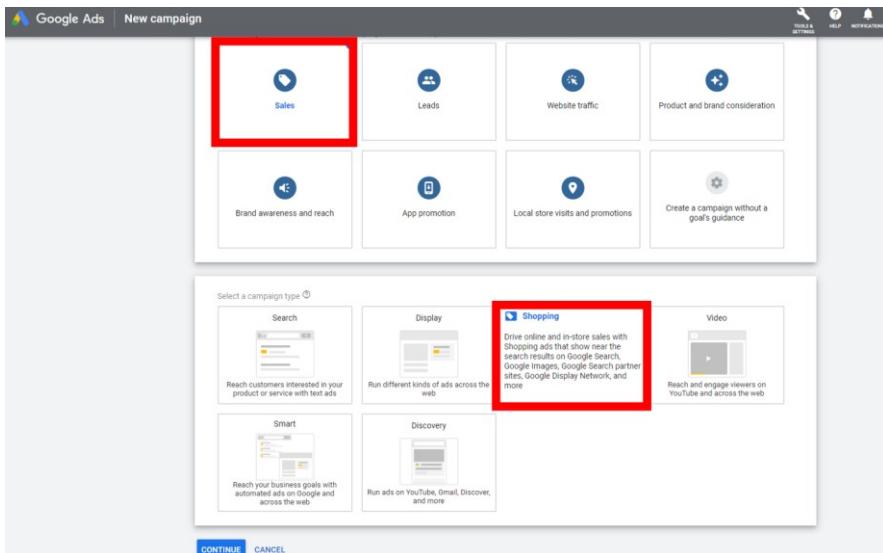


Figure 13: click on 'Sales' among the goals and then on 'Shopping' in your Google Ads account.

Next, you will be asked whether you want to run Standard Shopping or Smart Shopping. But what's the difference? The Standard Shopping Ads are shown on the Search network, while the Smart Shopping Ads run on the Search network plus the Display network, Search partners' websites, YouTube, and Gmail plus retargeting by default with a potential reach that is much larger than the Standard Shopping Ads.

However, since all this additional exposure with retargeting, Google Display and Google Search partners is fully automated, it would be impossible to manage the Smart Shopping Ads in foreign countries and they would easily reach people that are not relevant for your products.

That will risk lowering the performance, and consequently increasing the cost, of your advertising. That risk is very real, because you have almost no control over the bidding, which is also automated, nor do you have optimization opportunities, since there are no insights on audience and searched terms, which are fundamental to keep the budget under control when advertising in foreign countries.

To avoid these risks for your digital export project, select ‘Standard’ for your international Shopping Ads.

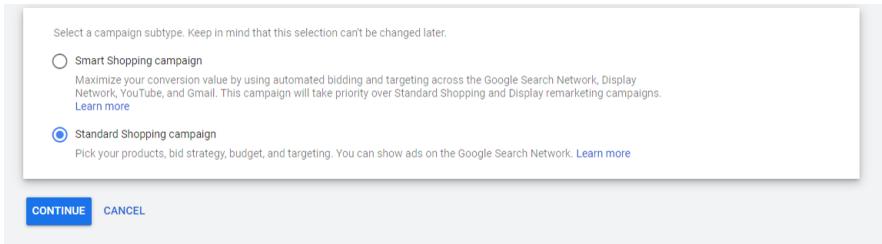


Figure 14: choosing ‘Standard Shopping campaign’ to be able to optimize your Shopping Ads.

Then, you will need to enter your business information and choose whether you want your ads to appear on the Search network only or also on YouTube, Gmail and other networks.

After that, you are asked to select the countries for your ads. You can select as many countries as you want, but if you want to run your ads in countries that speak different languages, your ads will need to be translated and must be in separate campaigns, each one for a specific language. In the country selector, therefore, only add countries that speak the same language. Otherwise, your ads might not be approved.

The last step is to set how much you want to spend, or bid, per click on your ads. If you are new to online ads, you might be asking yourself how to know how much you should bid, and then search for some data on the internet. By doing that, you will easily find websites, like the one in the following figure, showing the average CPC on Google Shopping Ads broken down by sector.

GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS BENCHMARKS

AVERAGE COST PER CLICK

The average cost per click for Google Shopping Ads is \$0.66

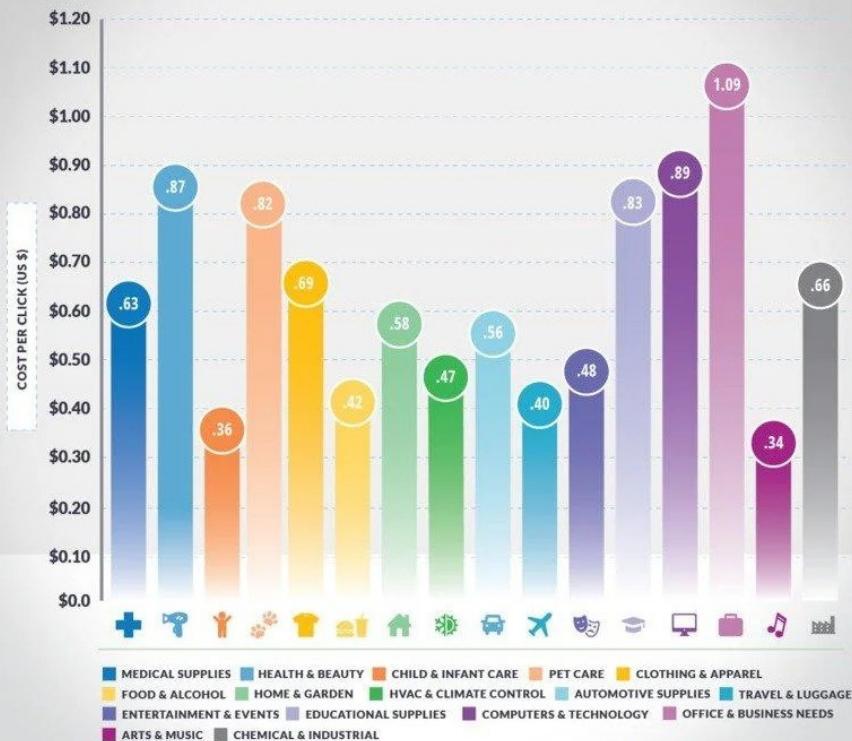


Figure 15: the average CPC on Google Shopping Ads by sector²⁸.

However, simply deciding to set the average CPC of your sector is not the right approach. You need to have an ROI strategy. What does that mean? It means that the money you bid on the CPC of your ad is an investment that must produce a profitable return.

²⁸ <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2019/04/01/shopping-ads-benchmarks>.

You cannot determine that profitable return from the average CPC in your sector. It must be calculated through your product price, your fixed costs, and your variable costs, by applying the same formula as in the Break-Even calculation²⁹.

Your bid CPC is part of your variable costs, so, if your product price is high and your fixed costs are low, you can afford higher bids. How much higher depends on another element, the conversion rate³⁰, or CR.

Where do you find your CR? Well, you would have it if you were already running ads, but, if you are starting with Google Shopping Ads, you can use the average CR of your sector, which is on the same website that presents the average CPC³¹.

Then, for the calculation of your bid, check the case study below.

²⁹ Find all the details of the Break-Even calculation in [book 1 of The Digital Exporter Series](#).

³⁰ It indicates the number of conversions, for example the number of people that purchased a product, divided by the number of total ad clicks or other interactions during the same time. For example, if you have 20 conversions from 1,000 clicks, your CR is 2%.

³¹ <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2019/04/01/shopping-ads-benchmarks>.

GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS BENCHMARKS

AVERAGE CONVERSION RATE

The average conversion rate for Google Shopping Ads is 1.91%



Figure 16: the average CR on Google Shopping Ads by sector.



CASE STUDY

Let's consider, for example, company A in the clothing & apparel sector:

- Product retail price at €50
- Variable cost, VC, at €30 assuming it is only for the CPC campaign on Google Shopping Ads
- Annual fixed cost, FC, at €100,000
- Contribution margin, CM, at $(50 - 30) / 50 = 0.40$ or $0.40 \times 100 = 40\%$
- Sector CR = conversions / clicks = 2.7%

Company A will have to achieve $€100,000 / 0.4 = €250,000$ in sales or $250,000 / 50 = 5,000$ in products sold in a year to break even, or, in other words, to be able to cover its costs. So, company A's ads must be able to convert 5,000 people to buy one product each at €50. To have 5,000 conversions, since CR = conversions / clicks, it means that clicks = $5,000 / 2.7\%$ and that the company needs 185,185 clicks to get 5,000 conversions. Since its Google Shopping Ads VC is €30 per product sold, which corresponds to one conversion, the total amount would be $5,000 \times €30 = €150,000$, and, therefore, company A can bid up to €1.23 per product to break even. The ROI would be $= (\text{turnover} - \text{ad spend}) / \text{ad spend} \times 100 = 60\%$.

Let's consider another example, company B, also in the clothing & apparel sector:

- Product retail price at €150
- Variable cost, VC, at €60 assuming it is only for the CPC campaign on Google Shopping Ads
- Annual fixed cost, FC, at €100,000
- Contribution margin, CM, at $(150 - 60) / 150 = 0.6$ or $0.6 \times 100 = 60\%$
- Sector CR = conversions / clicks = 2.7%

Company B will have to achieve $€100,000 / 0.6 = €166,666$ in sales or $166,666 / 150 = 1,111$ in products sold in a year to break even, or, in other words, to be able to cover its costs. So, company B's ads must be able to convert 1,111 people to buy one product each at €150. To have 1,111 conversions, since CR = conversions / clicks, it means that clicks = $1,111 / 2.7\%$ and that the company needs 41,152 clicks to get 1,111 conversions. Since its Google Shopping Ads VC is €60 per product sold, which corresponds to one conversion, the total amount would be $1,111 \times €60 = €66,660$, and, therefore, company B can bid up to €1.62 per product to break even. The ROI would be $= (\text{turnover} - \text{ad spend}) / \text{ad spend} \times 100 = 150\%$.

INTERNATIONAL CSS VS. GOOGLE SHOPPING ADS

CSS are Comparison Shopping Services. You can also use one or several CSS for running Google Shopping Ads. They are totally optional, and you can decide whether you want to use:

- Only Google Shopping Ads.

- Only CSS, one or several, managing your product data and campaigns by yourself.
- Only CSS, one or several, with the CSS managing your product data and campaigns on your behalf.
- Google Shopping Ads together with one or more CSS, choosing whether you want to manage the product data and campaigns by yourself.

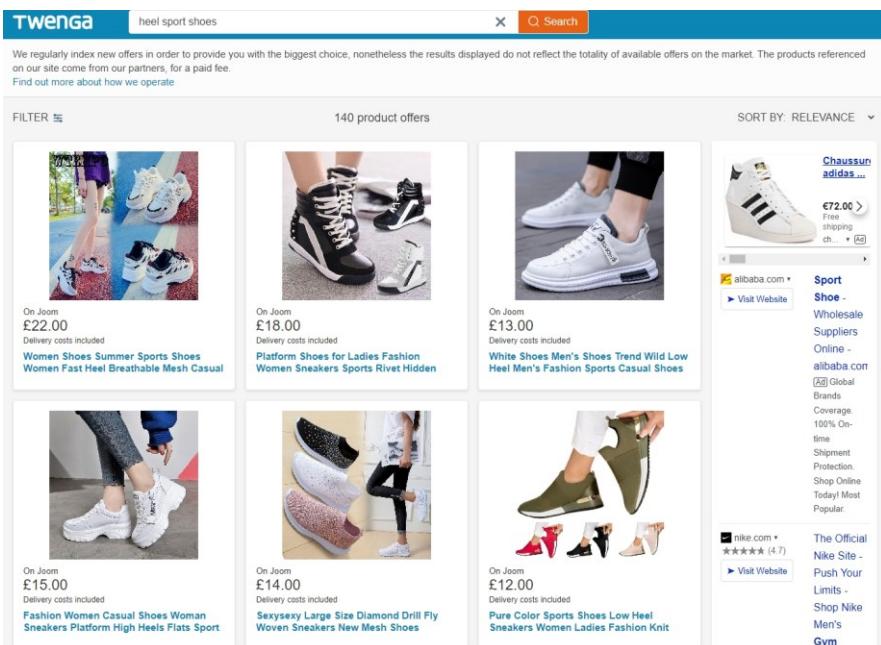


Figure 17: Twenga website, an example of CSS.

What is the advantage of using the CSS? They can allow your products to appear more times on the SERP for a given query, whether through your own Google Shopping Ads, your own Google Ads, or the CSS Shopping Ads.

On top of that, they will also appear on the CSS website. Multiplying the visibility of your products and brand through these types of Shopping Ads can increase your credibility as well as your brand awareness,

which can be fundamental to developing your sales in a foreign country where people do not know your brand well.

To use a CSS, you must upload your products to a different platform that replaces Google Merchant Center, but they must still comply with Google Shopping policies, or else the campaigns will not run.

CSS are not available everywhere. You can check the list and more information on this page:

<https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/7558973>.



TIP

If you use schema.org structured data on your e-commerce, don't forget to mark up all the key information related to your offers, such as price, quantity, brand, color, size, etc. Schema.org structured data helps Google and other search engines in their crawling and allows them to get all your offers' updates directly from your e-commerce. Find more about schema.org in [book 2 of The Digital Exporter Series](#).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Google Shopping Ads can help your digital export project, because they are an additional and effective way to present and sell your products online. Since Google Shopping Ads tend to have higher conversion rate, lower CPC, and higher ROI, they should be considered for your expansion in the countries you target overseas.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL SEA ON BAIDU TO GROW EXPORT SALES IN CHINA

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You already know that Google is a strong leader in the search engine market almost everywhere in the world. But there are some exceptions, such as China, Russia, South Korea, etc.

In countries like these, SEA campaigns can be similar to those on Google or can be totally different. In the next pages you will find out how to manage them in case your digital export project involves one of these countries.

SEARCH ENGINES BEYOND GOOGLE

Google has an extremely dominant position in many countries around the world, but this is not the case everywhere. You also have countries with Baidu, Yandex, Naver and Bing/Yahoo!

For your digital export project, the process for SEA campaigns goes in a similar way as the one for SEO, in the sense that you must first validate the search engines that are most used by your foreign prospective clients in their country. And if these people don't use Google but another search engine instead, it can be ineffective if you use Google Ads.

In this case, you have two options:

- Combine Google Ads campaigns with ad campaigns on the other local search engines. This solution is recommended wherever Google is not totally absent but has strong challengers, such as in Russia with Yandex and in Japan with Bing/Yahoo!.
- Do not use Google Ads but only the ads systems of local search engines. This option is recommended wherever Google is totally absent, as in China with Baidu or other local search engines.

Given the many similarities between Google, Bing and, to a lesser extent, Yandex and Naver, which require a similar approach to the one presented in the previous pages, in what follows I will focus on the major specific features of Baidu for ad campaigns in China.

SEA ON BAIDU IN CHINA: HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The first thing to know about Baidu's SERPs is that almost all the results above the fold are ads and promotional links.

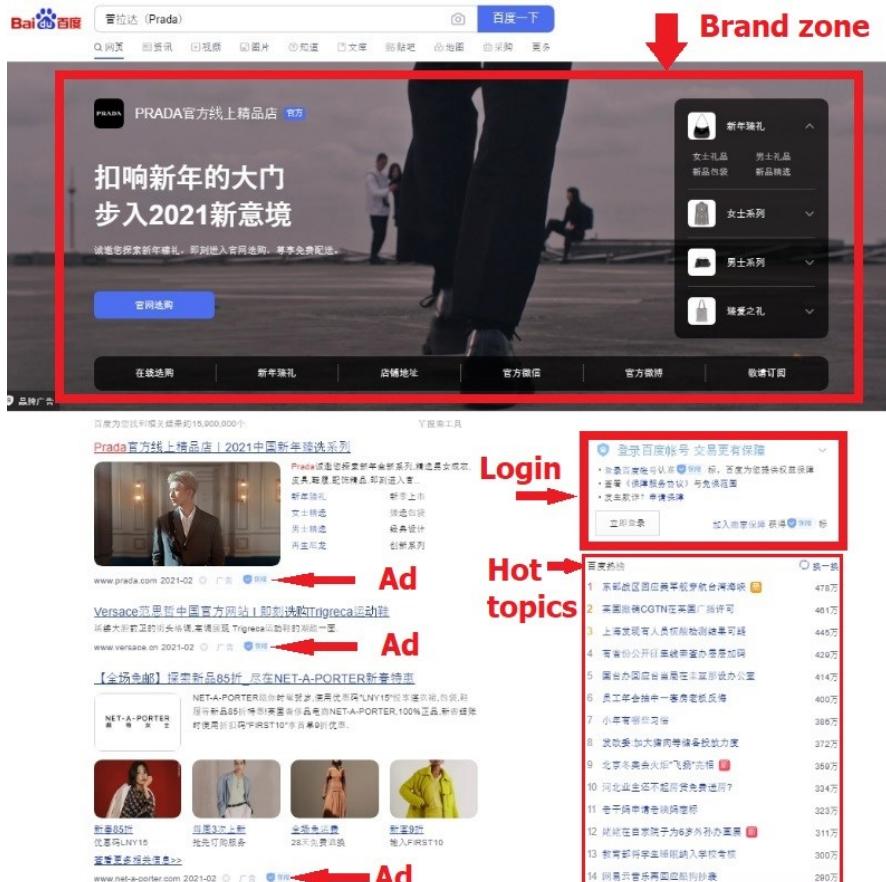


Figure 18: one of Baidu's SERPs.

Baidu provides many web-marketing tools like those of Google and other search engines. For example, Phoenix Nest³² and Tongji are Baidu's own tools for Google Ads and Analytics respectively. And Baidu now allows foreign companies³³ to run ads on its search engine, even those without a physical or legal presence in China, which is great for businesses that want to develop export sales in the Chinese market!

³² Also known as Baidu P.P.C., 百度推广, Baidu AdWords, Baidu SEM.

³³ With some exceptions, such as gambling, health & pharma, etc.

But the most common questions Western companies ask about Baidu are: How much does it cost? Is it effective?

You will find the answer to the second question in the next paragraph. As for how much it costs, there are fixed, variable and extra costs.

