

# SILVIA CARTER

## SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY:

### How to sell on local & international marketplaces

BOOK 5 OF 7



Excerpt from:

# **SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY: How to Sell on Local & International Marketplaces**

# SILVIA CARTER

## SELLING ONLINE INTERNATIONALLY: How to Sell on Local & International Marketplaces



[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.](#)
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ISBN: 9798405513652

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# CHAPTER 4

## HOW TO START DIGITAL EXPORT ON INTERNATIONAL B2C MARKETPLACES

“

*As previously mentioned, marketplace sales represent one in two of global online sales. It is, therefore, essential for your digital export project to use them.*

*But competition on these platforms, whether vertical or horizontal, and whether from local or foreign businesses, is fearsome. In this situation, you need to get prepared and use the best practices for getting off to good results.*

# **GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 1 - FIND THE IDEAL MARKETPLACES**

As you saw, with hundreds or thousands of marketplaces around the world, you have plenty of opportunities for your digital export project.

But achieving successful results and profitable sales on these platforms requires a certain investment of time and resources. You, therefore, need first to identify the marketplaces that are the most suitable for your business. If you choose to use too many or bad ones, you will waste time and money.

Depending on the foreign countries that you're targeting, you need to list the marketplaces that are used by your prospective clients, whether domestic or international. You also need to understand their shopping habits and whether they are compatible with your capabilities:

- What payment terms do they expect?
- What delivery method do they use most?
- What is the average return rate?

To that list, you should add the marketplaces used by your competitors, benchmarking their strategy as well:

- Are they selling in marketplaces?
- If yes, on how many?
- Which ones?
- What products or services, brands, prices?
- Do they have positive comments? Etc.

Once you have your list of marketplaces, to choose among them you need to compare the key criteria, such as:

- Geographical scope: domestic or international and, in the second case, in which country.
- Online services for international sales:
  - Automatic translations of your product titles, descriptions, units of measure, etc.

- Use of foreign currencies and localized payment systems to sell in several countries.
  - Multilingual customer support.
  - etc.
- Offline services:
    - Multiple storage and warehouse network.
    - International deliveries.
    - International reverse logistics.
    - etc.
- Total number of sellers, total number of sellers in your category, i.e., your direct or indirect competitors.
  - Category depth and breadth that the marketplace offers for your products or services.
  - The marketplace turnover for the last three years, or more if the figures are available.



### TIP

*If you're new to marketplaces, you should start in countries that are relatively close to you in terms of language. For example, Belgium and Switzerland for a French company or Austria, France, Germany and Italy for a Swiss company.*

*This will help you have better control of deployment cost and risks while learning how the marketplaces work with regard to opening your seller account, listing your products or services, optimizing the descriptions, etc. Once you are familiar with all these functions, you can pick up the pace by starting with more international marketplaces that provide automatic translations to deploy your offers in a broader area.*

*But don't forget that your choice must remain consistent with your digital export project: do not invest in marketplaces outside this scope or in those that you prefer more for personal than professional reasons.*

## **GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 2 - CREATE YOUR SELLER ACCOUNT**

In this step you open the official seller account for your business in the marketplace that you selected in the previous step, which, if completed correctly, will allow you to start selling.

To start this process, you must find and click the link on the marketplace indicating 'sellers', or 'professionals', or 'registration', often quite visible in the footer or menu at the top of the website. You will thus be redirected to the pages with the application form to create your account and to enter all your professional information.

Be sure to describe your business in the local language if you have chosen to start in a foreign marketplace. This process will be specific to each platform, and it will be followed by a verification system, which may take a few minutes or a few days depending on the techniques used by the marketplace.



### **TIP**

*If you have no experience, don't start in the most strategic marketplace with the greatest potential for your digital export project. You could make mistakes that would endanger your visibility for a while on the marketplace. Take the time to learn and improve your skills in a less exposed marketplace.*



## CASE STUDY

To open an international account on Amazon Seller Central (ASC), you need:

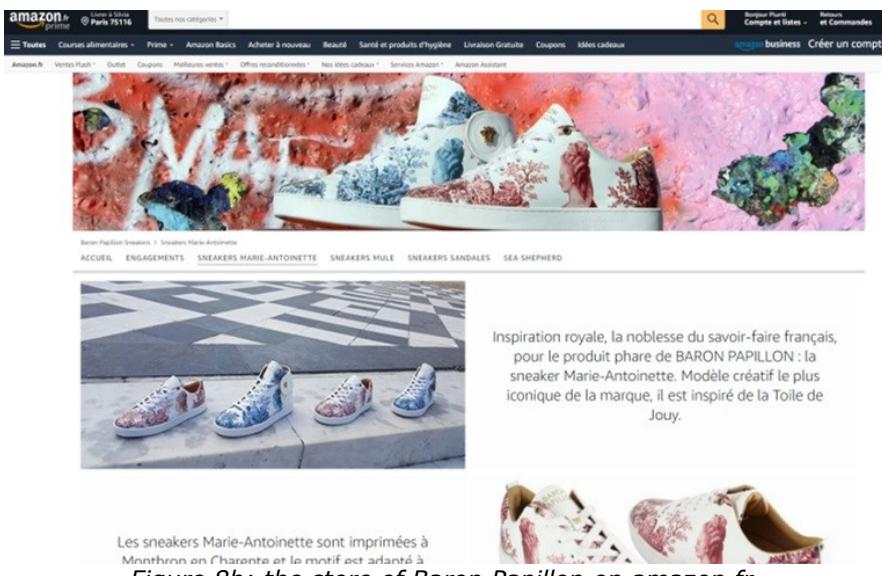
- 1) A primary contact person that will be in charge of ASC. All actions taken by this primary contact person will be deemed to have been taken by the company owning the account.
- 2) A mobile phone that will be used for the first verifications. This number can be changed afterwards.
- 3) A credit card in the exact name of the primary contact. It will be used for the monthly fee of €39.
- 4) A color scanned copy of both sides of a valid ID or passport of the primary contact with exactly the same name. It cannot be a screenshot.
- 5) The business registration number and address. It must be the address where you have registered your business and where the management is located. Amazon will perform identity checks to confirm your business operates from that address. If Amazon is unable to verify it, your account will not be opened.
- 6) A color scanned copy of a recent bank statement showing the business name and address of your company, which must match with your registration document and with the name and address that you used for the ASC account. It cannot be a screenshot.
- 7) The business bank account number. It will be used by Amazon to credit the money of your sales less the commission corresponding to the category of your products or to debit any other costs such as fulfillment, ads, etc.
- 8) The number, and possibly the names, of all the 'Beneficial Owners of the Business'.
- 9) The trademark registration number and confirmation document.
- 10) The name for your ASC account, ideally matching your registered brand.
- 11) You will be asked to specify whether your products have Universal Product Codes (UPCs).
- 12) You will be asked to specify whether you are a 'manufacturer or brand owner' for your products.
- 13) If you ship directly, you must provide the address from which you fulfil your orders. This address will be used by Amazon to determine the originating jurisdiction of your sales for the VAT calculation.
- 14) You need to provide a VAT registration number issued in the same country as your business address and mark it as primary. You need other VAT registration numbers if your inventory is in other countries, in the EU or outside. Check the second Case Study in the chapter on duties and VAT.
- 15) Any of the above documents must be provided in Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, or Spanish. If your documents are not in one of these eight languages, you must provide a notarized translation of all your documents into one of them.

This process must be followed with extreme care. Submitting a wrong or illegible or expired document will block it for a long time, sometimes forever.

*Opening an ASC in Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Spain, Poland, the Netherlands or Sweden will automatically allow you to sell in all the other European countries and beyond. To take advantage of that, you must first list your products in the language of your opening marketplace account. Then you can link it to the other European countries or to the U.S. or to Japan etc. through the 'Sell Globally' page on Seller Central and manage your business from that same page. And, for the translations, you can either let Amazon do them with its automatic translator or upload your own.*

*Once your products are listed, you can enroll your registered trademark in the Amazon Brand Registry of the country where you opened your ASC. As soon as your trademark has been validated by the Amazon Brand Registry, you can start creating your Store and Content A+. See some examples in the following figures.*

*If you don't have a registered trademark, you will not be able to have a Store or Content A+. That will not prevent you from running ads campaigns on Amazon advertising platform.*



*Figure 8b: the store of Baron Papillon on amazon.fr.*

#### Descrizione prodotto

Dalle Piane Cashmere affonda le sue radici nell'esperienza di una famiglia di artigiani, la famiglia Dondini, che da ben tre generazioni tramanda di padre in figlio l'arte tessile italiana. Una tradizione che col tempo si è rafforzata, elevandosi fino alla lavorazione del filato più nobile e pregiato: il cashmere.

Questo percorso virtuoso è stato possibile grazie anche al territorio in cui Dalle Piane Cashmere nasce e si sviluppa: Prato, famosa in tutto il mondo per il suo distretto tessile. Proprio in queste terre, già dal '1200, venivano realizzati indumenti di alta manifattura venduti in tutta Europa. Indossare Dalle Piane Cashmere oggi significa quindi portare con sé oltre 800 anni di storia tessile toscana.