- **Fixed costs:** you need to pay a deposit of RMB 6,000, RMB 20,000 or RMB 30,000 (corresponding to ca. \$870, \$2,900 and \$4,300, respectively, at the end of 2020) to open a Baidu Phoenix Nest account. These three types of deposit allow you to get different services from Baidu, such as a VIP manager, a design consultant, ads formats, reports, etc. the top ones being available exclusively to those willing to pay the third and most expensive deposit. Baidu deducts a one-time RMB 1,000 service fee and RMB 600 annual company authentication fee from the deposit. These deposits may vary depending on the sector and the projected quantity of ads the company plans to run. They must be paid by all Chinese companies and foreign businesses, except for those based in the UK, France, Korea and Singapore. For companies based in those four countries, the only solution is to open an account through a Hong Kong agency. In that case, the deposit to pay is RMB 7,000, of which RMB 2,100 will go for the annual verification fee.
- **Variable costs:** the bidding cost for the keywords on your ads, more or less as for Google Ads and other CPC advertising systems. But with Baidu this amount is deducted from the deposit, which means that the deposit you pay also counts as your ad credit. You will pay 'per click' each time a user clicks on one of your ads, and that payment will be withdrawn from the ad credit in your account. The daily costs of running ads on Baidu go from a minimum of RMB 50 to up to RMB 800 or more for the most competitive keywords or the most highly demanded industries. The final daily budget depends on the Baidu Index, which is based on the competitiveness of the company and of the market.
- **Extra costs:** these apply mainly to foreign companies that are advertising on Baidu. Although Baidu now allows them to run ads on its search engine, there are other technical restrictions to overcome for foreign companies. The first one is to comply with

China's censorship. That requires the ads not to have links to websites outside China, such as your own website, Facebook, Instagram, or with Google Tags, etc.

There are two solutions for that:

- 1) Pay Baidu to validate the links on your ad on Baidu. This is not an effective solution, because, even when the links are approved, the load time will be extremely long, since they are not based in China.
- 2) Create a specific landing page for Baidu. This solution is technically better, and it can be implemented either through a local hosting, which can be expensive and requires an internet content provider (ICP) license³⁴, or through a CDN that has powerful servers near China.

Another extra cost can arise when you do not have Chinese native speakers in-house to manage the Baidu ads. In that case, the solution is to hire a Chinese agency. The cost is usually 10%-20% of the advertising budget, but this type of agency only does it on annual budgets above a certain amount, roughly above RM 100,000.

SEA ON BAIDU IN CHINA: IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Doubts persist about the objectivity of Baidu's indexing crawlers and the impact of censorship on search results. Indeed, sponsored links are displayed in the first few positions of Baidu's SERPs. But how does Baidu decide on this position? In principle, it does this on the basis of multiple elements, four of which are key.

³⁴ All websites and domain names that are hosted on the Chinese mainland territory must obtain an ICP license, while those that are outside that territory do not need one. But there is an interesting exception for Hong-Kong: websites that are hosted in this territory do not need an ICP license. The Chinese ICP license number is shown on the website, usually in the footer of the homepage, and it includes a character indicating the province that issued the license.

Here they are in order of importance:

- **Your company's 'trust score':** Baidu uses this score to determine the reliability of your business in China and in the Chinese digital business environment. Therefore, if you have an excellent positioning in your home country or in Europe on Google, Facebook or Amazon, that will not help. You will have to start all over again following what is appropriate for Baidu. The good news is that every new advertiser starts with the same 100-point trust score. Then, these points can be taken away if you do not follow one or more of the rules of the Chinese digital environment³⁵, much like the points on your driver's license.
- **Your ads' 'quality score':** this rating system concerns the content of the landing pages, products, visuals, etc. These elements will determine your CTR, which will be compared to that of your industry and your competitors. Baidu QS is also directly impacted by the auction price, which makes the rating system quite arbitrary. Baidu penalizes advertisers with a low QS but still allows them to pay more for their bids to catch up. So, while, on the one hand, some advertisers are struggling to achieve a high QS that minimizes the cost of their auctions, others, with more substantial advertising budgets, are happy to overpay for keywords to obtain a high QS and win the auction.
- **The price:** the budget you set for your bids in the auctions.
- **The behavior of internet users:** how they react to your sponsored products or services and your brands.

As for other media, advertising on Baidu follows the same structure: it starts with a campaign that is the collection of several ad groups, each ad group consisting of ads, and each ad contains specific keywords.

A campaign shares the budget, the goals, the audiences, locations, and other metrics, while ad groups are dedicated to a specific category of products or services. The ads in each group can then be even more

³⁵ For example, posting content criticizing the Chinese government, or promoting illegal products.

specific for an individual product or service, each one with the right keywords related to that product or service. They can then change depending on the bids and auctions prices.

To keep track of everything, you have Baidu Analytics. Some even use Google Analytics, which makes it possible to follow campaigns on Baidu and on Google at the same time in the same interface, although the configuration is complex.



TIP

If your export strategy does not lead you to conquer markets in countries where Google is not a leader, stay focused on Google Ads campaigns for the Google search engines that are specific to the countries and languages you are targeting. Since Google has between 85% and 98% market share in almost all countries, except China and Russia, well-controlled Google Ads campaigns will allow you to reach that percentage of prospective clients in your target foreign markets.

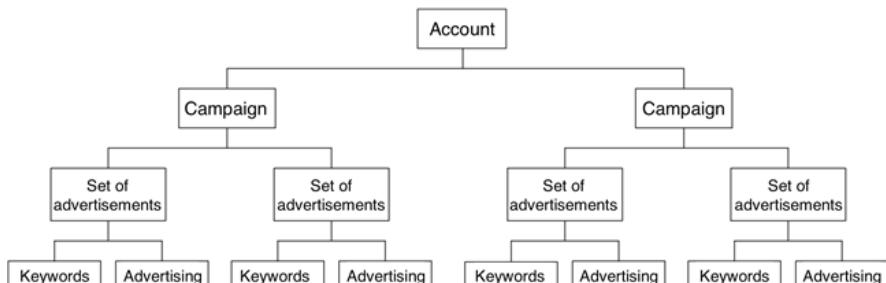


Figure 19: the campaign structure on Baidu, inspired by that on Google and Facebook.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

For SEA ads, Google has a dominant position in all countries around the world except for China, Russia, and other minor countries. For these countries there are two options:

- Combine Google Ads campaigns with campaigns on local search engines; this is recommended in countries like Russia where Google is not totally absent.
- Use only the local search engine; this is recommended for countries like China, where Google is totally absent.

In the second case, you have to focus on Baidu, the leading search engine, and use Phoenix Nest and Tongji to create, manage, and monitor the performance of advertising campaigns.

CHAPTER 6

INTERNATIONAL SEA WITH MICROSOFT ADVERTISING TO GROW EXPORT SALES IN THE U.S. AND BEYOND

“

Initially Microsoft adCenter, then Bing Ads, and finally, since April 2019³⁶, back to almost the previous branding, Microsoft Advertising reaches more than 680 million people monthly in the world³⁷, which is roughly 10% of Yahoo! and Bing's global market share. This number might look tiny compared to Google's global market share, yet Microsoft Advertising has great advantages to offer for your digital exports. How? In the next pages you will find the answer.

MICROSOFT ADVERTISING: WHAT IS IT?

Microsoft Advertising is more than the rebranded Bing Ads. It is a global platform on which you can manage ad campaigns on Bing.com plus all the websites Bing owns or operates, i.e., MSN.com, Bing.de, Bing.co.uk, etc., on AOL.com plus all the websites AOL owns and operates, and on Yahoo.com plus all the websites Yahoo! owns and operates.

These properties together with other third-party websites owned and operated by Microsoft and Yahoo's syndicated search partners constitute Microsoft Search Network, and are all gathered under the Microsoft Advertising platform, which means that you can manage your ads throughout all these websites around the world with the same tool at the same time.

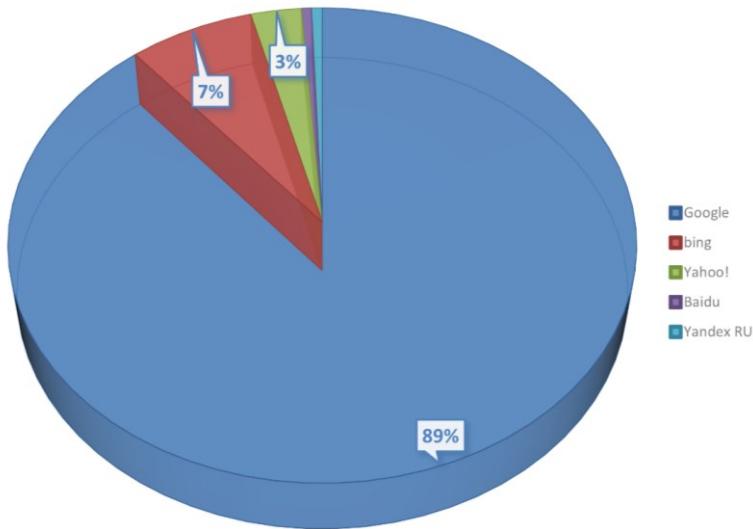


Figure 20: Yahoo! and Bing worldwide market share in January 2021³⁸.

³⁶ <https://about.ads.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/post/april-2019/bing-ads-is-now-microsoft-advertising>.

³⁷ According to Comscore qSearch (custom), June 2021, worldwide, desktop traffic only.

³⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/216573/worldwide-market-share-of-search-engines/>.

When you think about online advertising, you might argue that Microsoft Advertising, Google Ads, or all the other search engines advertising systems are all the same as they sell ads space on their SERPs using the same bidding and ranking criteria based on keywords, quality scores, CTR, and the likes.

However, each search engine has its own factors, and therefore ads campaigns can perform very differently from one search engine to another.

Regarding Microsoft Advertising, search volume and competition are lower than Google. Consequently, the CPC is also less expensive. Moreover, the demographics of the people using Microsoft's networks, also known as your ads' audience, differ from the one for Google Ads: they tend to be older, spend more online³⁹, have higher revenues, and higher education.

If these categories of people are part of your prospects and you are targeting countries where Microsoft Search Network has a significant market share, you should definitely start using it.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOUR DIGITAL EXPORT PROJECT?

The global market potential on the web is huge, and Microsoft Advertising has the second largest share of it after Google.

In certain regions, Microsoft Search Network is very relevant, such as in the U.S. where its PC market share is more than 37%⁴⁰: without Microsoft Advertising you would miss out on a big piece of the pie if your export project were targeting such regions.

³⁹ <https://about.ads.microsoft.com/en-us/get-started/small-business>.

⁴⁰ <https://about.ads.microsoft.com/en-us/insights/planning-tools/microsoft-search-network-data?Market=US>.



Figure 21: the potential reach of Microsoft Advertising in the U.S.

What is even more significant for you to know is that the people Microsoft Search Network can reach are not the same as those that Google Ads reaches, simply because they use platforms different from those of Google.

If your online advertising strategy consists of reaching as many prospects as possible, putting faith in Google alone can be insufficient, especially when your project is on the international scale and requires that ads and channels be adapted to your foreign prospects' behaviors.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The way Microsoft Advertising works is so similar to the way Google Ads works that it would be of little help for me to cover it step by step. Instead, what is important for you to know are the two differences below that can be useful for your digital export project.



TIP

As for Google Ads, with Microsoft Advertising you can run ads in several countries and in different languages, by selecting the country and the language in the settings of your campaign, if you want to have the same settings for all your ad groups and ads, or in the settings of your ad groups or ads if you want each one of them to run in different countries or in different language.

The first key difference is about Microsoft Audience Ads. But what are Microsoft Audience Ads? They are special ads called ‘native’ ads that look like the other free content surrounding them. Their shape can look, for example, like an article among other articles on a news portal, or a post among other posts on a blog, etc.

These native ads are so similar to the free content that it would be impossible to spot them if they didn’t have a special ‘ad’ or ‘sponsored’ label. You can find more details about native ads in the chapter dedicated to Display ads.

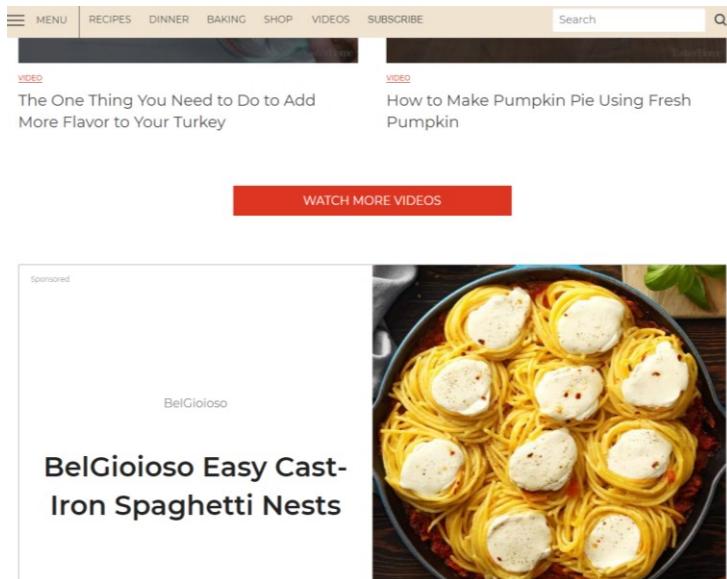


Figure 22: an example of native ad surrounded by other cooking content on the Taste of Home website.

This Audience Ads' visual feature is not the only one that matters. The placements are also interesting, because they are on special platforms, which form the Microsoft Audience Network and include websites such as FOX Business, Bing, CBS Sports, Outlook.com and MSN, to name a few.

Currently available in selected countries, Audience Ads are easy to run, since they are integrated into Microsoft Advertising. That means you can turn any Search ads in these countries into Audience Ads by using the same tool. This is a major difference from Google Ads, because to run native ads with Google you need to use a separate tool, Google AdSense through Google Ad Manager.



TIP

As the time of writing this chapter in November 2021, Microsoft Audience Ads was available in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela. Since this list evolves constantly, you can check for updates on Microsoft blog: <https://about.ads.microsoft.com/en-us/blog>.

The second key difference is Microsoft Advertising's approach, which takes for granted that most businesses are already running ads on Google. And, from that fact, Microsoft Advertising has integrated the functionality to import all Google Ads campaigns, ad groups, ads, highlights, etc., automatically in few minutes. It offers even the option to synchronize the two accounts regularly at the frequency you want⁴¹.

That means that, after you have set up your Microsoft Advertising account, you can simply work on Google Ads and have all your ads running on both the Google and Microsoft networks all over the world, since that synchronization also takes into account your language and country settings.

⁴¹ You can find the details about importing your campaigns from Google Ads here: <https://help.ads.microsoft.com/apex/index/3/en/51050>.



TIP

At this stage, you might think that adding Microsoft Advertising means having additional CPC to pay and advertising budget to finance. That's true, but, instead of seeing that simply as a cost, you should have a ROI approach. Your objective with Microsoft Advertising is to reach new prospects and sell more, which will provide additional returns and keep your ROI at the same level or higher.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Microsoft Advertising is a global platform you can use to manage ads campaigns on Bing.com plus all the websites Bing owns or operates, i.e., MSN.com, Bing.de, Bing.co.uk, etc., on AOL.com plus all the websites AOL owns and operates, and on Yahoo.com plus all the websites Yahoo! owns and operates. These properties together with other third-party websites owned and operated by Microsoft and Yahoo's syndicated search partners represent an audience of 700 million people around the world.

Although this figure looks smaller when compared to Google's audience, Microsoft Advertising offers several advantages that can be very effective for your digital export project.

CHAPTER 7

HOW TO USE INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY ADS TO GROW EXPORT SALES

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Display is a digital form of advertising in which the ads appear on specific third-party websites through content made of text, images, video, etc.⁴² Display differs from Search in that the former uses a push approach, while the latter uses a pull one. When people see a Search ad it's because they are already looking for the item in the ad (pulling it from the web), while, when people see a Display ad, it's because the advertiser pushed it to them based on some criteria. Since Display ad spend is almost the same as Search ad spend internationally, you need to know how to use it for your digital exports.

WHY USE DISPLAY ADS FOR A DIGITAL EXPORT PROJECT?

Since 1994, when it was used for the first time, Display advertising has become the most used paid digital lever in the world, accounting for more than 55% of global digital advertising, which was valued at \$455.30 billion in 2020, according to eMarketer⁴³. This value is the result not only of the Display ads on Google's platforms, but also of those on social media, on smartphones and on video players.

As mentioned in the introduction, the main difference between online Display ads and Search ads is that people see a Display ad when they are doing something not related to the ad, meaning that the ad is pushed to them when they are watching a video, or reading a recipe, or writing an email, etc., while they see a Search ad when they are actively looking for something related to the ad on a search engine, meaning that they pull the ad by themselves through their queries on the search engine.

The objectives are, therefore, different: Display ads are mostly used to support brand awareness and to encourage people to complete a purchase⁴⁴.

But are Display ads useful for digital export development? Absolutely! They are essential when you want to sell in a new country where your brand is still unknown or too little known, for two main reasons.

First, since you compete in a foreign country against local competitors, whose brand is more popular than yours, to get the attention of the same prospective customers, you need your business to be more visible. Display ads help you increase the visual impact of your brand and of your value proposition in your prospective customers' mind. And

⁴² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_display_advertising. Text available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>.

⁴³ Ethan Cramer-Flood, 'Worldwide Digital Ad Spending 2021', eMarketer, 29 April 2021, <https://www.emarketer.com/content/worldwide-digital-ad-spending-2021>.

⁴⁴ The business models between the two are also different: for Display it is most often based on CPM and for search on CPC.

strong visual impact is more effective for converting prospects into customers than textual messages, particularly on the international scale.

Second, people almost never buy immediately after having seen an ad on the SERPs. It takes a long time and several steps before a prospect becomes a customer, in any sector and in any country. Even if he clicks on your organic or paid link on the SERP, and visits your website or landing page, he will probably leave without doing anything and will go on with his work or another task totally unrelated to your business. Display ads are a solution for you to get him back and to keep him thinking about your business until he takes the action you want.

For your digital export project, Display advertising is an opportunity to show your business, your products, or your brand in several different formats on millions of third-party websites, on mobile apps, on social networks and on many other media⁴⁵ around the globe.

When you set it in the right way, it is very effective not only for developing your brand awareness in a new country but also for getting conversions and export sales from people that were not searching for your business, since they probably didn't know it, but happened to see your Display ad and thought it was a relevant solution for their needs.

In general, here is how Display advertising works:

- **On the advertiser's side:** if you want to run a Display ad, you must choose a Display network, such as Google Display Network, which you will see in the next pages, sign up to its conditions, create your advertiser account, and choose the most relevant third-party websites to use for your ad.
- **On the display's side:** websites, called 'publishers', participate in a program run by a Display network, such as Google's AdSense, which you will see in the next pages, to rent some space on their web pages and get paid for displaying your ads.
- **In between, the Display platform:** it lets
 - Advertisers manage the criteria for their ads and choose the type of ad.

⁴⁵ For example, on Gmail with Google Display.

- Advertisers pay for their ads.
- Publishers run the ads following the advertisers' criteria.
- Publishers get paid.