**La famiglia**

La storia della nostra famiglia, che è la storia di un mestiere, che ebbe inizio con la lavorazione della matassa prima e che continua tutti oggi con la produzione del capo finito, composto dalla fibra più nobile, il cashmere.

La nostra avventura nel mondo maglieria ha iniziato con la **filaratura del nonno Valter**, che trasformava in filati e rocche la lana. I figli, Roberto e Massimo, appena poterono, iniziarono a lavorare nella filatura di famiglia.

La storia di Dalle Piane Cashmere è anche - e forse soprattutto - una storia d'amore. Fu infatti grazie alle mogli dei due fratelli, Luana e Linda, che ne seguì l'**idea del maglificio**. Inizio come un gioco, ma da lì rapidamente divenne la prima maglieria prodotta: ricominciarono a trarre le loro belle prese in un'attività vera e propria. Fu così che, dopo investimenti per l'ammodernamento degli spazi e l'acquisto di macchinari all'avanguardia, nel 1988 nacque il **maglificio Anguarella**.

**Qualità 100% made in Italy**

Dalle Piane Cashmere testimonia con orgoglio la qualità produttiva manifatturiera italiana attraverso la tracciabilità 100% Made in Italy.

I capi Dalle Piane sono ideati, progettati e realizzati esclusivamente dall'azienda, in Italia. Sono composti da materiali naturali di qualità e di prima scelta, con tracciabilità della provenienza delle materie prime. Essere testimoni del Made in Italy significa anche realizzarsi i capi grazie a particolari lavorazioni artigiane e a tecniche tradizionali tipiche, appunto, tramandate da generazioni in azienda.

Figure 8c: the content A+ on a product page of Dalle Piane Cashmere on amazon.it.

## GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 3 - CHOOSE THE FULFILLMENT

International fulfillment<sup>17</sup> refers to the processes required to satisfy international purchase orders, including warehousing, picking & packing, shipping, handling customs operations, delivering, reverse logistics, customer service, sometimes even collecting payments. For the international marketplaces, you have two main options for that:

<sup>17</sup> If you have read [book 4 of The Digital Exporter Series](#), you can skip to the next step.

- **Self-fulfillment:** to self-fulfill the purchase orders of your foreign customers you need some of the same elements that you would use for your domestic customers, such as a warehouse with a picking & packing area, shipping materials, such as boxes, tape, bubble wrap, foam, etc., transport documents, invoices or proformas, and shipping labels.

However, while you might use your own transporters or some local carrier for your domestic customers, they are often not effective for foreign customers, especially for the last-meter delivery.

In this case, the best solution is to work with one or more international carriers like UPS, FedEx or DHL that can provide the door-to-door delivery for you, it means that you or your team will take care of the warehousing, picking, packing, and documents while your international carrier or carriers will manage the rest until receipt by your foreign customers.

#### Advantages:

- Your inventory is centralized for serving both your domestic and cross-border markets.
- By using external carriers, you can choose those that can use the localized delivery methods preferred by your foreign customers.
- A single team to fulfill domestic and international orders will allow you to make economies of scale and improve the return on investment (ROI) of your business.

#### Disadvantages:

- In peak seasons you might struggle to hire additional logistics people to help you fulfill all your orders. Likewise, in down periods, you might struggle to reduce your warehouse headcount, having a bad impact on your financial results.
- Your centralized warehouse might be too far from your target foreign customers, which can make your delivery time less competitive than that of your competitors that operate in the same country or in closer ones.

- Managing returns and customer service in several foreign languages can be difficult and expensive.



### TIP

If your digital export project concerns the European Union, you can check the tariffs on cross-border parcel delivery services between countries here:

[https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/postal-services/parcel-delivery/public-tariffs-cross-border\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/postal-services/parcel-delivery/public-tariffs-cross-border_en)

- **Third-party logistics provider (3PL):** fulfilling your international purchase orders with a 3PL means that you will have to give him the stock that you plan to sell overseas and he will store it in consignment. Then, he will take care of warehousing, picking & packing, shipping, and additional services, such as handling customs operations, delivering, managing returns, customer service, collecting the payments, etc. depending on the contract and on the provider's organization.