Depending on the objectives and on the Display program, ads can be of several types, the most popular being:

- **Site placement:** you, as advertiser, are the one that chooses the website on which you want your Display ads to be shown.
- **Contextual:** the platform chooses among all the websites in its network which ones to run your ads on based on the best relevance between the content of the websites and your ad. For example, an ad for an antique sterling silverware cleaning product shown on an antique auction-house website.
- **Remarketing:** your Display ads will be shown to people that were either on your website or on other websites but left without completing the desired action.



TIP

The success factor with international Display ads is that it allows you to show your ad to the right foreign people, on the right website, in the right language, and at the right different times. In fact, since your prospective customers do many other tasks on the internet than just searches on Google, e.g., watching a football game, reading the news, etc., it is more effective for your ad to be viewed by them on other media as well and not just on SERPs.

CHOOSE YOUR DISPLAY

Now that you understand how Display advertising works and why it can be important for your digital export development, it is time for you to choose the Display network that is best suited to the objectives of your project. And that requires all of your attention, because, just as it is true that with Display ads you can introduce your business to tons of relevant prospects, it is also true that you can introduce your business to tons of irrelevant prospects. In other words, it can cost you a lot of

money if you choose a Display system that is not suited to your international development.

In the next pages you will find the details of the three biggest Display network providers: Google, Amazon, and Facebook.

Google Display Network

As for Search ads, Google is the leader for Display ads and has a very extended network of websites participating in its program, which is called AdSense on the publishers' side and Google Display Network (GDN) on the advertisers' side. This network has over two million websites, blogs, apps, videos, etc. that can reach 90% of the internet users around the world.

Before you even start thinking about your GDN ad, you should know that in September 2018⁴⁶ Google introduced the responsive format to its fixed Display ads. That means that you can choose between either creating your ads following the strict dimensions of the ad spaces below, or letting Google adjust the size of your ad. For fixed Display ads, these are some of the formats Google offers:

- Textual: title + two lines of 35 characters each + URL; this format is very similar to that used in SEA campaigns.
- Graphic⁴⁷: leaderboard (728 × 90 px), banner (468 × 60 px), mobile banner (320 × 50 px), skyscraper (120 × 600 px), billboard (970 × 250 px), etc.⁴⁸

However, since every website is different, even if you qualify for a particular one, your Display ad will not appear if it does not precisely conform to the dimensions for the ad space on it. And, to make sure it does, the only solution is to provide your ad in all the different sizes that conform to all the ad spaces of that website.

⁴⁶ <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/9131153>.

⁴⁷ The tool allows you to personalize your banners yourself with the graphic elements available to you, which may help you avoid the cost of a graphic designer. It searches for images and logos on your website, and only images that meet the requirements are displayed. If none is suitable, the tool suggests that you draw from a bank of images that it makes available.

⁴⁸ Find all Google's specifications here: <https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/1722096#zippy=%2Canimated-and-non-animated-image-ads>.

In terms of ad creation, particularly on the international scale, where it might be difficult for you to know all the websites on which your ad can be shown and all the sizes of their ad spaces, it can represent an expensive budget.

This is why responsive Display ads can be a better solution for a digital export project. You simply need to use your logo, your text and the images or videos you want to show in the ad. Then, Google will make several combinations of ads to determine those that will work well on the websites you choose, and they will automatically adjust in size to each ad space of those websites.

Like the Google Search network, the Google Display network runs on a live auction system. When you're eligible for a given ad placement — according to your targeting parameters — you're entered into an instantaneous auction with the other advertisers that are eligible for that same placement.

Google Display is available in all the countries where the Google search engine is found, and it systematically offers you its selection of sites in its network according to your activity.

This is a practical solution if you do not know enough about the export market and local digital media. Otherwise, if you already know the websites where you want to display your ads, you can search for them on GDN and, if they are listed there, select them directly through the platform. If they are not listed in GDN but show Display ads, it probably means that they are listed by other Display network providers⁴⁹.

Amazon Advertising and Amazon Display Advertising

Amazon offers services both in Search (sponsored advertisements exclusively for its search engine) and in Display, always adapted to desktops, mobiles, and tablets.

⁴⁹ For more details, see <https://www.google.fr/ads/displaynetwork/get-started/>.

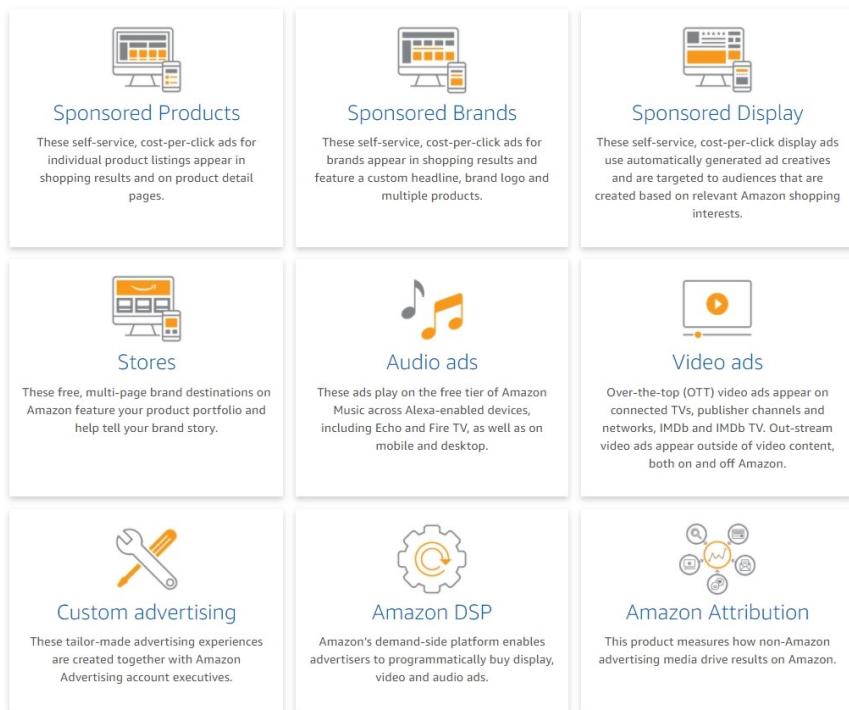


Figure 23: Amazon's advertising offers.

Amazon is the leader in product searches. It, therefore, represents an alternative, or an interesting Display complement, especially in markets where it is widely used.

The main advantages of Amazon Advertising are as follows:

- With Amazon, users are at a more advanced stage of their shopping journey, and their conversion rate is higher: 10% compared to 1% or 2% for Google. If your export business concerns products, a campaign on Amazon may perform better than those carried out on other levers.
- Amazon's criteria for displaying advertisements are based mainly on sales performance⁵⁰, which is calculated on several parameters,

⁵⁰ To be precise, Amazon's formula includes performance criteria (CTR history + conversion rate + sales) and relevance criteria (consistency between title + product

including not only the CTR history but especially the conversion rate and sales of the advertiser. So, the more you sell, the more your ads will show up first for lower prices. This is an essential difference from Google, which prioritizes CTR and not sales performance⁵¹.

- Synergies between Amazon Advertising ads and Amazon DSP services (the former AAP), i.e., ads that appear on third-party sites. The combination of the two has great potential to develop sales performance and brand awareness for export.

Amazon DSP	Amazon Advertising
Higher number of impressions	Lower number of impressions
Lower CTR	Higher CTR
Effective for brand awareness	Effective for business performance

Figure 24: the key differences between Amazon Advertising and Amazon DSP.



TIP

Amazon offers a wide variety of advertising solutions, which are particularly interesting when you export products to the countries where it operates. On top of that, another advantage is that Amazon can also become your logistics partner in these same markets.

Facebook Audience Network Ads

Facebook Audience Network Ads is the in-app display network that Facebook has deployed in 2014 for monetizing mobile apps. It has more than one billion users and millions of advertisers around the world, including some of the biggest global brands as well as SMEs.

description, seller name and terms used in the search). In general, good relevance creates good performance.

⁵¹ A small downside of Google Ads is that, while auctions can also be geared towards conversion, and allow you to prioritize the ads that perform the best, the positioning of advertisers remains calculated according to criteria other than sales.

The advantage of Facebook Audience Network Ads is that, if you are already running ads or boosts on Facebook, starting to use it will be simpler and better than starting with Display ads on a totally unknown system.

First, because the guidelines are the same, apart from the ads' sizes. Second, because, as Facebook claims⁵², Audience Network ads work better when they are done together with ads on Facebook.

You can run Facebook Audience Network Ads everywhere you run Facebook ads. To start running your ads on mobile apps with Facebook Audience Network, create a new campaign and go to 'Placements' in your New Ad Set settings, where you need to select 'Manual Placements' and 'Mobile' under devices. Then click on 'Audience Network' under Platforms.

The screenshot shows the 'Placements' section of the Facebook Ad Set settings. It includes options for 'Automatic Placements (Recommended)' and 'Manual Placements'. Under 'Devices', 'Mobile' is selected. In the 'Platforms' section, 'Facebook' and 'Audience Network' are checked, while 'Instagram' and 'Messenger' are unchecked. A red arrow points to the 'Audience Network' checkbox.

Placements Learn more

Automatic Placements (Recommended)
Use automatic placements to maximize your budget and help show your ads to more people. Facebook's delivery system will allocate your ad set's budget across multiple placements based on where they're likely to perform best.

Manual Placements
Manually choose the places to show your ad. The more placements you select, the more opportunities you'll have to reach your target audience and achieve your business goals.

Devices

Mobile ▾

Platforms

Facebook Instagram
 Audience Network Messenger

Figure 25: the settings for Audience Network Ads.

⁵² <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/audience-network-ad-performance>.

RETARGETING, PROGRAMMATIC AND NATIVE ADS

In Display advertising, there are systems that are currently having very dynamic development at the international level. These are retargeting, programmatic, and native ads.

Retargeting

Retargeting, also known as 'remarketing', is about showing ads only to people that have visited your website before or have already seen your ad once. After their visit, they will see your banner appear on other sites.

Retargeting is particularly relevant if the buying process is not impulsive, which is often the case with cross-border purchases. Beyond its effectiveness on sales, this system offers the advantage of reinforcing your brand image with foreign internet users by making them return to your website more easily.

This tool is quite powerful if used well. The following two aspects are particularly important:

- The time lapse between the visit to the website, or the first view of an ad, and the redisplay of the ad: if it is too short, the internet user will probably be in the same non-conversion conditions and you risk annoying him; if it is too long, you may no longer benefit from the memorization effect between his first visit, or his first view, and the redisplay.
- The relevance between advertising and your website: if you do not take care of your international SEO when exporting, you run the risk of attracting poorly qualified people, and retargeting will cost you more money, because it will re-display your ads to uninterested people that will not convert.

By communicating via 'retargeted Display' advertising with internet users that have already visited your website, or viewed your ads, you reach prospects that have expressed an interest in your offers: this is very important, especially because prospects, whatever their origin,

rarely make a purchase on their first visit to a new website or after their first view of an ad.

Programmatic

Despite a drop in investments in mid-2018 following the entry into force of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), programmatic Display captures the majority of investments in digital Display advertising. As eMarketer estimated, almost 88% of all U.S. digital display ad spend will be done programmatically⁵³.

The term 'programmatic Display' refers to the automated and scheduled purchase of online retail space at real time building (RTB) auctions through 'ad exchanges' or public and private advertising marketplaces. With this system, advertisers automate the purchase of ad space one by one in real time based on available data on the behavior of target internet users, instead of fixed ad space purchased in advance.

The benefits of programmatic Display are numerous:

- Geographic segmentation of audiences via supply side platforms (SSPs) and demand side platforms (DSPs)⁵⁴ of international media, such as what Amazon offers.
- More relevant ads to the audience: more precise targeting with real-time data makes it possible to reach the right audience, at the right time, in the right place.
- A better controlled ROI because the volumes, in terms of clicks, visitors or leads, are announced.
- Save time with automation, which reduces errors and repetitive jobs.
- Synergies with other levers because it can be deployed on any other online media

⁵³ Lauren Fisher, 'US Programmatic Ad Spending Forecast 2019', eMarketer, 25 April 2019, <https://www.emarketer.com/content/us-programmatic-ad-spending-forecast-2019>.

⁵⁴ The first are platforms that allow publishers to offer their inventory to be auctioned, and the second are platforms that allow advertisers and agencies to access the sale to auction and buy advertising space.

A critical point of programmatic Display for export is to ensure that the ads do not appear on unwanted sites, for political reasons, reputation, style, etc.

Because programmatic buying is based on users rather than content, you run the risk that your ads may end up on disturbing websites. In this case, you have two options:

- Use a blacklist in the DSP with websites or content categories where you do not want your ads to appear. Since websites change often, remember to update this blacklist regularly.
- Use a whitelist, especially if your brand is very sensitive or if you do not understand the digital environment in the foreign country concerned. It is then a matter of listing in your DSP the websites and content categories where your ads can be displayed.

Either way, if you are working with an agency for your programmatic advertising, be careful about how they can exclude sensitive and low-quality websites.

Native ads

Native ads appeared at the end of 2012 in the United States, in response to the drop in clicks on banners⁵⁵, due to ad-blocking software. Indeed, depending on the country, age group and equipment, ad blockers can affect up to half of internet users.

India, Indonesia, Germany, North America and Scandinavia are among the areas where ad-block use is the most widespread⁵⁶.

If the foreign country you are targeting is affected by this phenomenon, one solution is to use native advertisements. Native ads⁵⁷ still use the Display system but they are displayed differently from traditional banners: their format, textual or illustrated, blends perfectly into the

⁵⁵ From around 10% in 2000 to less than 1% in 2014.

⁵⁶ 'PageFair 2017 Report: The State of the Blocked Web', Blockthrough, 1 February 2017, <https://pagefair.com/blog/2017/adblockreport/>.

⁵⁷ Business Insider has predicted that native ads will account for 74% of ads in 2021. Margaret Boland, 'Native ads will drive 74% of all ad revenue by 2021', Insider, 14 June 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-native-ad-report-forecasts-2016-5?IR=T>.

editorial content of the website on which they are displayed, whether it is a showcase, e-commerce, institutional, blog, sport, or other type of website.

The adaptation of the format is automatic, without the advertiser's needing to intervene, and sometimes the level of harmonization with the content is such that internet users may not notice that it is an advertisement.

And, because of that, even if native ads show a special label indicating 'sponsored content', or 'promoted', or 'recommended content', etc., their CTR are almost ten times higher than traditional Display ads.

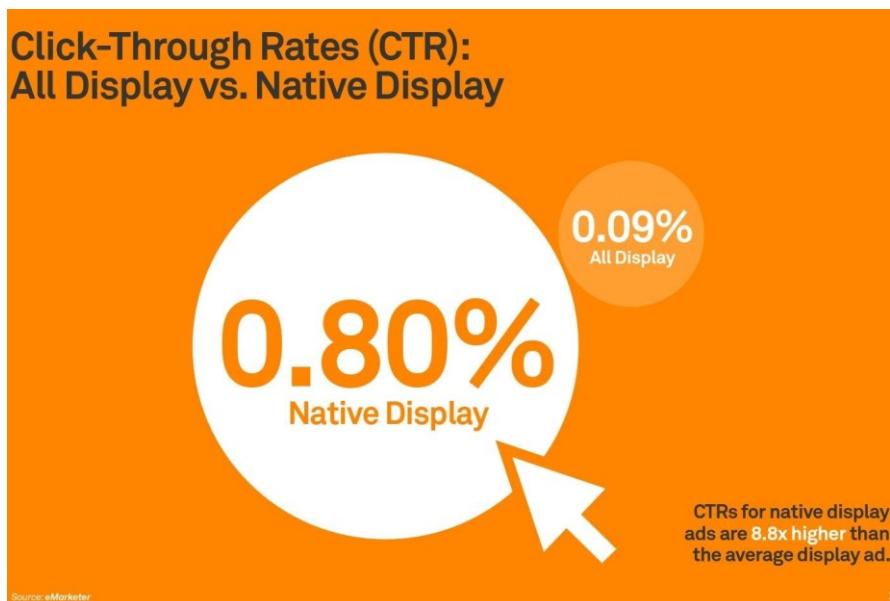


Figure 26: average CTR in native ads versus average CTR in Display.

FINAL TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY ADS

To optimize the effectiveness of your international Display advertisements, you should focus on the following points:

- Targeting: it is generally useless and expensive to run all-out campaigns.
- Localized quality: make sure your textual and visual messages, your content and the ad format are of good quality⁵⁸ and effective for the export markets you are targeting. Your Display campaigns must be imbued with the values of your export prospects so that they are clicked.
- The format: it must be well suited to the technical constraints of the countries you are targeting. Desktop versus mobile, network quality, etc., these are parameters that can impact the quality of your Display advertising.
- Planning: although the graphic production is relatively fast, the validation of the media, the locations, the formats, the messages, and the possible negotiations with the advertising agencies are long steps. If you want to communicate on the occasion of a specific international event, plan to do so at least four months in advance.
- The media: make sure there is total consistency between the content of the page, your ad and the target audience in the export market.

⁵⁸ For example, take into account the length of texts. A text in English is about twice as short as in German. An ad in German, therefore, requires approximately 50% more space.

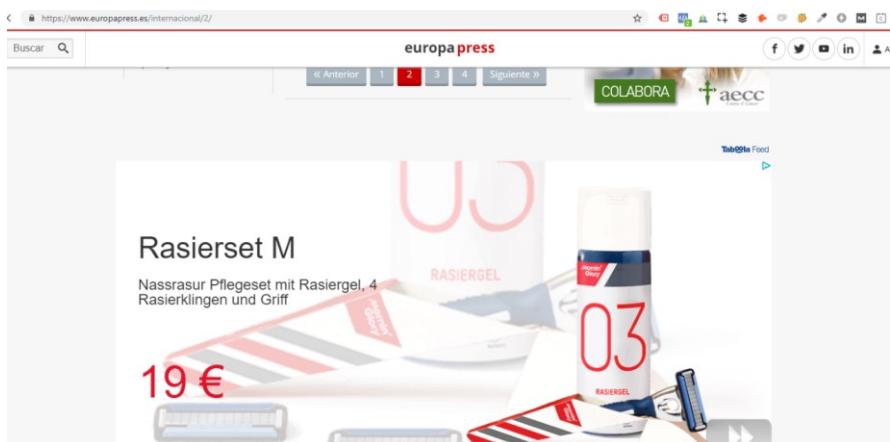
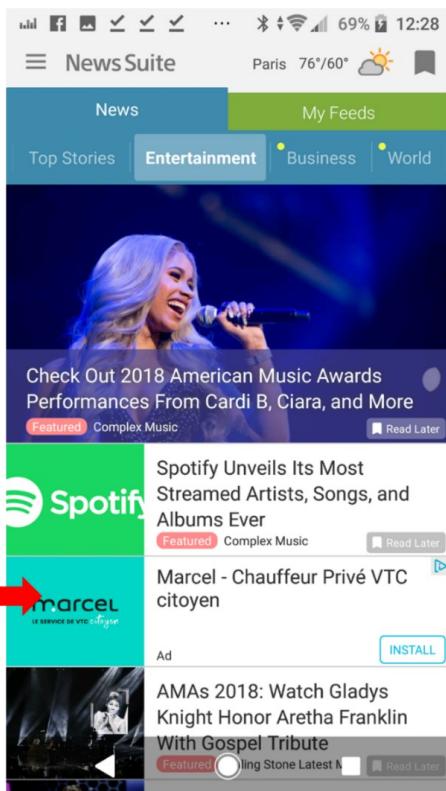


Figure 27: examples of native mobile in-feed ad and with the Taboola widget.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *For Display ads, Google, once again, is dominant, but Amazon and Facebook can be interesting alternatives for your digital export project.*
- *Beyond the choice of advertising networks, the use of certain technologies can increase the effectiveness of your international Display campaigns. These are solutions for retargeting, programmatic and native ads.*

CHAPTER 8

SMA AND ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EXPORT

“

SMA, social media advertising, refers to advertisements displayed on social media to motivate fans or followers to take a specific action: a purchase, a download, a registration, etc.