You have a large choice of well-known companies and other less-known 3PLs that operate globally or regionally, including Amazon Multi-Channel Fulfillment (MCF), UPS Supply Chain Solutions, FedEx Fulfillment Center, ShipBob, Shipwire, Red Stag for the U.S., DCL Logistics, Deutsche Post DHL especially for Europe, Byrd, BoxMe for Asia, SkyPostal for Latin America, GEODIS, Easyship, Kerry Logistics Network Ltd., Fulfillment for China, F4E - Fulfillment 4 Europe, etc.

Some of them provide additional services, related to logistics or not, that can be very useful for cross-border, such as customer service in multiple languages or dealing with customs formalities, translating packaging, re-packaging, adaptation of labels, and web marketing, etc. In this case they are sometimes referred to as 4PLs. However, if you don't need any of these additional services, for instance because you can only sell within the European Union, or because your product doesn't require customer service, you can

turn to smaller and simpler 3PLs that can sometimes be cheaper than the big names for the same quality of service.

Most 3PLs charge an upfront fee, for the integration, followed by either a fixed monthly fee, or a sales commission when you can demonstrate that your products sell well. The 4PL services are mainly charged by the use.

#### Advantages:

- Depending on the 3PL you choose, your inventory can be located in several fulfillment centers, meaning that you will be able to offer quicker deliveries in a much larger geographical area.
- More flexibility to manage peak and low seasons as well as the fixed costs associated with them.
- You'll be free to spend more time on more strategic functions, such as sales and marketing development.

#### Disadvantages:

- The upfront set up cost can be high.
- You have less control of your inventory, and, if you need to move it to other regions or recover it for quality reasons, it will take longer.



#### TIP

*To choose the right 3PL for your international marketplaces, it's important that you know not only the types of services you need but also in which country or countries you want to sell.*

*Only a few 3PL companies are effective on the global scale, probably FedEx or ShipBob, while most of them are specialized by region, for example North America, Europe, APAC, etc.*

*They can be better than the global ones especially when your products require special distribution conditions or need to comply with specific local obligations.*



## CASE STUDY

*Is Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA) a 3PL? Yes and no!*

*First, you need to understand, and maybe already do, that Amazon started in the 1990s as a reseller, meaning buying stock to resell through its website to consumers. That has been its core business for a long time. Since then, Amazon invested a lot in developing the tools and services it needed to offer its customers as good a shopping experience as possible, and that included logistics. Then it launched its marketplace, and with that it allowed its sellers to take advantage of its own logistics to fulfill their Amazon orders. FBA was born. So, for a business that sells on Amazon through a Seller Central account, FBA is a 3PL but only partly, because FBA does not fulfill orders from other sales channels, for example a business's own e-commerce. For that, Amazon has another offer, Multi-Channel Fulfillment (MCF). With MCF, the same business that sells on Amazon through a Seller Central account, can use its FBA stock to fulfill orders coming from other sales channels, including its own e-commerce. Available in almost all Amazon's marketplaces around the world, MCF is a 3PL, but only for businesses that have an account on Amazon Seller Central. For them, the combination of FBA and MCF can be a good solution for enlarging the geographical scope of their cross-border e-commerce. Here are three last pieces of advice:*

- 1) Check the MCF pricing, since, for certain categories of products, it can be less competitive.
- 2) Also check the compatibility with your other sales channels since sometimes other retailers do not accept deliveries from Amazon.
- 3) Do not overdo it with your stock at Amazon fulfillment centers, because if some unpredicted event happens, such as a big order from a large retailer that doesn't accept MCF, you cannot take it back easily.



## TIP

*If you also manage a cross-border e-commerce on top of the marketplaces, you should work with a 3PL that can connect directly to your e-commerce platform or shopping cart plugin. Several 3PLs have developed specific plugins that you can install easily on your WooCommerce, Shopify, Squarespace, or other major e-commerce platforms and shopping cart plugins. However, since that involves a cost of web development for the 3PLs, they haven't done it for all the e-commerce platforms and shopping cart software but only for the most frequently used ones. This is why, when you choose your 3PL, you need to make sure it has a plugin to connect to your e-commerce platform or shopping cart plugin, because if it doesn't then the connection between the two will require an additional investment on your part.*

A hybrid fulfillment approach can be a good solution for your digital export project. It combines some or all the above options instead of choosing and sticking with only one. It might require a bit more effort

for inventory management, but you maximize the fulfillment options for all your sales channels around the world, whether online or offline.

## **GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 4 - LIST YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES**

Once the account is created and validated, you can start listing your products. When you do that, make sure that it is not yet possible to place orders.

To do this, put your account on hold, or in vacation mode or zero availability or with prices that are three times more expensive than your competitors. In this way you will have all the time you need to enter the information, pictures, video, and any other element you need, and do the necessary tests before receiving real orders from real customers.

If you're new to working on marketplaces, in this stage, do not list more than 20% of your products or services. You do not need to list your whole catalog at once. This is always a testing phase, and before you move forward with listing the rest of your products or services it is better to check that these 20% are well listed on the marketplace, in the right categories.

What are the methods for listing your products on a B2C marketplace? Listing products or services on a marketplace can be done in multiple ways. The most common ones, especially for products, are the following:

- 1) **Manually one-by-one:** it is a good method if you have around 50 items without information organized in tables, such as in an Excel file. This is a straightforward and easy method that does not require any particular skill, but it is quite time-consuming.

amazon seller central

Vital Info Variations Offer Images Advanced View

Jewellery > Women > Charms > Bead Charms

When multiple sellers sell the same product through a single detail page, we combine and present the best product data to ensure customers get the best experience.

\* Product Name

\* Manufacturer

\* Brand Name

\* Product ID  -Select-

You require a unique identifier such as UPC, EAN, or GCRID to list your products. You can request exemptions to list products that do not have standard product IDs for certain categories. Learn more

\* Type of Metal

\* Type of Material  Add More

\* Part Number

Cancel Save and finish

Detailed description: This screenshot shows the 'Vital Info' section of the Amazon Seller Central product listing interface. It's a clean, modern design with a light blue header and white background. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Vital Info', 'Variations', 'Offer', and 'Images', along with an 'Advanced View' toggle. Below the header, the breadcrumb trail shows the category path: Jewellery > Women > Charms > Bead Charms. A note at the top states: 'When multiple sellers sell the same product through a single detail page, we combine and present the best product data to ensure customers get the best experience.' The main form contains several input fields with placeholder text: 'Product Name' (Bosch - Cordless Drill/Driver - PSR960), 'Manufacturer' (Makita), 'Brand Name' (Natural Diamonds, Diamond Manufacturers etc.), 'Product ID' (5279173125000) with a dropdown menu labeled '-Select-', 'Type of Metal' (silver plated), 'Type of Material' (White Gold) with a 'Add More' link, and 'Part Number' (LE). At the bottom right are 'Cancel' and 'Save and finish' buttons.

Figure 9: manual listing on Amazon Seller Central for product information.

The screenshot shows the 'Offer' tab in the Amazon Seller Central interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Vital Info', 'Variations', 'Offer' (which is underlined), 'Compliance', 'Images', 'Description', 'Keywords', and 'More Details'. Below the navigation is an 'Advanced View' toggle switch. The main content area displays a product listing for a 'Jewellery' item under 'Women > Charms > Bead Charms'. A note at the top says, 'You have the option to save as inactive now and add the offer back later.' with a checkbox labeled 'Let me skip the offer data and add it later.'

**Offer Data:**

- Your price:** £ Ex: 50.00
- Seller SKU:** 30762913 (locked)
- Sale Price:** £ Ex: 50.00
- Sale From Date:** DD/MM/YYYY
- Sale End Date:** DD/MM/YYYY
- Quantity:** (empty input field)
- Condition:** New (locked)
- Condition Note:** Dust cover missing. Some scratches on the front.
- Recommended Retail Price:** £ Ex: 50.00
- Product Tax Code:** A\_FOOD\_GEN
- Handling Time:** 0 (empty input field)
- Restock Date:** DD/MM/YYYY
- Can Be Gift Messageed:**
- Is Gift Wrap Available?**
- Max Order Quantity:** 1 (empty input field)
- Merchant Shipping Group:** Migrated Template (dropdown menu)

Figure 9b: manual listing on Amazon Seller Central for a product offer.

- 2) **XLS/CSV file:** through the marketplace XLS/CSV template that is usually available on the dashboard of the platform. It is a good choice when you have a few hundred items, and you can export the information about your items from the database of your e-

commerce. To use this method, you need to be familiar with Excel skills and have your picture on some URL.

- 3) **FTP/HTTP integration with XML/CSV feed:** this is a much more automated method, and it is a good choice for any quantity of items and any frequency of listing. Whether XML or CSV, a feed is a file containing all the information about your products.

With such a feed in place, you have a single file through which you can upload your products' information to various marketplaces and shopping channels<sup>18</sup>. You just need to make sure all your items' information is organized in a database that will generate the feed that will be integrated via FTP or HTTP into the marketplace or marketplaces you want.