To optimize SMA for your digital export project, there are several techniques you can use. The best and easiest ones are explained in the next pages.

WHY DO SMA FOR EXPORT?

SMA is another effective lever of web marketing that you can use for your business internationally. With a value of \$153.7 billion in 2021 and expected to grow to US\$229.6 billion in 2025 worldwide⁵⁹, SMA includes promotional posts and advertising campaigns on social networks, an advertising activity that represents 54% of companies' marketing budget in 2018 according to Statista.

SMA actions are very synergetic not only with SMO but also with SEO and SEA, especially when they redirect traffic to your website. In particular, for export, SMA helps you:

- Increase the visibility and awareness of your brand in foreign countries.
- Reduce international marketing costs, because it is generally cheaper than traditional marketing, such as trade fairs, print ads in magazines, etc.
- Build trust and credibility with foreign prospective clients.

THE POINTS TO VALIDATE FOR YOUR INTERNATIONAL SMA

In the international development process, it is not enough to deploy multilingual advertising. You must also adapt the landing pages to your target foreign audience, ensure consistency of the language used in the content, set clear objectives, etc. These are the elements of an international SMA strategy.

These are the points you need to cover:

- 1) Check which social networks are most relevant to your business in your target foreign market: Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram,

⁵⁹ <https://www.statista.com/study/36294/digital-advertising-report-social-media-advertising/>.

Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc., in Western countries, or WeChat, vk, Sina Weibo, etc., in the eastern hemisphere. Given the high number of social networks, you should invest only in those that are really effective in your target markets.

- 2) Decide how to operate for the international deployment, depending on the size of your company and that of the target countries:
 - The decentralized way, which allows:
 - Local management of budgets.
 - Positioning specific content in the countries.
 - Management of evergreen and of localized events calendar.
 - The centralized way, which allows:
 - Better control of the brand image.
 - Economies of scale in the production and posts of content.
 - International monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 3) Check which social networks are most relevant to your foreign target audience: the broader the social network audience, the better you need to configure your targeting through the social network advertising tools. For example, Facebook offers a very comprehensive targeting tool that focuses on all the information it has, which makes it effective in most countries.

SOME TRENDS TO FOLLOW IN INTERNATIONAL SMA

Social marketing advertising continues to gain power, and many new trends are emerging in this area. Keeping up with them is, therefore, essential. For your digital export project, these two trends are particularly useful:

- **Ephemeral content:** after Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networks have also integrated similar

functionalities, known as ‘stories’, to allow users and advertisers to publish content that disappears after a few hours. Using stories to communicate in a foreign country is a good way to test your advertising messages on new markets while limiting the risk thanks to their ephemeral nature.

- **Video is king:** according to Adobe, posts with video have 25% more engagement on Facebook and double on Instagram compared to posts without video. A video without text or voice is the best content for international distribution.

THE KPIs TO USE FOR MEASURING SMA PERFORMANCE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Choosing the KPIs for measuring SMA actions is an important step, and it is even more important for international SMA actions, although many companies consider it a tedious job. The most important thing here is to differentiate between vanity indicators, such as the number of likes or followers, and business indicators, such as the number of sales or customers generated for each SMA action.

While the number of likes, shares, and comments that posts get is important for measuring the relevance of content, increasing that number is not the goal of your digital export project!

The KPIs you choose to use are good only when they are well aligned with your digital export objectives. And each objective has appropriate KPIs. In a digital export development process, the objectives often relate to increasing sales or brand awareness in the new markets.

And the KPIs must be specific for both of these two cases, for example:

KPI for sales objectives:

- The number of purchases made online or offline with a promotional code that you provided in an advertisement on a social network, with a specific code for each foreign market.

- The number of purchases made by internet users after clicking directly on the ad, a statistic obtained using the tracking tags installed on your website, for example the Facebook pixel, which also allows you to check the geographic data of your customers.

KPI for brand awareness objectives:

- The number of impressions, subscribers, clicks or shares that your post or page obtains with the advertisement in a specific country.
- The amount of content mentioning you that is generated by your target foreign audience.
- The number of registrations for an event or a newsletter that you mentioned in the advertisement.



TIP

Be simple in the definition of the KPIs. Do not scatter with dozens of indicators. Three to five are often enough. You should remain consistent over time and frequently compare the evolution of advertising results in each country to adjust the worst-performing actions.

If your foreign ad campaign gets few results, avoid changing or expanding the target. First, you should better analyze your message, your visual content, the format, the vocabulary, etc. These are often the elements that make social media advertising campaigns underperform.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Social media ads continue to gain momentum. To make good use of them internationally, an SMA strategy is essential to:

- Increase your visibility and reputation in your target foreign countries.
- Reduce international marketing costs.
- Strengthen confidence and credibility vis-à-vis your prospective clients abroad.

CHAPTER 9

INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS ON FACEBOOK

“

Facebook is the most widely used social network in the world, with more 2.7 billion active users per month in Q3 2020⁶⁰. Despite the controversy over the use of personal data and ‘fake news’, of all the social media, Facebook remains the one that companies invest in the most for their advertisements.

Here you will discover the best practices to produce effective advertising for your digital export project.

GET STARTED WITH ADVERTISING ON FACEBOOK

The first thing to do before you start with Facebook advertising is to install the ‘Facebook pixel’ on your website. The Facebook pixel is a JavaScript code provided by Facebook, to be integrated into a website to track conversions and ad performance on Facebook and Instagram. This is very similar to the Analytics code for tracking the performance of Google Ads campaigns. You need it if you want to control your advertising budget and optimize costs.

The installation of this pixel is not complicated, but it differs depending on the CMS or the structure of your website. You will find all the detailed instructions here:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/help/314143995668266>.

Once that is done, there are two other useful points for you to understand before embarking on international advertising with Facebook:

- The difference between ‘boosted posts’ and ‘advertisements’ in Facebook’s terminology.
- And, for the latter, how to use the Ads Manager.

BOOSTED POSTS VS. ADVERTISEMENTS ON FACEBOOK

To make a boosted post, also called a ‘promotion’, the post must already be on the ‘timeline’, which means published in the news feed of your page, and preferably in the language of the export market you are targeting.

⁶⁰ Simon Kemp, ‘Digital 2021: Global Overview Report’, DataReportal, 27 January 2021, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report>.

For example, if you target Germany, you can boost one of your German timeline posts to a defined audience located in Germany, for a budget you decide on.

This format is the easiest way to advertise on Facebook because it is done and managed directly in the back office of your page, without the need to use the Ads Manager⁶¹, which is mandatory for ads.

Boosted posts will appear on the news feed of people matching the target you selected. As a reminder, the ‘company’ and ‘personal profile’ pages are two different things on Facebook, and they do not have the same functionalities: promotions and advertisements are possible only from a company page.

Although company pages are less visible than personal profiles, using the latter to communicate about your business does not allow you to use targeting features for your boosted posts and would, therefore, not be effective, especially for export.

Boosted posts can also be displayed on Instagram, which is very handy if your target also uses this network.

Here are the steps to boost an international post:

- Choose your post in the language of the audience you want to target. If you want to boost a post in a foreign language without posting it on your page, you can click directly on the ‘boost’ button instead of ‘post’ when creating it.
- Choose your target: i.e., the people you want to reach, beyond your fans, by defining the demographic category, centers of interest, geographical area, etc. Be sure to limit the geographical scope to the zone and language that you are targeting for export with your promotion: if it is not properly limited, your ad may be displayed to and clicked on by people that are not relevant, and that means spending your advertising budget for nothing.
- Choose the maximum budget and the length of time to spend it.
- Validate the launch of the boost.

⁶¹ Without this Ads Manager, you cannot take advantage of certain personalization parameters or ad targeting. But, if you don’t need the advertisements, for the promotions you can avoid this tool, which is very time consuming, especially in the learning phase.



TIP

There is a substantial difference between a normal post and a boosted post:

- *A normal post appears only in the Fan News feed of your company page.*
- *A boosted post appears on your Fan News Feed, plus that of all the people you have defined as the target audience for the promotion.*

USE FACEBOOK ADS MANAGER

To advertise, you need to use Ads Manager, a platform that Facebook makes available to you free of charge to create and manage all of your ads, even boosted posts, although they can be managed without this platform.

Ads Manager is a platform with more advanced personalization and targeting options.

Apart from the difference in content, the other main difference between boosted posts and advertisements lies in the objectives: with a boosted post you will be able to generate engagements with your page, i.e., likes, comments, or shares, while with Facebook ads you can additionally result in app installs, website redirects, video views, orders, store visits, lead generation, etc.

If you are logging into this platform for the first time, you are probably going to be fairly confused: what is the difference between a ‘campaign’, ‘ad set’ and an ‘ad’? For those who are not in the advertising industry, these terms seem to define the same thing, yet they are not. A campaign, a set of advertisements, and an advertisement together form what Facebook calls the ‘structure’ of a campaign.

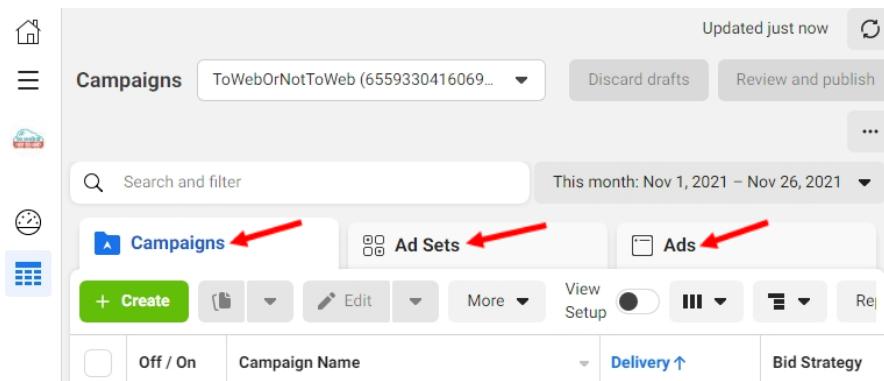


Figure 28: Facebook's Ads Manager.

- **Campaign:** the advertising objective, which is the foundation of your advertising, is defined at the campaign level. For example, you can set the objective of generating more fans on your page, promoting your business locally or internationally, attracting export prospects for your business, etc. A campaign can contain multiple sets of ads.
- **Ad set:** it defines how your ad is delivered. At this level, you define your budget, the broadcasting schedule and the audience you want to reach in terms of gender, age, etc. For international purposes, pay particular attention to places in relation to your export countries. In general, unless you have several years of experience with advertising abroad, you will have unknown variables in your new markets: this is where the ad set will come in handy. In the same campaign, and for the same objective, for example 'generating export leads,' you can create multiple sets of ads each targeting a different audience, which you can easily compare and manage. You can also have different ad sets with different time frames or budgets. A set of ads can contain several ads.
- **Ads:** these are your creations of textual and visual content, with images or videos, and 'call to action' that will be seen by your audience.

Ads are subject to Facebook's control: they will only appear after Facebook has validated them, and the process usually takes up to 24 hours. So, if you want to launch a campaign on the occasion of an event,

don't wait until the last minute. You can schedule the ad without running it, allowing Facebook to review and approve it ahead of time.



TIP

As a general rule, keep in mind that internet users do not use social networks for shopping and do not behave in the same way as if they were on Amazon or another e-commerce website, although that is changing.

So, avoid tiring them with too many ads and commercial offers on Facebook and other social networks.

You will have several geographic targeting options using the 'Locations' field:

- By group of countries or by geographic area, for example 'Asia' or 'Europe'.
- By free trade zones, for example 'MERCOSUR'.
- By sub-regional zone in a country, for example 'California'.
- According to other particularities, for example 'Emerging markets', etc.

The 'Languages' field (just after 'Locations') should be left empty, unless you want to target a language other than the official language of the places you have selected. Depending on your purpose and format, you can also create ads in multiple languages: once you set the default language, Facebook will translate your ad into the other languages automatically.

The advantage of international advertisements with Facebook is that the social network is not limited to displaying your ads. It also analyzes their performance in real time, and, if the results are better in certain places than in others, it will prioritize your budget for displaying them in these places.

You will be able to see these results by location in your Ads Manager.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

To advertise internationally on Facebook, there are two options:

- *Boosted posts.*
- *Ads.*

For both, you can use the Ads Manager platform that Facebook provides free of charge to create, distribute, and analyze all promotional actions. But, while this platform is required for ads, it is not for boosted posts.

CHAPTER 10

INTERNATIONAL PROMOTIONS AND ADVERTISEMENTS ON INSTAGRAM

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Instagram is the social network with the highest engagement rate. With more than a billion active users per month, this network can be a very effective web-marketing lever for export.

Let's see how to run high-performance advertising for your digital export project on this network and how to create synergies with Facebook.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF INSTAGRAM

Despite the obvious advantage of its high engagement rate, Instagram also has a very particular weakness: the URLs of a website mentioned in the text of the posts are not hyperlinks, which means that they are not clickable! And, even with the right-click, you can't copy the URL text to paste it into a browser's address bar.

This is a technical drawback that prevents redirection to a website outside Instagram and makes converting more complex.

The only solution is to direct followers to the links in the bio at the very top of the Instagram profile. These links can be changed at any time, for example with links to specific 'landing pages' for international promotions, but this requires precision and regular coordination between the texts in the posts and the updates of the links in your bio.

Besides the links in the bio, the other two ways to have clickable links on Instagram is through ads that allows you to add 'call-to-action' buttons, and through the shopping functionality, although this solution is only available to e-commerce accounts as explained in the next pages.

THE SHOPPING FUNCTIONALITY ON INSTAGRAM

There is indeed another option to have clickable links on Instagram, but you must have an e-commerce website to manage the Shopping⁶²

⁶² This feature is currently available in the following countries: South Africa, Germany, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Korea, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Spain, the United States (including Puerto Rico), Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Netherlands, Peru, Poland,

functionality, which allows users to be referred to the site or to make purchases directly on Instagram. To integrate this functionality, you must:

- Sell physical goods that comply with Instagram's terms and conditions.
- Be a business account.
- Be associated with a Facebook catalog, created, and managed in the Facebook Business Manager (or through the Shopify or Bigcommerce platform). To do this, the template of your Facebook page must be the 'shopping' template, that you can select in your settings. Then, you can access the 'shopping' section of Facebook to create your catalog and add your products.
- Once this is in place, on the Instagram side, here is the procedure:
- Submit your request to Instagram. In general, the validation process takes a few days, depending on the specifics of your business or sector.
- Once your request is approved, you will need to change your account format to 'shopping' in your Instagram settings to select the catalog you created on Facebook.
- Then you can start publishing images, videos or stories and tag your products with their price and with the links to buy them on the e-commerce pages you have configured. These 'shopping' posts will be identified by a 'shopping bag' pictogram in the corner of your visual.
- You can check all the details and requirements here:
<https://www.facebook.com/help/instagram/1627591223954487>

Portugal, Dominican Republic, Czech Republic, Romania, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay. Since this list evolves continuously, you can check for updates here: <https://www.facebook.com/help/instagram/321000045119159>.

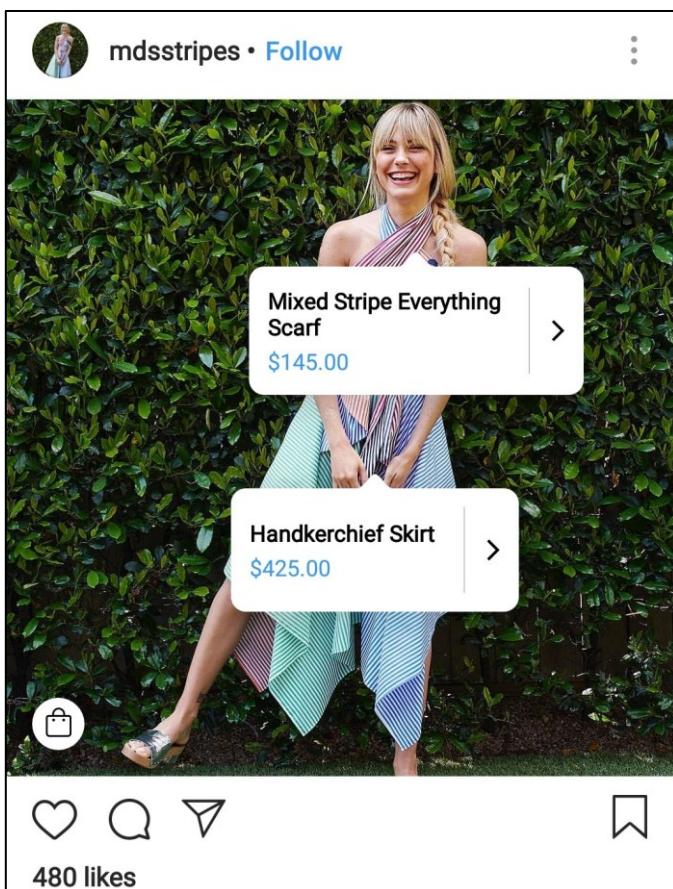


Figure 29: example of a Shopping Post on Instagram.

PROMOTING ON INSTAGRAM IS NOT ADVERTISING!

Promotions are a simplified method of advertising on Instagram. It consists of boosting a post directly via the application. Just click on the

'Promote' button that appears at the bottom of your posts and they'll be more visible directly in your target audience's news feed.

After clicking this button, here's what to do:

- First choose where you want to redirect users that clicked on your promotion: to your profile, your website or your instant messaging on Instagram.
- Next, you will need to define your target audience: automatic, local, or manual. For an export promotion campaign, you must select 'manual' to be able to enter the countries that interest you and possibly other parameters to target your foreign audience more effectively.
- All you have to do is select your budget and the duration of your promotion.

Before posting, Instagram shows you a summary screen with the estimated result, allowing you to adjust your budget if it is too far from your goals.

Once your promotion is launched, you will be able to monitor its performance in real time, such as the number of impressions, the budget spent, etc.

FOR YOUR INSTAGRAM ADVERTISEMENTS, GO TO FACEBOOK!

It might sound amazing, but, if you want to run an ad campaign on Instagram, Facebook is the place to be. Ads are, in fact, created, managed, and measured from the same platform, Facebook's Ads Manager. You will, therefore, have the same international targeting and personalized audience options as for ads on Facebook.

This platform also allows you to serve your ads on Instagram even if you do not have an Instagram account. However, this is not ideal, since users will not be able to click on your profile unless you have an account: they will only be able to click on your Facebook page, but if

they don't want to leave Instagram or don't have a Facebook account, they won't.

Once your Instagram and Facebook accounts are linked, Facebook's Ads Manager platform follows the same process for creating and managing your campaigns, ad sets, and ads.

Here are some peculiarities specific to Instagram:

- 1) Connect to your Ads Manager and click on 'Campaigns' then on 'Create'. Then choose the objective of your campaign before generating your set of ads:
 - Brand awareness
 - Traffic
 - Engagement
 - App installs
 - Video views
 - Lead generation
 - Conversion
 - Etc.

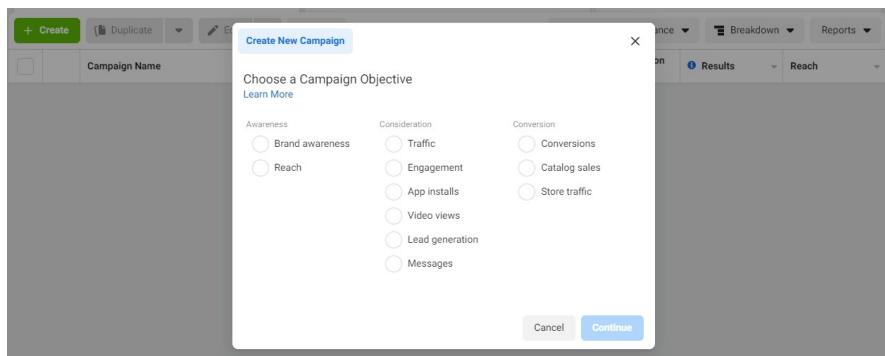


Figure 30: all the options of objectives on Facebook Ads Manager.

- 2) Define your international target and the countries the ad should be displayed in. If you've already created Lookalike Audiences or Custom Audiences segmented by export market in Facebook, you can use the same settings for your Instagram ads.

- 3) These first two steps are very similar to Facebook. From now on, you go into the specifics of Instagram with the choice of the distribution channel of the ads. Note: to be able to select Instagram, you must uncheck 'Automatic placements' and choose 'Manual placements'. In the new window, you will finally be able to choose Instagram and display your ad in the News Feed, Stories, Reels, etc. Instagram offers you five ad formats:
- Photo ad: a single square, or landscape, or vertical image in full screen.
 - Video ad: up to 60 seconds in square or landscape format.
 - Carousel ad: containing more than two images to scroll.
 - Slideshow announcement: containing three to ten images scrolling automatically.
 - Stories Ad: inspired by Snapchat with a single image or video that disappears and shows up among user stories.
- 4) Choose the format, upload your visuals or videos and write the text in the language of the export market that you are targeting or in a default language if you are targeting several countries and let your audience use the automatic translation of Instagram.
- 5) Set your budget: If you're starting out with international advertising on Instagram, start with small budgets to test formats and content in your new markets. You can increase your budget at any time if the results are positive.
- 6) Select the advertisement duration and confirm to launch the campaign.
- 7) Analyze the performance of your ad or of your campaign if you have launched several ads in different countries or in different languages. In the latter case, you have the advantage to compare the results of one country or language to another in relation to the format, the objective, the target, etc. This performance monitoring allows you to take action on the ads to improve them in real time.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Instagram does not allow hyperlinks in the texts of its posts, so you cannot redirect users to external websites. To have clickable links, there are three solutions:

- *Promotions directly on Instagram.*
- *Advertising via Facebook Ads Manager.*
- *The 'Shopping' functionality, although only available for e-commerce accounts. This functionality is specific to Instagram. Integrating it into your account allows you to create particularly effective cross-border ads.*

CHAPTER 11

INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING WITH LINKEDIN

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With almost 730 million users worldwide at the end of 2020⁶³, LinkedIn is a professional social network that any B2B marketing strategy of an international company should integrate.

We will now look at the advertising options offered by this network that can be useful for your digital export project.

⁶³ <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report>.

LINKEDIN, THE KING OF B2B ADVERTISING

Since its takeover by Microsoft, which enabled the development of new functionalities, LinkedIn offers two main functions to companies: on the one hand, promoting their business and their brand through posts and advertisements; on the other hand, prospecting qualified B2B leads via individual communications.

In both cases, you can target your audience according to several parameters and by combining them with each other:

- Geographical: country, city, etc.
- Demographics: age, sex, location, etc.
- Sociological: centers of interest, etc.
- Behavioral: through their interactions with your products or services.

Campaign Manager is LinkedIn's all-in-one advertising platform, whose interface and features are very similar to those of Facebook's Ads Manager. And this is good news because this consistency will allow users to become more familiar with these types of tools and to be more comfortable with producing and managing ads.

A MULTILINGUAL LINKEDIN PAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Unlike other networks, you don't have to have a company page to advertise, at least for some ad types. Your profile is enough.

However, communicating about a brand or about products or services is more effective if you do it with a company page, and for international advertisements it is better to have a multilingual page.

This page should at least include a description of your business and the link to your website. Then, all you have to do is translate the page into the languages of the export markets you are targeting via the LinkedIn translation tool.



TIP

Avoid creating a different page for each export market: managing them will be more complex, and above all you will dilute the number of your followers.

This is true for LinkedIn, but also for Facebook, Instagram, and in general for any other social network.

Once your multilingual business page is ready, you can start your ads. Like Facebook and Google Ads, LinkedIn offers you JavaScript code to install on your website to measure the performance of your ads.

It's called 'Insight Tag' and you can find all installation instructions here: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/lms/answer/88395/add-the-linkedin-insight-tag-to-your-website>.

You don't have to install it to run ads on LinkedIn, but it is highly recommended to do so, since it is the only way to identify ineffective ads and avoid wasting your advertising budget.

HOW TO CREATE ADS ON LINKEDIN

Here are the steps for your international advertising campaign on LinkedIn, via Campaign Manager.

- 1) Choose your objective from 'Brand awareness', 'Website visits', 'Engagement', 'Video views', 'Lead generation', 'Website conversions', and 'Job applicants'.

- 2) Define your target audience: language, country, industry, job title, skills, etc. For the location, like for Facebook, you can set them by group of countries or by geographic area, for example 'Asia' or 'Europe', or trade zones, for example 'EMEA', etc. As for the choice of language, you must select one language, the one used in the location that your ad will target. Therefore, the best for an international campaign is to have separate ads, one per each language and location.
- 3) Depending on the objective you have chosen, you will be offered to select the format among several options, some requiring a link to a company page:
 - 'Text Ads', which are displayed on the right side or at the top of your audience's timeline. The content must be very concise.
 - 'Sponsored Content', which appears directly in the feed of your target audience's profile and comes in three different formats:
 - Single image ads.
 - Ads with a carousel of images.
 - Video ads.
 - 'Dynamic Ads', which use profile data, such as photo, company name and job title, to personalize ads. They come in three formats:
 - Follower ads, textual or visual, to promote a business page.
 - Spotlight ads, which are intended to refer users to a website.
 - Job ads, which are intended to refer users to job offers.
 - 'Message Ads', which are deployed via LinkedIn messaging, i.e., sponsored In-Mails, a format that allows you to contact your international prospects individually and to start one-to-one interactions.

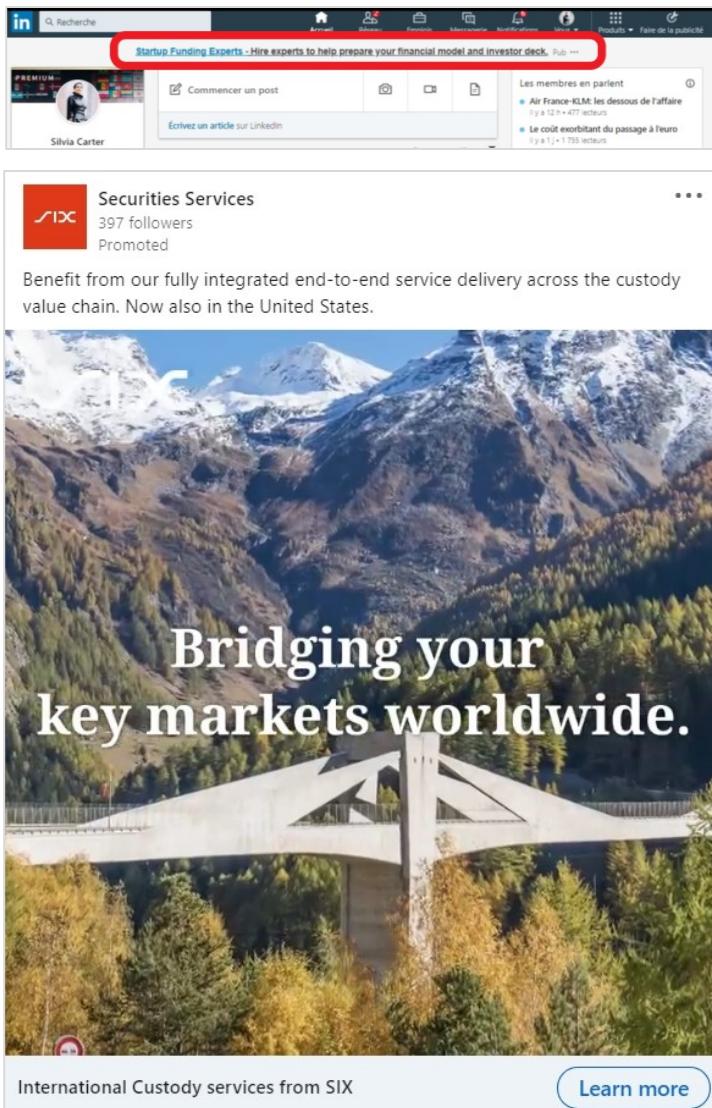


Figure 31: two examples of LinkedIn Ads, one textual and one with a short video plus the Call to Action 'Learn more'.

- 4) Create the content for your international advertising: make sure it is consistent with your export target and with the format you selected in the previous step. For example, if you want to increase the number of visitors to your next trade fair in the United States, a

Message Ads campaign in English will be more effective than a Text Ad.

- 5) Validate your daily budget, the maximum amount to spend per day — if it is exhausted by 1 p.m., your ad will not be displayed again until the next day — and your total budget, the maximum amount to spend for your campaign — once this amount is used up, your ad will change from ‘active’ to ‘finished’.
- 6) Select the type of auction and cost:
 - Automatic auctions using ‘machine learning’.
 - Manual auctions at maximum cost: here you can specify the maximum amount you are willing to pay according to four systems:
 - Cost per click (CPC): you must specify the maximum amount you want to pay per click (example: \$3 per click).
 - Cost per impressions or per mille (CPM): you must specify the maximum amount to display your ad a thousand times.
 - Cost per video view (CPV): you must specify the maximum amount to pay per view of your video ad⁶⁴.
 - Cost per send (CPS) is specific to Message Ads campaigns, for which you pay for each message that is successfully delivered to an active user of your target audience
- 7) Configure the delivery time of your campaign with a start date and, optional, an end date: select this duration as well as the delivery times according to the connection habits of your export target, which often vary from one country to another.
- 8) Set up KPIs according to the objective you defined at the outset for your campaign. That will allow you to calculate the conversion rate on the total conversions obtained, in addition to knowing how many times your prospects have clicked on your ad or your InMail or how many times your ad has been viewed. Once you have obtained these statistics, you can divide the spent budget and get your ROI.

⁶⁴ Find all the details about business models of paid web-marketing levers in the next pages.

- 9) Track results and tailor your campaigns: stop the ads that don't work and increase the ones that perform well. LinkedIn helps you do this in real time, which is why you need to monitor your campaigns closely and correct them as soon as possible.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *LinkedIn is the most important B2B social network in the world and uses Campaign Manager, an advertising platform inspired by that of Facebook, to allow its users to create, manage and measure advertisements.*
- *It includes very advanced and practical geographic targeting features for international ads.*
- *It offers several advertising options according to different international objectives: products/services promotion, lead generation, brand notoriety, job offers, In-Mails, etc.*

CHAPTER 12

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCERS AND INFLUENCE MARKETING

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Today's influencers do more than just buzz. They have become a full-fledged web-marketing lever, a very effective way to increase business and brand awareness internationally.

Influence marketing effectiveness is mainly due to its being relatively cheaper than other paid digital levers.

Here are some tips for using it well for your digital export project.

WHY USE INFLUENCERS?

The effectiveness of influence marketing is based on the ‘natural’ factor: messages and communications from influencers have a much more natural aspect than other advertising formats and, therefore, have a very high conversion rate.

Aren’t we more likely to listen to people we trust than to a sponsored video on Facebook?

Beyond the ‘natural’ factor, influencers’ effectiveness is also linked to their cost, which is generally lower than that of other paid web marketing, since they sometimes even accept compensation in the form of products or services of the company that hires them.

TYPES OF INFLUENCERS

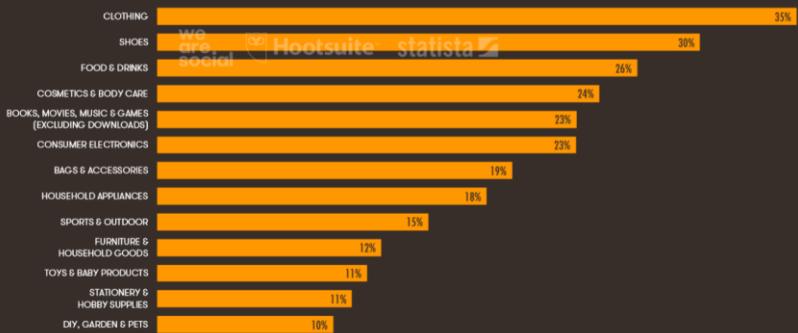
Queen Bey (Beyoncé) is a very successful celebrity influencer, not only for the brands she supports but also for her own recipes: with long-standing partnerships, such as the one with Pepsi, her Instagram posts are today estimated to be worth more than €1 million each.

But celebrities aren’t the only type of influencers.

OCT
2018

INFLUENCERS' IMPACT ON PURCHASE DECISIONS

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNET USERS* WHO REPORT THAT INFLUENCERS* HAVE INFLUENCED THEIR PURCHASE DECISIONS BY CATEGORY [SURVEY BASED]



24

SOURCE: STATISTA GLOBAL CONSUMER SURVEY 2018. *NOTES: "INFLUENCERS" REFERS TO "BLOGGERS, YOUTUBERS, OR OTHER FAMOUS PEOPLE ONLINE". PERCENTAGES REPRESENT A WEIGHTED AVERAGE FOR A SELECTION OF KEY ECONOMIES AROUND THE WORLD. AVERAGES HAVE BEEN WEIGHTED BY THE LOCAL INTERNET PENETRATION IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY.

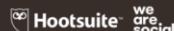


Figure 32: influencers' impact on purchase decisions, by product category.

Although there is no official categorization of influencers, they can be grouped by how many people they can reach, as micro-, meso- and macro-influencers, by whether they choose to be mono-brand or multi-brand, and by whether they work over the long, medium or short term.

Micro-influencers

Micro-influencers have niche influence. Typically having fewer than 10,000 followers, they have a very close level of engagement with their community, with high engagement rates, from 8% to 17%: the smaller their follower base, the more they are engaged.

Many of them do not even consider themselves influencers. But they are, because they post on very specific topics, about their passion or expertise, and have grown very engaged and qualified bases of followers, even if not large, that can still be appealing to certain brands. Companies can contact them directly, via the contact details given on the social network: if they are already active in micro-influence, they will surely have indicated a way to reach them. This is one of their advantages: accessibility. Since they don't get as many requests as 'macros', micro-influencers are more receptive to partnership offers.

Macro-Influencers

Macro-influencers, in contrast, have communities of more than 100,000 followers, with lower engagement rates, usually around 3%.

They are the celebrities of social networks with the ability to bring a very large number of people together. Their posts result in massive likes, shares, comments, etc. and, even more importantly, high traffic to the mentioned brand's site. They are an effective way to launch a new product or increase brand awareness.

Unlike others, macro-influencers are extremely busy, so much so that requests are handled by a PR manager or an external agency.



TIP

Macro-influence was used more in the past. Although it still works very well, it is rarely affordable for SMEs.

The example of Beyoncé, who was paid \$50 million for the Pepsi campaign in 2012, explains why.



Figure 33: one of Beyoncé's posts on Instagram as part of the Pepsi campaign.



CASE STUDY

The example of Astrid provides a good explanation of the mono- and multi-brand concepts with specific accounts for one or the other:

- *@astrideudeline, a personal Instagram account with more than 35,000 subscribers, where she posts on different subjects and several brands in easy-going mode.*
- *@Asos_Astrid, an Instagram account for the Asos brand where she only posts about the brand's products.*

Meso-influencers

Between the two are the meso-influencers, with an audience of between 10,000 and 100,000 followers, and with engagement rates from 3% to 8%: again, the smaller their follower base, the more they are engaged. Highly respected, they have had recognized expertise in their field for several years because they built their community over time. They also have another related advantage, which they share with macro-influencers: other influencers can follow them out of a desire to partner with the same brand and mention it in their posts without even being paid for doing so.

You will find these three types all over the world, although the number of followers is not always in the ranges mentioned above, because it depends on the size of the country and especially the influencer's activity: the number of followers can always move up or down depending on how active the influencer is in the social network.

In addition, any influencer can be mono- or multi-brand depending on the terms of the partnership contract he has signed with the brands. This too can constantly change based on the terms and duration of the contracts.

HOW TO USE INFLUENCERS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

More and more companies are integrating influencers into their web-marketing strategy to obtain qualified prospects that can be easily converted into clients.

The steps for setting up global influencer campaigns are roughly the same for all three types of influencers: first find the best ones for your business, then segment and manage them.