The drawback of this method is that, if you use several marketplaces, it will be difficult to adapt your feed to the specific template of each marketplace with the result that your offers will not appear as nice and complete as they should.

- 4) **With a feed management tool:** it is a software-as-a-service (SaaS) application that connects to your website to generate automatic and customizable feeds for marketplace and other platforms<sup>19</sup>. As before, this is a much more automated method than the first two, and it is a good choice for any quantity of items and any frequency of listing.

You need to pay a monthly fee of €30, or less, but up to several hundred euros if you have several hundred or thousands of items to sell on several marketplaces or on other channels. It is one of the best solutions if you plan to use many platforms and if you have a large number of items, because it allows you to adapt your products' data on the template of each marketplace and platform.

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<sup>18</sup> Such as other marketplaces but also Google Ads, Facebook Ads, Comparison Shopping Service providers, etc.

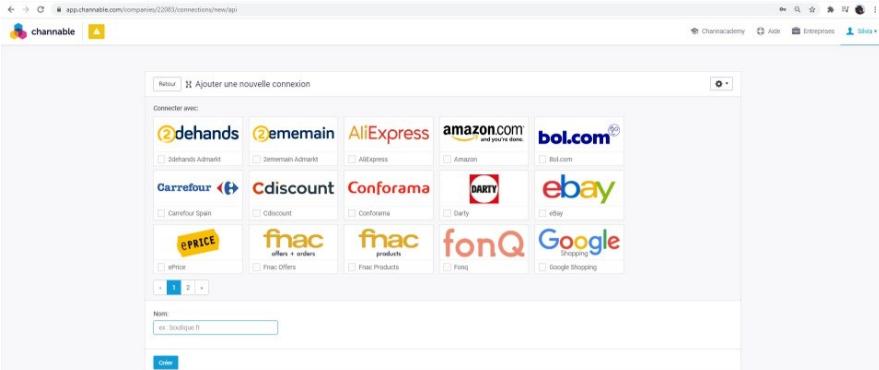
<sup>19</sup> Such as other marketplaces but also Google Ads, Facebook Ads, Comparison Shopping Service providers, etc.

Some examples are: DataFeedWatch, Channable, CROSSMODS, GoDataFeed, Marello, Highstreet.io, BeezUP, etc.

- 5) **Application program interface (API)<sup>20</sup> integration:** this is a fully automated method that suits any quantity of items and any frequency of listing, but you will need:
- All your items' information to be organized in a database; and
  - A developer to connect the specific API.

The major drawback is that this API integration doesn't allow you to customize your data on the marketplace template: your data will be uploaded as it is in your e-commerce.

If you want it to be customized for each marketplace, you will need specific API development each time.



*Figure 10: an example of a feed management tool, Channable, and some of the marketplaces to which it can connect your e-commerce.*

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<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Shaneil Lafayette, 'eCommerce 101: API for eCommerce and Why it's Important', Elastic Path, 12 August 2021, <https://www.elasticpath.com/blog/an-introduction-to-ecommerce-apis>.

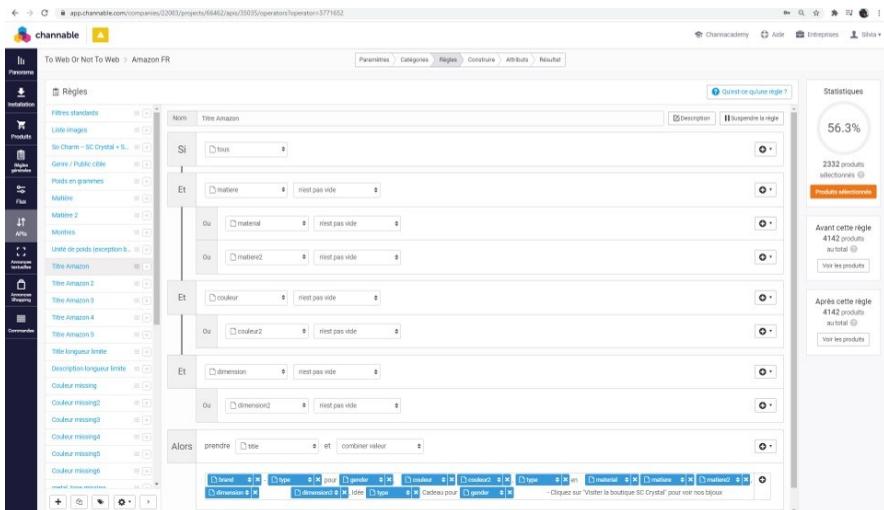


Figure 10b: an example of Channable features to adapt the items' data according to the rules of the Amazon France template.

## GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 5 - DO THE FINAL CHECKS

Your store and your 20% of products are now visible online but not yet available for sale. Before starting your sales, do one last test of the integration between the marketplace's back-office and your e-commerce or ERP, your warehouse or fulfillment center, and your bank account. Check that all these operational elements are working properly:

- Product or service pages and their picture quality.
- Listing in the right categories of the marketplace.
- The links of all variants for sizes, colors, quantities, etc.
- Simulate an order until its payment. This is a specific function that is generally offered by the marketplace and validates that all the interactions with your IT system and your bank account are working well.

- Check the alerts and in particular that everyone involved with order fulfillment receives them in the right format, in the right place, and at the right time.
- The inventory is updated as soon as the purchase order and the payment are confirmed.
- The marketplace's customer service is operational for your products.
- Your feed management tool, if you have decided to use one, is synchronizing correctly.

If all these checks go well, you can stop the on-hold or vacation mode or add availability or correct your prices to start the real sales.

You might keep managing only 20% of your products, but is not an issue because, before going any further, it is better to analyze the first results. How did the first sales go? Were your first customers happy? Did they leave a positive review? Which keywords did they use to find you?

If the results of this analysis are positive, you can finish listing all your other products or services. Otherwise, it will be better if you first solve any problems that occurred.

## **GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 6 - START SELLING INTERNATIONALLY**

Once you've finished opening your seller account and listing your offers in the domestic marketplace, those B2C marketplaces that operate in multiple countries will offer you the option to deploy your offers in other countries as well.

Amazon is an example: you can start on any of its domestic marketplaces, for example, on amazon.de with your products translated into German.

Then, when your German Seller Central account is finished and your products are listed, you can go on and:

- List your products on the other local marketplaces in the UK on amazon.co.uk, in Spain on amazon.es, in France on amazon.fr, in Poland on amazon.pl, etc. Each platform will focus your offers on users in their country, but people from other countries will also be able to buy.
- List them on the global site amazon.com. This will focus your offers on shoppers in the U.S. and beyond.
- List them on the other platforms around the world in Canada on amazon.ca, in Mexico on amazon.com.mx, in Australia on amazon.com.au, in Japan on amazon.co.jp, etc.

Catalogue Inventory Pricing Orders Advertising Stores Reports 🔍

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All Inventory Manage Inventory ↗ Enhancements (316) | Fix stranded inv...

Manage FBA Inventory ↗ More | Rate this page

Pan-European FBA Inventory

Action on 0 selected

Inventory Planning title, ISBN,  2543 product(s)

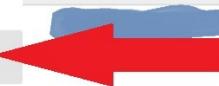
Filters: List

Add a Product ↗ Inactive | Fulfilment Type:  All  An...

Add Products via Upload

Inventory Reports **Product Name**  
ion ASIN

Manage Promotions

**Sell Globally** 

Manage FBA Shipments

Manage PartFinder

Figure 11: an example of how to open global sales on Amazon Seller Central.

## Your Listings

### Americas

	US	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Canada	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Mexico	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>

### Europe

	UK	31 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Germany	31 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	France	31 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Italy	31 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Spain	31 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Netherlands	31 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Sweden	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Poland	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>

### Asia-Pacific

	Australia	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>
	Japan	0 listings	<a href="#">View</a>

Figure 11b: Amazon Seller Central dashboard for managing international sales.

In both cases, for logistics you have the option of using the ‘Fulfillment by Amazon’ (FBA), which allows you to store your products in Amazon distribution centers. In this way, Amazon will take care of the warehouse and delivery management. Alternatively, you can choose ‘Fulfillment by Merchant’ (FBM) and manage the deliveries from your warehouse.

With FBA you have an additional cost with a fixed monthly storage fee on top of the delivery fee, but it can be interesting if you don’t yet have a logistics solution for delivering in your export markets. You can also

combine the two methods depending on the markets where you want to sell.

Some international marketplaces only let you sell internationally after a trial period. If you show them that you have learned how to manage the marketplace locally in terms of delivery, payment, VAT, customer service, etc., they will allow you to move into high gear and sell on other marketplaces abroad.

These marketplaces often require proven experience before accepting foreign sellers on their platform, which is usually done through reviews, ratings or recommendations obtained either on other marketplaces or on the seller's e-commerce. Some marketplaces also require a minimum number of items per reseller, such as Otto in Germany, which requires a minimum of 300 items, depending on the category.