CASE STUDY

How much does it cost to collaborate with influencers internationally? In terms of cost, the geography doesn't change anything, since the cost correlates directly with the influencers' engagement rate. Let's take these two examples:

- *Campaign A with a macro-influencer:*

- Number of influencers: 1
- Average number of influencers' followers: 100,000
- Budget: €1,000
- Average engagement rate: 3%
- Average engagement: 3,000
- Total engagement: 3,000
- Cost per engagement: €0.33.

- *Campaign B with micro-influencers:*

- Number of influencers: 10
- Average number of influencers' followers: 10,000
- Budget: €1,000
- Average engagement rate: 12%
- Average engagement: 1,200
- Total engagement: 12,000
- Cost per engagement: €0.08.

In terms of tactics, you have three options, depending on your industry and the countries you are targeting:

Use few domestic meso-influencers

Today, with the automatic translation of most social networks, influencers can continue to post in their language using the translated

hashtags specific to the foreign markets you target⁶⁵. Social media users around the world following or researching these hashtags will easily find the posts using the hashtag used by the influencer.

Why should you use meso- and not micro- or macro-influencers? On the one hand, micro-influencers have an insufficient number of followers to convince your target audience in a foreign market: why would people in that country follow a small account talking about an unknown brand when there are more popular ones to follow? On the other hand, macro-influencers will have an adequate number of followers, but they will be very expensive. Meso-influencers offer the combination of a qualified influencer with a sufficient number of followers, which will easily captivate large foreign audiences.

Use several domestic micro-influencers

In this case, you need to prepare not only to identify a lot of effective micro-influencers for your business in each foreign market, but also to manage a larger number of partnerships and actions of each of them.

Why micro- and not meso- or macro-influencers? As mentioned, micro-influencers are generally more reactive, which will compensate for the additional time spent identifying and managing them in each country you target for your digital export project. Depending on the country, micro-influencers offer the combination of a much more affordable budget than macro- and meso-influencers and a good level of engagement of their followers.

Combine domestic micro-influencers and meso-influencers

By having both micro- and meso-influencers using the same hashtags in their local languages, you can easily intensify your international campaign performance on the social networks.

⁶⁵ Remember that hashtags are never affected by machine translations on social networks. That is why you should use their translated version to target a specific country for export.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Influencers represent an increasingly effective paid web-marketing lever internationally, which in some foreign countries are even more effective than other levers.

There are three types: macro-, meso- and micro-influencers.

For export, the preferred option for SMEs can be one of the following:

- *Use domestic meso-influencers.*
- *Use domestic micro-influencers.*
- *Combine domestic micro-influencers and meso-influencers.*

CHAPTER 13

FINDING THE RIGHT INFLUENCERS IN FOREIGN MARKETS

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Choosing the right influencer is probably the hardest part. Each influencer has an audience that meets specific criteria. The right match between influencers, company, brand, goals, and communication style is essential for a successful influence campaign.

But you still need to identify and hire the right foreign influencers for the investment to be profitable for your digital export project. Here are some tips to find them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

How do you identify the right influencers in new markets?

First, you must do it well in advance. Allow at least three months in your planning, after having defined the specifications for the foreign countries you target with objectives, typology of influencers, targets, etc.

Among the influencer search options, the following two approaches are quite effective if you don't want to go through an agency.

Do research yourself

If you go for this option, you first need to find the most active profiles on the keywords and hashtags that are specific to your field of business in the export country that interests you. This also involves the monitoring of your local or international competitors in those countries.

Once you have found these most active profiles, you need to evaluate the relevance of the prospective influencers: do they write on topics relevant to your business?

Then, you need to evaluate the quality of the influencers surveyed: do they have regular or erratic follower growth? In the latter case, it is likely that the profile has bought followers.

To do this kind of research in foreign countries, there are many online tools that can search for relevant profiles on several networks and on the internet. They can also allow you to study your competitors' influence strategy: this can provide you with additional insights on the best practices you need to put in place. Some examples:

- Paid: <https://awario.com/> or <https://www.brandwatch.com/>.
- Freemium: <https://buzzsumo.com/>, <https://influence.co/> specializing in influencers on Instagram, Amazon, and bloggers, or <https://socialblade.com/> to check the prospective influencers' activity history as well as the correlation with the number of their

followers, on Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and many other social networks.

- Free: Google. By checking their name on Google, you can discover other 'off-grid' elements about their activity.

Use influencer marketplaces

Another solution that can save you time when looking for influencers is to use influencer marketplaces, i.e., platforms for connecting influencers and brands/advertisers. Brands post their marketing campaigns needs there to which influencers can then apply.

There are many advantages for companies, beyond saving research time:

- Checking influencers' performance.
- Negotiating the terms of the partnership.
- Campaign management.
- Analytics of the results of operations.

But there are also some drawbacks:

- You have to pay to remunerate the platform's intermediation service.
- The platforms are rarely used by macro-influencers that already have sufficient and profitable activity.

In the following table are some international platforms that you can use depending on the geography and the social network you are targeting.

Name	Countries	Social networks	Approx. number of influencers
Blogfoster that recently merged with Eqolot https://eqolot.com/	Germany	Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs	42,000 at the time of Blogfoster
Buzzoole https://buzzoole.com/	Italy + 100 countries	VK, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Blogs, etc.	307,000
Famebit that became Google's YouTube BrandConnect https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9385307	International	YouTube	65,000 at the time of Famebit
Fluvip http://www.fluvip.com	LATAM + U.S. + Spain	Instagram, YouTube, Blog	100,000
Grapevine Village https://www.grapevinevillage.com	U.S.	YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn	177,000
Influence4brands https://influence4brands.com/	France	YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Twitter, Snapchat, Blogs, Facebook,	197,000
#Paid https://hashtagpaid.com/	Canada + 100 countries	Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook,	N/A
HYPR by Julius https://hyprbrands.com/	U.S. + international w/o Asia	Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter	10,000,000

Influencity https://influencity.com/	Spain + international w/o Asia	Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter	70,000,000
IZEA https://izea.com/	U.S. + Canada	YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs	975,000
KLEAR part of Meltwater https://klear.com/	U.S. + Japan + UK + Spain + LATAM + Canada + Indonesia	Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	N/A
Kolsquare https://www.kolsquare.com	France + 180 countries	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok	N/A
PARKLU part of LAUNCHMETRICS https://www.parklu.com/	China	WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Meipai, Yizhibo, Ingkee, MeiLiMeiZhuang, Nice, Youku, Instagram	N/A
Scrunch https://scrunch.com	U.S. + UK + Australia + Canada + India + Germany + Spain + New Zealand + Philippines + Ireland + U.A.E. + France + Italy + Brazil + Singapore	YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs, TikTok	20,000,000

Upfluence https://www.upfluence.com/	France + international	Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Pinterest, TikTok	N/A
VS Media https://www.vs-media.com	China	WeChat, ShiuHongShu, YouTube, Facebook, Google, Weibo, Meipai, Tudou Big Fish, Tencent, NetEase	N/A
Thoughtful (TMG Originals) https://www.thoughtfulmedia.com	China + U.S. + Thailand + Vietnam + Indonesia + Philippines	Weibo, Yixia, Youku, Tudou, iQiyi, Sohu, Tencent, 56.com, PPS	N/A

Figure 34: some influencer marketplaces around the world.

ACTION PLAN

- 1) Once you have a list of prospective influencers, segment the profiles in a table according to their networks, their micro-, meso-, macro-profiles, with the strengths and weaknesses of each, according to the KPIs in your notebook.
- 2) Carefully study those that interest you the most for your export markets. Try to identify the points that differentiate them in their posts: this will allow you to check the adequacy of their style with the positioning of your brand and to bring a more qualitative touch to your message when you contact them.
- 3) Prioritize potential influencers for each export market and contact them with a collaboration proposal.
- 4) Negotiate the terms of the collaboration and deploy your campaign.



TIP

If this is your first time contacting an influencer internationally to suggest a collaboration, start with the last on your list to practice and master negotiation tactics.

Make sure you update your list regularly: the influencer market is constantly changing. Stay alert thereafter and continue to monitor the market to follow the evolutions of influencers, the actions of your competitors, and to start new complementary or substitute collaborations.

If you go through an intermediary platform, the steps are faster, especially to get in contact, send a proposal, and negotiate the terms.

Influencer marketing is not an exact science: you have to think carefully to identify the most relevant influencers for your export business and then work regularly to develop an effective long-term partnership.

Before launching a campaign, you also need to estimate its ROI and choose the KPIs, such as the number of likes, comments, etc. for measuring brand awareness objectives, or turnover, CPC, CPA, etc. for measuring sales objectives.



CASE STUDY

When working with influencers, you must follow the laws specific to each country, which can be very strict, whether in terms of products offered, remuneration of influencers, or consumer protection.

For example, for the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), respectively, require that posts on social networks mention the relationship between influencers and brands in the context of a collaboration paid in cash or in kind, failing which there is a risk of heavy fines.

SUCCEEDING WITH INFLUENCERS IN CHINA

China offers plenty of business opportunities, not only in China, but also in your own country and in many other countries with the wave of Chinese tourists going around the world. Since influence marketing is the most effective web-marketing lever with Chinese people, you might ask, 'why not use it both ways?' Well, it is not that simple!

Although the types of influencers and communication techniques are roughly similar to those found in other countries, the Chinese social networks there are different and specific to China.

The influence strategy must, therefore, be modified and adapted. This topic can be quite broad, so make sure you have the time and resources.

Here are a few things to consider:

- The first key difference is related to the omnipresence of WeChat. Once you have hired your influencer (known to international Chinese as a key opinion leader, or KOL, and to less international Chinese as *wanghong*, meaning 'online celebrity' in Mandarin⁶⁶), he or she will be able to write content for distribution on Chinese social networks such as Weibo, Youku, Qzone, RenRen, SinaWeibo, etc., but also on blogs.

So far, the process is not much different. But the differences start with the habits of the Chinese with WeChat, an instant messaging platform to which they are permanently connected not only to communicate with their entourage but also to work, read the news, play, study and, above all, shop.

If you do not have digital tools suitable for WeChat, such as QR codes or links to Chinese e-shops to buy your products or services,

⁶⁶ 'What's the Difference Between a KOL and a Wanghong?', eMarketer, 2 August 2018, <https://www.emarketer.com/content/what-s-the-difference-between-a-kol-and-a-wanghong>.

your KOL's results will be limited. This is a key point to validate before embarking on influence marketing in China.

- To choose your KOLs, you need to ensure their quality⁶⁷ and their fit with your brand values, which in China can be a little more complex than in other countries due to cultural differences and linguistic constraints.

Whether you are looking for a KOL yourself or using a marketplace, having someone whose mother tongue is Chinese is a real plus. If you don't have anyone on your team, an agency or consultant specializing in influence strategy for China can help you.

- Offline reputation! This is not an essential criterion in other countries but in China it is, because a KOL is seen as an 'educator', not a salesperson.

This is why consumers place much more importance on their behavior and their 360° reputation.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

To find international influencers, you can use two techniques:

- *Search for them directly on social networks in the foreign markets concerned.*
- *Use marketplaces that facilitate the discovery, negotiation, management, and analytics of influencers and international campaigns.*

For China, you need to have the resources to adapt your digital tools to Chinese habits before launching influence campaigns.

⁶⁷ And the quality of their followers, to avoid KOLs that have too many 'fake followers'.

CHAPTER 14

USING PUBLIC RELATIONS OR MEDIA RELATIONS FOR EXPORT

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Public relations (PR) professionals have evolved enormously in recent years with the rise of social media and digital. To be in line with these new requirements, they have broadened their field of expertise to digital while maintaining their strength: the relationship, whether with the press, with bloggers but also with influencers.

This is a development that concerns all countries, especially those with a high internet penetration rate.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS INTERNATIONALLY

PR professionals with a multi-channel approach are specialists in traditional media that have developed complementary expertise in online media. The term 'media relations' is generally understood as referring to the relationship between the company and the traditional news media (press, television, radio), i.e., journalists, but, in a broader sense, can be considered to encompass online media as well.

A few years ago, PR professionals would never have agreed to commit to performance metrics like engagement, article appreciation, positive comments, etc. This has changed radically, and today they represent an important part of the digital marketing budget of companies, both nationally and internationally.

Facebook, Tweeter, Instagram, YouTube, etc., have entered the daily life of media relations professionals alongside traditional activities such as press releases, media kits, press conferences, events, etc., which are still essential to develop a relationship of trust between a company and a journalist, blogger, or influencer and to achieve the objectives of awareness, reputation, and commitment of the company.

SOME TOOLS FOR INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

There are loads of tools available to work well with international PR and media relations. Here are a few must-see examples:

Media Databases

Used by agencies and companies' communications managers, media databases make it possible to build up a list of relevant media and journalists. There are many databases providing names, phone numbers, email addresses, social accounts, etc. for each media entity. Their quality and cost vary greatly, and in general a single database will hardly meet your needs for several foreign markets.

Here are a few:

- Muck Rack, global: <https://muckrack.com/media-database>
<https://muckrack.com/>
- Cision for France, the United States, Canada, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom: <https://www.cision.com/products/database/>
<https://www.cision.fr/software-rp/base-de-data-journalists-and-media/contacts-journalists-and-bloggers/>
- Meltwater, global:
<https://www.meltwater.com/en/products/media-database>
<https://www.meltwater.com/en/contact-journalists/>



TIP

These databases are very useful, but don't make the mistake of relying solely on them to create your own list. By-hand searches and checks are essential to build a relevant list.

Sourcing tools for journalists

Sourcing tools are platforms where journalists can connect to news sources and brands to write more and better stories.

Here are some international examples:

- Help A Reporter⁶⁸, English-speaking countries:
<https://www.helpareporter.com/>

⁶⁸ A subsidiary of Cision.

- SourceBottle, English-speaking countries:
<https://www.sourcebottle.com/>
- PR Newswire⁶⁹, international:
<https://www.cision.com/products/distribution/>
<https://www.cision.fr/logiciel-rp/diffusion-wire/>

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

CRM is a system for managing customer relations, prospective clients, and business development. It is first and foremost an approach to classify your PR contacts, keep track of your exchanges, and organize all your activities, while avoiding duplicating your actions. There are plenty of CRM tools out there, but if your business already has one for sales, it's best to use the same one.

ESSENTIAL POINTS FOR YOUR DIGITAL EXPORT PROJECT

Before you start, these are the essential points to validate:

- The messages to communicate, the objectives, and the target audience to be reached in the foreign markets: use a PR expert for each country to have effective content in relation to your objectives and to respect local constraints in terms of editorial style, calendar, and legal regulation.
- The language to use: often the local language of the foreign market, but sometimes also English when communication is global and concerns several countries.
- Digital distribution channels in the target markets: a local PR expert can not only direct you to the most relevant channels and media for your business, but also link communications directly to their own network of journalists, bloggers, and influencers.
- KPIs: to monitor communications performance and compare it with other markets.

⁶⁹ A subsidiary of Cision.



TIP

To succeed in your media relations around the world, you need to work on both the content and the form: the type of message, its content, the media, etc., everything must be adapted to your targets and their culture. An Italian press release can be three pages long, compared to one in France or none in Norway, where a simple email is sufficient.

In terms of organization, you have several options depending on the size of your business and the geographic scope of your project:

- Work with domestic PR agencies having an international network, such as <https://open2europe.com/en/> for Europe.
- Work with a local agency in each export market you target.
- Work with freelancers in each export market you target.

In all cases, you need good coordination between your company and the agency, or agencies, or freelancers to prepare briefs, respond to requests from journalists, participate in the organization of press conferences, etc.

By using several local agencies or freelancers, you could obtain more effective and faster results but at the cost of a more significant work for you: not only will you have to manage everything in each of the foreign languages but also you will have a multiplying effect on budgets, not necessarily linear, sometimes higher (as in the United States and Canada) and sometimes lower (as in Latin American countries).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Media relations are increasingly encompassing online media, and digital tools have integrated traditional activities, such as press releases, media kits, press conferences, events, etc.

The tools available for media relations are numerous: databases, sourcing platforms, etc. But before deploying these tools internationally, you must work on:

- *Validate the target, objective, message, language, and distribution channels for each market.*
- *Select the KPIs to monitor and compare the performance of communication actions.*

CHAPTER 15

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATE MARKETING

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No other digital advertising lever is more performance-based than affiliate marketing.

Easy to implement and perfect for multichannel development, affiliates can become your virtual sales force in the foreign countries that you target, redirecting relevant prospects to your website to help you grow your export sales. And all of that for an optimal ROI, since you pay them only after the required goals are achieved.

AFFILIATION: WHAT IS IT?

Affiliation is an advertising mechanism by which your company, the advertiser, pays a third-party website, the affiliate or publisher, when the latter hosts specific content (banners, links, offers, etc.) that will redirect its visitors to your website to achieve a precise action previously defined in the affiliation contract between you and the affiliate.

For example, if you have an e-commerce, the monitoring tools⁷⁰ will allow you to remunerate your affiliates based on the sales they generate through their website. Your affiliates almost become ‘resellers’ with a mechanism similar to that of marketplaces.

This acquisition lever is often applauded because it drives sales, but the cost is entirely based on performance.

The affiliation contract, or program, defines the conditions of remuneration of the affiliate publishers by the advertiser for each internet user that has taken the desired action.

Affiliate marketing can be very interesting for a digital export project, because the model has little to no risk not only for you as the advertiser, but also for your publishers, since they can decide how to present your offers in the ways that best suit their website.



TIP

Another benefit of affiliation is SEO. Depending on the authority of your affiliates, this method can increase qualified traffic to your site, which in turn boosts SEO.

⁷⁰ Affiliation requires the implementation of tracking codes allowing the exact tracking of internet user behavior provided by the affiliate, quite similar to the installation of the Google Ads conversion tracking tag.

WHY AFFILIATE MARKETING WAS BORN

Since the beginning of the internet, the number of websites has been growing year after year. There were about 1.8 billion websites on the internet in November 2021 according to Statista⁷¹, and still counting. With such numbers, the monetization of websites became first inevitable then normal.

Affiliate marketing is one of the most effective due to its popular feature of ‘pay for performance’. It first became well-liked among e-commerce sites, then with proven security, easy integration, and competitive remuneration, it generalized to other categories of websites and applications. Nowadays affiliate marketing can go through blogs, newsletters, emailing⁷², social networks, price comparison websites, etc.



TIP

Marketplaces and affiliation have a very similar business model based on performance: compare the conditions of each to validate the most advantageous system for your digital export project. The main difference is represented by the web-marketing tools specific to marketplaces, which are totally absent in the case of affiliation.

AFFILIATION: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Whether the conversion model you want is based on cost per sale (CPS) or cost per lead (CPL), there are generally three or four parties in affiliate marketing:

⁷¹ <https://www.statista.com/chart/19058/number-of-websites-online/>.