## **GET STARTED IN SEVEN STEPS: 7 - BOOST YOUR EXPORT SALES**

This final step consists of using the web-marketing functionalities that each marketplace provides to help sellers sell more. Since these platforms have their own search engine, their SEO and SEA techniques work in quite the same way as those of Google or other search engines.

These web-marketing functionalities include advertising, adding rich content for customizing your offer pages, creating a mini-store within the marketplace, etc. They are free of charge except for the advertising. You have to pay for the clicks, because the ads models are almost always based on the cost per click (CPC)<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Check out [book 3 of The Digital Exporter Series](#) to find all the details on CPC and web advertising, the SEA.

These functionalities can make the difference in terms of sales performance. And, to boost them even further, you should adapt your e-commerce to the same shoppers in the countries where you sell through the marketplaces.

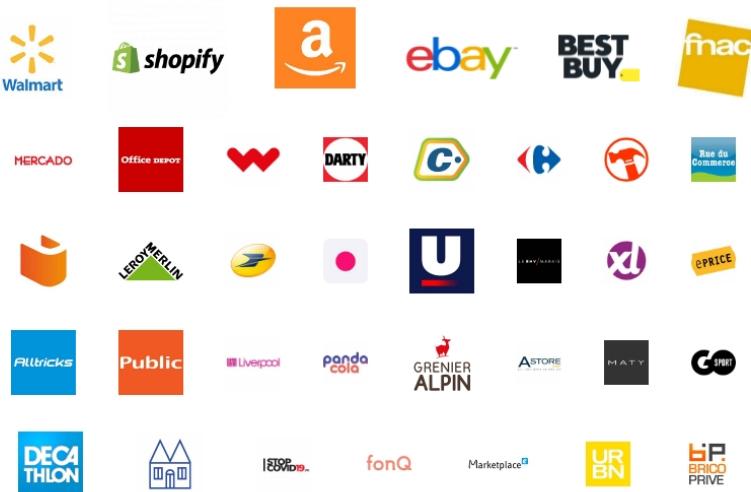
Therefore, to have better chances of being found by them than your competitors do in the marketplaces' search, you must optimize the synergies between the SEO and SEA of your own e-commerce and that of the marketplaces, ideally in each country. If your e-commerce speaks the same language, offers the same payment and deliveries systems, has clear terms and conditions, and uses the same keywords, these foreign shoppers will more easily find and use your e-commerce and might sooner or later start buying from you directly, which means higher profit for you.



### TIP

*There are several SaaS tools that can help optimize marketplace sales performance by providing additional services for keyword analytics, inventory management, sales intelligence, automation, etc.*

*While some are specific to one marketplace, like <https://www.junglescout.com/> or <https://www.helium10.com/>, or <https://www.zonguru.com/> for Amazon, others are multichannel and allow businesses to connect several marketplaces on the same tool and to follow their sales performance on all of them at the same time. One of these multichannel tools is <https://merchantspring.io/>, which offers one of the most comprehensive choices of connectable platforms across the world.*



Streamline Your Selling Across **All** Geographies



*Figure 11c: some of the options in terms of marketplaces and countries offered by MerchantSpring <https://merchantspring.io/>.*

Most international marketplaces offer different web-marketing tools to develop sales on their platform, such as:

- Offering special discounts.
- Advertising products or services or brands on the platform itself or on external partner websites.
- Promoting the position in the search results on the marketplace.
- Participation in the marketplace's regular promotional operations (Christmas, Black Friday, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, etc.).
- Paying an official tester to test your product and leave a review on your offers.



## TIP

*As you expand your business across marketplaces and across multiple countries simultaneously, don't hesitate to use specialist e-commerce providers. Whether it is to synchronize a feed management tool with different marketplaces, or to outsource customer support in local languages, or to produce multilingual content, or to provide marketplace SEO, etc., you might encounter different needs that multiply for each foreign country. External providers can help you accelerate your sales performance on international marketplaces.*



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

*Starting on a B2C international marketplace is not always easy, especially on the most popular ones. You need to provide updated business information and go through the validation process of each marketplace. Only when that is fully confirmed will you be able to list your products or services, sell in multiple countries, if the marketplace is international, and use the platform's specific web-marketing functions.*

*The seven steps to get your business off the ground in the B2C international marketplaces are:*

- 1) Find the ideal marketplaces.*
- 2) Open your seller account.*
- 3) Choose whether you're going to self-fulfill your orders or use a 3PL.*
- 4) List your products or services.*
- 5) Do the final checks.*
- 6) Start selling internationally.*
- 7) Boost your sales with the marketplaces' web-marketing tools.*