⁷² Affiliate advertising messages are sent to a database of email or newsletter recipients.

- 1) The **Advertiser**, in other words you: it is basically your website offering the products or services that you want to sell internationally, and for which you are looking for external websites that can display your offers.
- 2) The **Publishers**, in other words your affiliates: they must have a website or another online platform or application that can display your offers. For your digital export project, you need to have affiliates in the foreign countries that you target and to give them the creatives of your offers in their local language.
- 3) The **Clients**, in other words the internet users: they are the people visiting your affiliates' website or platform or application. Those who click on your creatives and fulfill your desired action, such as buying a product or filling out a form, will start the remuneration for your affiliates.
- 4) The **Affiliation Platform**, which is optional: you can find your affiliates, deploy your program, and manage your collaborations all by yourself, or you can use one of several intermediary platforms that can help you during all the steps, including the identification of prospective affiliates, the supply of your creatives, the tracking of all your desired actions, the measurement of your affiliates' performance, etc. For a digital export project, this type of platform can be an important ally, especially in foreign markets where you might struggle to find and convince relevant websites to become your affiliates. If you want to opt for this type of platform, choose among those operating in several countries such as:
 - www.tradedoubler.com
 - www.affiliation.com/en
 - www.tradetracker.com
 - www.teads.tv
 - www.daisycon.com
 - etc.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Affiliation is a performance-based advertising system where a company (advertiser) pays a third-party website (affiliate) when the latter hosts its content that will redirect internet users to its website to carry out a specific action, previously defined in the affiliation contract between the advertiser and the affiliate.*
- *The interest for the advertiser is the variable cost linked to the specific action under contract. Internationally, the easiest way is to use platforms operating in several countries.*

CHAPTER 16

THE BUSINESS MODELS OF PAID WEB- MARKETING LEVERS

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Besides the paid web-marketing levers presented in the previous pages, the list could continue with a number of others, more or less adapted to the digital context of the foreign countries you target.

Although all levers have their strengths and weaknesses, which are often very different from country to country, there are similarities in their remuneration systems.

Let's clarify this point.

CPM, CPC, CPL, CPA, PPS: DIFFERENT BUT THE SAME EVERYWHERE

SEA, Display, but also SMA, affiliation, influencers, ... As we have seen, there are many advertising levers. The good news is that, beyond the technical differences, the business models are largely the same in any country. In fact, costs are almost always and everywhere calculated according to the four formulas presented below.

CPM (cost per mille)⁷³

This is the cost per thousand impressions or views of the page on which the ad is displayed.



CASE STUDY

A German B2B magazine asks for a CPM of €5 to display your 468×60-pixel banner.

If at the end of the advertising campaign it was displayed 10,000 times, therefore 10,000 impressions, your cost for this campaign would be: $CPM \times \text{total number of page views} / 1,000 = €5 \times 10,000 / 1,000 = €50$.

CPC (cost per click)

This is the cost for each time that internet users click on your text or banner ad⁷⁴.



CASE STUDY

A French recipes blog requires a CPC of €0.5 to display your native ad.

If at the end of the advertising campaign your native ad was clicked 50 times, your cost for that would be: $CPC \times \text{total number of clicks} = €0.5 \times 50 = €25$.

⁷³ The average CTR is 0.5%, or five clicks per 1,000 displays.

⁷⁴ It is the most used system by Google Ads and AdSense.

CPL and CPA (cost per lead and cost per action/acquisition)

This is the cost of acquiring a lead or a specific action⁷⁵. The action may vary, but it must be clearly measurable on the internet: registering for an event, subscribing to a newsletter, etc.



CASE STUDY

An advertising agency charges a CPA of €10 to acquire subscribers to your newsletter on a business travel booking site in U.S.

If during the acquisition campaign the agency obtained ten subscriptions to your newsletter, your cost for that would be: CPA × total number of acquisitions = €10 × 10 = €100.

PPS (pay per sale)

This is the cost for each sale of an e-commerce item.



CASE STUDY

A Chinese KOL requests a PPS of 7% of turnover to promote your offers to his followers.

If at the end of the promotion he generated €1,000 in sales on your e-commerce website, your cost for that would be: PPS × total sales = 7% × €1,000 = €70.

These are the business models that are most used for paid web-marketing levers, but there is no unique formula, and very often you will need to negotiate with the other platforms' owners.

Having a good command of the statistics of each of your advertising levers gives you better control over your ROI and helps improve your decisions on how to commit your budgets according to the most effective actions.

⁷⁵ These are the systems used in affiliation contracts.



TIP

To avoid manual calculation of these formulas, you can try online simulators like <https://marketingdiscounts.io/calculators/>.

To complete this review of the paid levers of international web marketing, let's briefly look at the export opportunities offered by using them ... in the reverse direction.

If you have a website with a high traffic of unique visitors per month in your home country, advertising display networks or international affiliation platforms can prove to be interesting opportunities to monetize your domestic digital asset by publishing for foreign companies that want to grow their sales in your country. Yes, that is also part of export development!

FINAL POINTS ON PAID LEVERS FOR A DIGITAL EXPORT PROJECT

The levers of international web marketing require a budget, and that means ROI. To increase the performance of your actions and optimize your ROI, make sure to:

- Target the internet users you want to reach.
- Define the actions you want them to carry out, i.e., your advertising objective in each export market.
- Choose the most suitable digital levers for the export market according to your budget.
- Use effective KPIs and analysis tools to track every action in every market.
- Invest in paid digital levers internationally after setting up your SEO for the export markets you are targeting.
- Plan actions by giving yourself a minimum and maximum time to test and measure.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

There are many paid levers for international web marketing, but they apply similar economic models in all countries: CPM, CPC, CPL, CPA, PPS.

For your digital export project, the optimization of these levers goes through the optimization of your ROI. For this, the critical points to plan are:

- *Precise targeting of internet users to reach.*
- *Definition of advertising objectives in each export market.*
- *Choice of the most appropriate digital levers in the export market according to your budget.*
- *Use of efficient KPIs and analysis tools to track each action in each market.*
- *Implementation of SEO for export markets before starting with paid digital levers.*
- *Planning a minimum and maximum time to test and measure each lever.*

CHAPTER 17

DARK SOCIAL: MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU!

“

All the levers and web-marketing campaigns that we have reviewed must be continuously monitored and analyzed.

However, almost 70% of overall website traffic is not captured by Analytics: it is ‘Dark Social’!

This name immediately evokes something terrifying, but fortunately we are far from it.

WHAT IS DARK SOCIAL?

The term 'Dark Social'⁷⁶, not to be confused with 'Dark Web', was coined in 2012 by Alexis C. Madrigal to define traffic to a website whose source is not precisely identified by Analytics.

And in an increasingly multichannel world, this is very annoying. How then can you judge the effectiveness of each action to improve the campaigns that are performing less well and highlight those that are performing the best? And, especially, how can you calculate the ROI of each investment?



CASE STUDY

A French e-merchant sells watches on his international e-commerce website www.example-watches.com/fr and launches a promotional campaign for Mother's Day on 12 May 2019, in Germany and Italy via the subdirectories www.example-watches.com/de and www.example-watches.com/it by offering a 20% discount on all women's models. He repeats the same promotion on 26 May 2019, in France via www.example-watches.com/fr.

He creates a banner for each language and displays them six weeks in advance on its German, Italian and French websites. He adapts the same creatives for Facebook and Instagram to distribute it several times in normal, boosted posts and in an advertising campaign on both networks. He sends the same promotion in a newsletter to his contacts in Germany, Italy, and France.

These campaigns redirect internet users to three identical landing pages in German, Italian and French on his e-commerce website, and he uses Analytics to measure the performance of each of these advertising actions. However, the clicks from mobile or web applications are all grouped together, and it is impossible to know whether the customers came from Facebook, Instagram, or the newsletter.

⁷⁶ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Social.

THE UTM CODES SYSTEM

The solution is to use a tracking system via urchin tracking module (UTM) codes.

By adding UTM codes to the URL links of landing pages linked to a banner, or another type of advertising content, you will be able to identify the traffic coming from a mobile application, a social network, a newsletter or any other tool that does not belong to Google (or rather Alphabet): with this system, statistics are segmented according to the campaign delivery channel and clearly indicated in the Analytics reports for each country.

Indeed, UTM codes work with many analysis programs, including Google Analytics, to provide a detailed view of your performance on all media, at the general level (the best-performing media) as well as at the more detailed level (which post created the most conversions).

UTM tags, which you can generate with several tools, including that of Google, are added at the end of the URLs.

These tags are recognized by Google Analytics, and the URL incorporating them can be arranged inside a newsletter, a social media post, etc. Here is an example of a URL with UTM codes:

`https://www.example-watches.com/fr?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=post30042019_de&utm_campaign=fete-de-meres.`

As you can see, UTM codes are placed after the domain URL and after a question mark. Right after that, there are five parameters to configure your URLs, the last two of which are rarely used:

- `utm_source`: to define the source of traffic, for example a social network⁷⁷.
- `utm_medium`: to define the type of media support.
- `utm_campaign`: to identify the subject of the link.

⁷⁷ The only one that is really mandatory in order to use the tool <https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder/>.

- utm_term: for the keywords, code specific to the SEA.
- utm_content: to define the content within the frame of A/B tests.

Google offers a tool to create UTM codes and URLs compatible with Analytics: <https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder/>.



TIP

The URL and its UTM codes are clearly visible in the browser. So, consider using short, non-confidential names for your campaigns.

Statistically, long links containing lots of strange symbols like '%,' '?' are clicked on less: if the links are in the text of a newsletter or in a Facebook post.

The best solution is to use tools such as <https://goo.gl> to shorten your URLs or anchor them to some keywords in your text.

Once the UTM codes are installed and your URL links deployed in your international advertising campaigns, go to Analytics:

- Acquisition/All traffic/Main dimension = Source
- Acquisition/All traffic/Main dimension = Other + Secondary dimension = Acquisition = Ad content to find 'UTM_content' data; or
- Acquisition/All traffic/Main dimension = Other + Secondary dimension = Acquisition = Source, to find the 'UTM_term' data.

You will find all the statistics there with details of the acquisition channel, by country and by advertisement⁷⁸.

⁷⁸ To be precise, search engine bots ignore UTM codes: using URLs with UTM codes has no impact on your SEO. If you prefer, you can also use the 'canonical' tag to specify to search engines the page to reference <link rel = 'canonical' href = http://www.example-montres.com/de/> in the <head> section (see [book 2 of The Digital Exporter Series](#)).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The term 'Dark Social' defines traffic to a website whose source is not precisely identified by Analytics.
- The solution is to use a tracking system via UTM (urchin tracking module) codes, to be added to the URL links whose traffic you want to analyze.
- In this way, the statistics will be clearly reported in the Analytics reports for each foreign country that you target.

CHAPTER 18

IS SEO DEAD?

“

Advertising activity on the internet means positioning a website or a link in the first few places of the SERPs. We can see this in any country and search engine around the world.

But is this result more important than digital export performance and website conversions? And then, how effective is SEO for that purpose?

IS SEO DEAD? NOT SO FAST!

As we have already seen, search engines play a fundamental role in the development of a business on digital, national, and international channels. Whether it is Google or its direct competitors in China and Russia, or even the new indirect competitors like Facebook or Amazon, any search engine has the power to display a brand, a product, a service, or information with greater or lesser reach, depending on the formulas (and whims) of its algorithms.

Today, for a business or an e-merchant, not being present in the key search engines in its strategic markets would be like shooting oneself in the feet — yes, both of them!

For experts, the implementation of SEO is essential to differentiate a website from competitors and can sometimes become the field of fierce battles between the different players in the same sector with the aim of arriving in the first position on the first SERP for certain keywords.

Google's algorithms, and those of other search engines, are constantly evolving. From structured data to voice searches, from mobile priority to the semantic web, from quality content to influencers, ... and several new features are likely to emerge in the coming years, or rather in the coming months.

WHY IS THE DEATH OF SEO BEING ANNOUNCED?

This announcement basically comes from people that have been doing SEO since the beginning and have had the chance to know its evolution in a global sense.

A few years ago, a lot of agencies, developers, apprentices, trainees — in short, almost everyone — made awful websites (that's not nice, but you can still see this type of website, with an old-fashioned design,

abandoned or forgotten here or there on the Web). Back then, all you had to do was do one little SEO thing that was different and more appreciated by Google, and presto! You could immediately gain the first positions in the SERPs.

But things have changed, also thanks to the evolution of the algorithms of Google and other search engines: today, almost everyone is making quality, with more and more beautiful websites, better and better for search engines, because everyone has understood what must be done to respect the wishes of search engines and please their algorithms, nationally and internationally.

This development leads all of us to a formula intended to increase SEO competition exponentially: (propagation of SEO quality × increase in the number of websites) + (multiplication of content × proliferation of inbound marketing).

The relationship between these four variables makes it increasingly difficult, and also random, for a website to achieve top SERP positions using SEO alone. We could speculate that this is the goal of Google and other search engines to encourage companies to invest more in the paid levers of web marketing: SEO is less and less effective, it is dying, it is, therefore, necessary to replace it with other systems to make oneself visible and develop the business on the internet.



TIP

While in some cases SEO may prove to be less effective, concluding that it is dying is fiction. The death of SEO is an evergreen title: it dies and is reborn every year!

FIRST PLACES IN SERPs ARE NOT ENOUGH

Often in the SEO environment the focus is on positioning: being in the first place or in the first few positions of SERPs. Yes, but what does it bring to the business, concretely? In other words, does the first position in a SERP make you sell or sell more?

The goal of the web for a commercial business is sales, and for an exporting company it is international sales. Converting a prospect into a customer is, therefore, more important than having your website in the first position of the SERP.

So, does SEO help with conversion? The answer is yes, but it depends on time! SEO, like any other lever of web marketing, represents a budget whose ROI is calculated over a defined period of time. This time is generally longer for SEO than for paid levers, sometimes even very long if it is completely isolated from other levers. Because although in terms of budgets, for a defined amount, these web-marketing levers compete, in terms of performance they are extremely complementary.

Why keep doing SEO then? Because once in place it will be able to create synergies with the other levers, and they will reinforce each other. And, over time, their effect will multiply in a way that you probably don't need to spend that much on paid levers.

The stakes are, therefore, on the time:

- SEO is a long-term strategy, which is why deploying best practices from the start of a digital export project is important: clearly defining the meta titles and descriptions, having a clear domain structure, with quality content and not duplicated, use the relevant keywords in a way that is consistent with your export strategy, etc.
- If your time is limited, then the priority should go to paid levers, which will achieve results much faster. For a defined budget, these paid levers are considered competitors of SEO. It is up to you to find a balanced solution between them to benefit from their synergies.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

If a website is not present on search engines, it will not be very useful because it is invisible to prospects and customers. The implementation of the SEO is, therefore, essential.

Why then do we regularly announce the death of SEO? Because we find ourselves more and more confronted with a formula intended to increase SEO competition exponentially: (propagation of SEO quality × increase in the number of websites) + (multiplication of content × proliferation of inbound marketing).

But the real issue is time, because the goal in the web is to convert a prospect into a customer, and not simply to obtain the first position of SERP:

- *With SEO, we take a long-term view and must deploy it from the start of a digital export project.*
- *But if time is limited, priority must be given to paid levers to achieve results more quickly.*

CONCLUSIONS

Here we are at the end of this book.

But don't close it right away, because I still have a few things to tell you about the necessary costs and organization.

Then, it will be up to you to get started on your digital export action or, if you have already started, to pick up the pace!

CHAPTER 19

A FEW FINAL TIPS: COSTS, ORGANIZATION, AND ... TIME!

“

How much does international web marketing cost? What type of organization should you have for the deployment of a digital export strategy? How long does it take to get results?

Here is my latest practical advice to help you answer these operational questions.

HOW MUCH DOES DIGITAL COST INTERNATIONALLY?

In principle, you can do almost anything on the internet for 'free'. But today, in terms of efficacy, free on the internet is not the same as it was a few years ago, and the first example is Facebook.

Today, Facebook is no longer free for companies as it was before: for a few years, its algorithm has increasingly limited the pages' organic reach. As a result, standard publications are visible only to a few fans. If you want more, you have to switch to sponsored posts or advertising. The problem is the same for other social networks as well as for SEO, blogs, etc. Content is free when produced in-house by you or your teams, but:

- The time spent on the production of this content has a cost called a 'salary'.
- Visibility, a determining factor for performance, has a price that must now be added to your budget.

Build an international web-marketing budget

The share of web marketing in companies' marketing budgets is constantly increasing compared to traditional marketing, which is constantly decreasing⁷⁹.

Often these budgets are provisioned and allocated as a percentage of the company's turnover in the concerned territory. But what should you do when you start in a new export market where you have little or no turnover? Are you going without a budget? Not at all!

In this case, you need to be inspired by the web-marketing budget of another comparable country or of another business unit similar to the activity concerned, or the head office should determine the initial

⁷⁹ Jennifer Veenstra, 'The CMO Survey: Marketing Budget Gets Big Boost', Deloitte, 26 April 2021, <https://deloitte.wsj.com/articles/the-cmo-survey-marketing-budget-gets-big-boost-01619463730>.

funding, which will be provisioned beforehand and reimbursed with a more or less extended schedule or co-financed by public aid.

As in the T.O.S.CA method, there are similar elements to consider when building an international web-marketing budget, whether for a new market or for an already existing one:

- Target: foreign countries and foreign languages.
- Objectives: increase sales, brand awareness, ...
- Segments: consumers, professionals, age, level of education, etc.
- Channels and Call-to-Action: website, e-commerce, marketplaces, distributors, ...
- Paying levers: Google Ads, Display, influencers, ...
- Types of content: video, text, photo, tone style, frequency of publication, etc.
- Period to be covered: three years, five years, ...



TIP

When building your budget, do not forget to include your objectives, whether quantitative or qualitative. Without them, you will have trouble calculating the ROI of your investment.

INTERNATIONAL WEB-MARKETING COSTS

In practice, international web marketing uses several skills, each with a specific cost. For a company with ad hoc needs, such as the internationalization of its website or e-commerce, the integration of marketplaces abroad, the development of SEO for export, etc., the best solution is to call on external service providers offering linguistic and technical skills that are suited to its project.

In this context, here are some examples of the average rates of freelancers in Europe (for information purposes only).

- Web designer/graphic designer: between €150 and €300 per day.
- Web developers: between €300 and €700 per day depending on the development language and expertise.
- Artistic director: about €800 per day.
- SEO consultant: between €300 and €800 per day depending on level of experience and issues addressed.
- International SEO consultant: between €500 and €900 per day depending on level of experience, issues addressed and geographic scope.
- SEA consultant: between €400 and €800 per day depending on level of experience, budget, type and quantity of campaigns.
- International SEA consultant: between €700 and €1,000 per day depending on level of experience, geographic scope, budget, type and quantity of campaigns.
- Analytics consultant: between €300 and €500 per report depending on experience.
- International analytics consultant: between €700 and €1,000 per report depending on experience and geographic scope.
- Web-marketing strategy consultant: between €500 and €1,000 per day depending on experience.
- International web-marketing strategy consultant: between €700 and €1,500 per day depending on experience and geographic scope.

In an international approach, you can also work with local providers or freelancers based in the foreign country you are targeting, or even elsewhere. Prices can vary as much as 100% for identical services. To give you an idea: if we set the United States at 100, France would be at 80, the countries of North Africa and Eastern Europe at 70, and India almost at 50.



CASE STUDY

Since many factors condition budgets, formulas vary on a case-by-case basis, and it is impossible to generalize. To give you some guidance on how to build a budget, here are some calculations as examples.

Example 1—Banner for a hotel in the Alps in Austria, to be displayed on affiliate program websites.

Target: sporty couples with young children based in France, Germany, and Italy. Budget: €3,000 over four months.

Results:

- Impressions of the campaign on affiliate sites: more than five million times.
- Banner clicks: approximately 5,000 clicks, with a CTR of 0.1%.
- Bookings: 50, conversion rate 1%, cost per acquisition €60.
- Simplified ROI: turnover of €10,000 for the 50 reservations; $ROI = (\text{turnover} - \text{budget})/\text{budget}$ = 233%.

Example 2—Google Ads campaign to download a white paper for SaaS in the legal sector.

Target: SMEs in the UK. Budget: €1,000 over 14 days.

Results:

- 12,000 impressions.
- More than 287 clicks, with a CTR of 2.87%.
- 19 downloads of the white paper.
- Conversion rate of 6%, cost per conversion of €52.60.
- Simplified ROI: turnover of €1,500; $ROI = (\text{turnover} - \text{budget})/\text{budget}$ = 50%.

These calculations relate to simplified ROIs. To obtain the net ROI, you also need to deduct the variable costs associated with the project, such as any costs of creating the banner, translating, and producing the white paper in English, adapting the website, etc.

THE IMPACT OF CTR IN AN INTERNATIONAL WEB-MARKETING BUDGET

The budget to invest in international web marketing is also linked to the CTR⁸⁰, which is a concept used around the world to express the percentage of internet users that have clicked on a link, whether organic or paid.

How does CTR impact your budget? If your CTR on organic and free web-marketing levers (for example, the SEO on your website for a foreign country) is very low compared to the industry average, paid levers will probably be more effective: as is often the case in a new market, where a brand is still little known, it can take time to reach the strategic target only through SEO. On the contrary, paid levers can achieve these goals much faster, but the costs increase to pay for SEA, SMA campaigns, etc.

Otherwise, if your CTR is already at a good level or even higher than the industry average, you can move forward with organic web-marketing actions in your target foreign country, which will be more economical than in the previous case.

To know whether your CTR is good or bad, you must, therefore, compare it with the average for your business sector in the export market that you are targeting. To give you an idea, here are some sector averages in the U.S.⁸¹

⁸⁰ <https://support.google.com/googleads/answer/2615875>.

⁸¹ Mark Irvine, Google Ads Benchmarks for YOUR Industry [Updated!], WordStream, 24 September 2021, <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks>.

Industry	Average CTR (Search)	Average CTR (GDN)
Advocacy	4.41%	0.59%
Auto	4.00%	0.60%
B2B	2.41%	0.46%
Consumer Services	2.41%	0.51%
Dating & Personals	6.05%	0.72%
E-Commerce	2.69%	0.51%
Education	3.78%	0.53%
Employment Services	2.42%	0.59%
Finance & Insurance	2.91%	0.52%
Health & Medical	3.27%	0.59%
Home Goods	2.44%	0.49%
Industrial Services	2.61%	0.50%
Legal	2.93%	0.59%
Real Estate	3.71%	1.08%
Technology	2.09%	0.39%
Travel & Hospitality	4.68%	0.47%

An example of the average CTR by sector in the U.S.

Each lever has its average sectorial CTR, which may be higher or lower than the others. In general, the CTR in Display is lower than in Search: all sectors combined, Display CTR is 0.46% while Search CTR is 3.17%.



TIP

Do not compare the CTR of one lever with that of another. This can lead you to decide, 'I just do Search because the CTR is higher'. In reality, it is the synergy between the different levers that will improve the performance of web marketing and thus the ROI of your budget, both at home and abroad.

The rise in CTR rates is proof of this: if CTR were the only factor in performance, Display budgets would have been stopped for years.

HOW TO GET ORGANIZED FOR INTERNATIONAL WEB MARKETING

Although web marketing is well anchored in corporate strategy, it is common to hear clichés about international practice, such as:

- My intern, who spent his holidays in Spain, will manage my cross-border e-commerce.
- My English girlfriend's neighbor's son is going to develop my bilingual website for free.
- We don't need to translate the website into German because everyone in Germany speaks English.
- We have created a page in English on Facebook because we were told that was the right thing to do, but frankly it is useless and in addition it is empty because no one here is comfortable writing in English.

Unfortunately, these examples are not uncommon in companies, especially in those that have not taken the time to formulate their multichannel export strategy.

In fact, digital export and international web marketing include several distinct activities and skills: SEO, SEA, newsletters, social media, e-commerce, marketplaces, influencers, marketing automation, etc., each of which must be adapted to the target export markets. Your company must not only find solutions to manage all these skills in several countries at the same time, but also ensure the integration of all these skills as well as new techniques to come.

But in addition to this complexity of technical skills and geography, digital export also imposes a shift from the offer, or the company, to the demand, or customer. With an organization focused on the offer, the company risks having the problem of 'silos' where each function works on a single axis of the customer journey by country and separately from other functions. Whether at home or abroad, you need to ensure the convergence of all actions carried out in the direction of prospective customers to provide as coherent and effective a customer journey as possible.

Organizing digital export and international web marketing is, therefore, complicated, but you can act in three areas to make it easier:

- *Bring them closer to the company's strategy.* Digital export and international web marketing must be as well-suited as possible to the short-, medium- and long-term objectives of the company and must be able to deploy the most effective levers. At the same time, the company must provide the necessary resources to align its web marketing with the objectives of its export strategy and motivate all its teams, internal and external, to work towards the same objectives.
- *Acquire an in-depth understanding of each step of the export customer journey and learn to use them correctly.* This will allow you to understand precisely not only the strengths and weaknesses of your company in this journey, but also the new skills necessary to address those weaknesses.
- *Adopt the agile organizational approach.* Since digital export requires several types of expertise in technical, graphic, commercial, managerial fields, etc., hiring several people for each area of expertise requires a substantial budget. The agile approach needs an open vision toward alternative solutions, an ability to share new ways of working, and a willingness to adopt new concepts quickly. Your organization can adopt this approach and respond more effectively to the ambitions of your digital export project.

Centralized or decentralized management

To organize the deployment of your digital export sales, you must first consider the two options for centralization or decentralization, depending on the size of your business and on your target countries:

- Decentralized deployment via subsidiaries or local partners. Some of the advantages of this model are:
 - Local management of budgets.
 - More specific positioning and content in the countries.
 - Closer organization of local events.
- Centralized deployment from your headquarters. Some of the advantages of this model are:
 - Better control of brand image.
 - Economies of scale in production and publication of content.
 - International monitoring of KPIs.

Centralized deployment is usually more suitable if your business is in an international start-up phase and does not yet have local structures.

Internalizing, externalizing or both?

Often international web marketing is under the responsibility of the company's marketing manager, who is in charge of everything: traditional marketing with trade fairs, communication, packaging, catalogs, etc., and web marketing with SEO, newsletters, blog, social networks, etc. But a single person rarely has expertise in all areas of traditional and digital marketing as well as in all export markets the company targets.

On the other hand, the profile of a generalist marketing manager can be a good solution. He will have sufficient skills to negotiate and manage the service providers specialized in the fields of international web marketing that you need for your digital export project. As a company employee, he can directly take charge of some of these levers, the most critical, which will then remain internalized. He can outsource the others to selected service providers, and then gradually internalize them: recruiting a web-marketing team is a significantly expensive investment, and you will be more in favor of it once you know what ROI you are able to achieve.

So, in a start-up phase, as for ad hoc needs on specific issues, for example the internationalization of your website in German or the implementation of an advertising campaign on Yandex, working with specialized service providers is the best choice.

Things to pay attention to when outsourcing

As we have seen, there are significant price differences depending on the skills of the service provider in question. But beyond the price, there are other things to pay attention to when negotiating with future international web-marketing providers. Here are a few:

- The specifications of the international web project: clearly define who does what between you and your service provider and when.
- Ownership of accounts: make sure that you keep ownership of Google accounts, such as Google Ads, and that they are properly linked to your name with full access to data and administrator rights to change login and password until the end of the contract.

- Ownership of product content: when providing international content creation services published on your website or social media, make sure that this content becomes your property.
- The duration of contracts: avoid commitments over several years without any possibility of emergency exit.
- The difficulty of paying for results or performance: being enormously dependent on Google's algorithms and their untimely changes, service providers cannot make 100% of their remuneration conditional on results. Success fees or bonuses for exceeding objectives are more appropriate and appreciated.
- Reporting of results and monitoring of actions: mention them in the quotes so that you can always know what has been done when and when to measure the results.

HOW LONG TO WAIT FOR RESULTS

The press and specialized media repeat it often: internationalizing a business is not just about selling a product or service abroad; it is rather a long process requiring a lot of thought and preparation. But what's the right balance so that 'a lot of thought' doesn't get in the way of action?

Premature internationalization or no internationalization?

Premature internationalization certainly carries risks, but 'no internationalization' is not a solution either.



CASE STUDY

The marketing director of a French manufacturer of bicycle accessories wanted to expand its online business to other countries. The company already had a good number of domestic customers, but it had not yet developed its own e-commerce. The marketing director then decided to integrate the e-commerce functionalities on the website, which he had translated into English, German, Spanish and Italian, and to list around 20 products on Amazon's European marketplaces in the hope that this would increase sales in Europe.

After a few weeks, the first orders arrived, mainly from the United Kingdom. The items were dispatched immediately. All UK customers tried to contact the company after receiving their package, but failed, and finally decided to return the items. The marketing director, surprised by this result, contacted them by email to find out why: the customers explained that the instructions they received were not in English, that they had tried to call the company, and no one answered, and that, unable to understand how to install and use the products, they simply returned them.

In this case study, we cannot criticize the marketing director for having started exporting without being sufficiently prepared. His initiative has enabled the company to create value⁸² and to create the basis for new sources of growth. In addition, his approach is compatible with a gradual export development strategy, and the company can adapt its investment according to the degree of success of the actions deployed.

A multilingual website is, therefore, not enough to make your business international, but it is one of the first ingredients necessary to become profitable and sustainable. Think of the investment you have made to promote your business in your home country, on the internet and beyond: the website but also SEO, newsletters, marketplaces, social networks, trade shows, packaging, interviews, advertisements, etc. How much time and resources have you devoted to it and continue to devote to it on a daily basis? Would it not be normal to think that so much time and resources should also be dedicated to your target foreign market?

The secret to good results is time

Export and digital separately are two processes that take time to achieve positive results in the target countries. Although the

⁸² An international website can increase the value of a business, especially an e-commerce website.

combination of the two makes it possible to accelerate international development, a multi-channel export strategy always takes time, and the ROI is long-term, generally over three to five years.

This is why intermediate stages with objectives in the short and medium term are also necessary to increase and measure the performance of the deployment over time. These stages must be described in a roadmap for five years, or even beyond. Even if reality invalidates part of this roadmap, it will serve to inspire the launch, to monitor the development, and to formulate hypotheses on what export sales could be achieved in the short, medium, and long term with their budgetary impact.

Regarding this last point, here are three concrete examples:

- For short-term goals, such as prospecting during an international trade fair abroad, investing in SEO or social media will not be effective, because they will not have the time to produce concrete results. Other levers, such as lead generation or advertising campaigns, will be capable of achieving this performance in the desired time frame.
- For medium-term goals, such as increasing sales on Zalando in Europe by 30% in one year, simply referencing the products translated into each language will be useful but not sufficient. Boosting products with promotions or advertising on Zalando and on partner sites may produce more satisfactory results within the desired time frame.
- For long-term goals, such as developing brand awareness in a new country over three years, organic levers are strategic and suitable for building this reputation on solid qualitative bases and supporting its growth over time.

Depending on the time available to achieve the objectives, the levers used will, therefore, have a higher or lower cost, which will impact your budget.

But even with a clear roadmap, many companies throw in the towel for the first year for lack of positive results. Avoid this mistake and don't give up. To extend your perseverance intelligently, here are some tips:

- Place digital export as a priority ambition in the company's strategy by not allowing it to be perceived as a simple search for commercial

opportunities. Involve as many employees as possible by making them feel that they are part of this ambition.

- Be realistic. The average time to complete an export business, all channels combined, is two years, depending on the sector. Moreover, completion does not mean profitability, because profitability generally needs one to two extra years.
- To maintain the course on your international development, subtract everything that is not in your core business and that others can do better than you. But beware of providers who promise impressive results overnight. Whether online or offline, if you want to achieve good, profitable, and lasting positive results, you have to invest in quality work, and that doesn't happen in days.
- Anticipate your funding needs to ensure that your cash flow can follow the project over the long term. Several mechanisms such as government grants or aids from chambers of commerce, etc., make it possible to finance the development of digital export.
- Regularly analyze your performance. Yes, the progress can be disappointing. But check it regularly and make sure that the best tools and practices are correctly implemented. That will allow you to intervene as quickly as possible if something goes too slowly compared to your roadmap.

So, how long will it take to get results? Neither digital nor export is a precise science; they are rather continuous projects. For the first, on average 95% of new websites can take more than a year to arrive at the first results of SERP. For the second, it can take between six months and a year, after validation of the strategy, to obtain the first customer. These times are mere estimates, and the actual time you need may vary depending on several factors, including your sector, the export market, your budget, your objectives, etc.

HOW DIGITAL DARWINISM CAN STRENGTHEN EXPORT

The internationalization of a company should be considered a journey and not a destination. Each foreign country is not just a new market; it also involves the discovery of new habits, new cultures, new opportunities. Certain countries will have specific needs for which the company will have to find specific solutions. It is the wealth of solutions that the company will be able to deploy in its new markets that will make its export journey efficient.

Until the early 2000s, export development for an SME mainly involved finding and managing distributors or importers in other countries. English was the only language used for business, often sufficient in that context.

But, in recent years, the opportunities for internationalization have evolved. Internet, e-commerce, marketplaces, and other digital tools have joined distributors and importers, multiplying the channels that help reach foreign customers, directly and indirectly. How will this evolve in the coming years? With the speed of breakthrough innovations, we can expect huge developments in several areas affecting export sales thanks to the internet.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Digital export is like conquering a summit: there is the excitement of the challenge, the pleasure of advancement, the ecstasy of the outcome. These stages are renewed at each conquered summit, but the chances of success will be greater after each successive conquest. It would be a shame to stop at the first summit, and for your digital exports it would be a shame to stop at the first country.

If you want to read more about how to sell online across channels internationally, don't forget the rest of The Digital Exporter Series,

where you can find more than 100 case studies presenting the best tools, actionable solutions, and step-by-step explanations. Here is the list of books in [The Digital Exporter Series](#):

- Book 1 – [STARTING THE GLOBAL DIGITAL JOURNEY: How to create the best international web strategy.](#)
- Book 2 – [GETTING CLIENTS OVERSEAS, ORGANICALLY: How to set up local, international & global SEO.](#)
- Book 3 – [GETTING CLIENTS OVERSEAS, BY ADVERTISING: SEA, SMA and other acquisition channels.](#)
- Book 4 – [SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY: How to set up & manage a cross-border e-commerce.](#)
- Book 5 – [SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY: How to sell on local & international marketplaces.](#)
- Book 6 – [DEVELOPING A STRONG INTERNATIONAL BRAND: Multilingual social media & social selling.](#)
- Book 7 – [DEVELOPING A STRONG INTERNATIONAL BRAND: Multilingual inbound marketing & marketing automation.](#)

I hope that this book has given you useful advice, and I wish you success in reaching as many digital export summits as possible!

SOME PRACTICAL DATA

- Trade Map (www.trademap.org): covering 220 countries and territories and 5,300 products of the harmonized system, a system adopted in 1983 by the World Customs Organization, it provides plenty of indicators on exports.
- OECD.Stat (<https://stats.oecd.org>) is a platform that provides access to statistical databases for OECD countries.
- Ecommerce Europe (<https://ecommerce-europe.eu/>) is an association representing more than 100,000 companies selling goods and services online to consumers in Europe.
- DHL, ‘The 21st Century Spice Trade: A Guide the Cross-Border E-Commerce Opportunity’

(https://www.dhl.com/content/dam/downloads/g0/press/publication/g0_dhl_express_cross_border_ecommerce_21st_century_spiece_trade.pdf).

- European Commission, 'Buying goods online coming from a non-European Union country'
(https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/individuals/buying-goods-services-online-personal-use/buying-goods/buying-goods-online-coming-from-a-non-eu-union-country_en).
- United Nations (<https://unstats.un.org/home/>), statistical data globally and by country.
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook — Explore All Countries (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>).
- W3C Internationalization (I18n) Activity:
<https://www.w3.org/blog/international/>.

FREE TOOLS TO MEASURE SEA CAMPAIGNS

iSpionage: <https://www.ispionage.com/Welcome> specialized in the English-speaking countries. Useful to measure competitors' Ads budgets.

Spyfu: <https://www.spyfu.com/>. Like the previous tool, Spyfu is very useful to estimate competitors' ads budget and strategy. The website is only in English, but their results are worldwide according to the domain name you want to check.

For Ads campaigns run on search engines, such as Google, Yandex, Bing, Yahoo!, Baidu, etc., you can use the free tools that each platform offers for free to measure Ads performance.

For Ads campaigns run on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, WeChat, Weibo, etc., you can use the free tools that each channel offers for free to measure Ads performance.

For Ads campaigns run on marketplaces, such as Amazon, Zalando, MercadoLibre, Darty, Tmall, etc., you can use the free tools that each platform offers for free to measure Ads performance.

WordStream: <https://www.wordstream.com/google-adwords-benchmark-tools>. In this link you will find some free tools to compare your paid search metrics against the average of your competitors in your industry on the international scale.

Moat Ad Search: <https://moat.com/>. It is an excellent tool to check for competitors' ads creations. Simply enter the name of a brand you want to check, and it will show you the ads design and sizes they have run in their past campaigns.

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