A picture containing outdoor, blue, woman, umbrella

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## INTERNATIONAL SALES AND MARKETING MODULE

## A close up of a logo Description automatically generatedINTERNATIONAL MARKETING STRATEGY

### **CLIENT/CUSTOMER PROFILE**

International marketing is significantly more complex than domestic marketing. Additional factors like legal differences, cultural differences, barriers to entry (tariffs, taxes…), brand identity and distributor agreements will add complexity which must be planned and approached strategically.

One of your most important elements to ensure your success in your foreign market is to clearly define your clients. Your marketing plan should identify three key elements: 1) who your target customers are, 2) how you will reach them, and 3) how you will retain them, so they repeatedly buy from you.

Describe your ideal client(s) in your chosen international market. Those can be very different from the end-users of your products/services. There could be several types depending on product range, geography, etc.

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| Who are your clients?  (might differ from your  end-user) |  |
| Provide a clear & specific description of the end-users  of your products/services |  |
| What are their precise wants, needs & buying motivators? |  |
| Where do your end-users  buy from? What channels? |  |
| If you use intermediaries/distributors, provide a clear & specific profile of the ideal one |  |
| Who are the top 2-3 competitors in your  new chosen market? |  |
| Are your clients  easily reachable? How? |  |
| Where are they located? |  |

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### **MARKET ANALYSIS**

#### **Export Market Scoping and Research**

To select your export market and succeed in expanding there, it is critical to gather as much market intelligence and information as possible. Market research is the foundation of your marketing strategy and should be aimed at achieving your company’s overall objectives. Three factors need to be outlined in your plan:

1. **Sources of Market Intelligence**

Industry associations, local competitors/allies, commercial banks, industry publications, data traders, Trade Commissioners, etc. This section will give credibility to your findings and help convince potential investors.

1. **Competitive Analysis**

Identify your competitors and evaluate their strategies to determine their strengths and weaknesses as they relate to your products and services. Based on your market research.   
How do you stack up against your main competitors (direct or indirect)?

1. **Market Selection**

Describe factors such as competitive advantages in logistics, cultural links, economic conditions, technological aspects, etc.

***Once you have analyzed your market and have a strong knowledge of who your clients and competitors are, highlight the key points of why you have chosen your selected market and why it will give you a competitive advantage.***

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#### **2) P.E.S.T. Analysis**

P.E.S.T. is an acronym that stands for the Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors of the market(s) your company want to enter. Before entering any market, you will have to do in-depth research to determine the major trends and factors you will have to take into consideration.

***P.S.: this research is extremely long to complete. You might want to make use of the services of external support such as university students or interns.***

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| ****Political (includes legal and regulatory):****  *Labour law, consumer protection, environmental regulations, industry-specific regulations, competitive regulations, etc.* | Economic (market trends): *Economic growth trends, taxation levels, government spending levels, disposable income, job growth/unemployment, interest rates, exchange rates, tariffs, etc.* |
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| Social (cultural conditions): *Demographics (age distribution, gender, race, family size, growth rates, etc.), lifestyle changes, population shifts, education, trends, cultural aspects, fads, diversity, immigration/emigration, health, etc.* | **Technological (access to IP):**  *Technological factors can determine barriers to entry, minimum efficient production levels and outsourcing decisions. Technological factors will also consider levels of R&D activity, automation, technology incentives and the rate of technological change.* |
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### **MARKETING PLAN**

With a clear definition of your clients’ profile, market analysis and market competitors, you can now put in place the marketing tactics which will get you to grab additional market shares.

#### **Market Entry Strategy**

The many methods that a company can use to enter a new market can be defined as trading or investing strategies, all bearing different advantages and disadvantages.

* Outline the various advantages/disadvantages for each strategy,
* Indicate which method works best for your product/service including the strengths and weaknesses of your strategy and,
* Why you didn’t choose one of the other leading strategies (if applicable).

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| **Trading Entry Strategies** | **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** |
| Direct exporting  (to end-user) |  |  |
| Indirect exporting  (via distributor, agent,  or third-party) |  |  |
| eCommerce Platforms  (portals, web) |  |  |
| **Investing Entry Strategies** | **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** |
| Branch/Sub Office |  |  |
| JV/Partnership or Alliance |  |  |
| Investing in Production |  |  |
| Merge or Acquire |  |  |
| Franchising |  |  |

Describe which market entry strategy will be chosen to enter/expand your market and why*.*

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#### **Your Products and/or Services**

**Write a short, concise value proposition.** Describe specifically how it satisfies the needs of your target customer. You can have several value propositions, each targeting a specific customer.

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It is highly likely that your products/services will need to be adjusted to succeed in your new market, if only for translation or regulatory considerations.

* **Positioning –** positioning strategies may vary depending on which country you want to penetrate. They are the value proposition which conveys what makes your products/services unique, better and relevant and how they benefit the clients who will be buying them.
* **Differentiation –** essentially the way you carry out your positioning by promoting distinct attributes or benefits that your products/services offer, differentiating you from your competition.
* **Adaptation –** your products/services might need modification to appeal to your new clients and meet local cultural and regulatory requirements, language, pack size, weight, colour, technical specifications, durability, efficiency, prestige, customer service, production, R&D, etc.
* **Pricing –** you might decide to set your prices artificially low to gain market share, lower marketing and promotion costs to create an image of “no frills, great value” or on the contrary, charge higher prices because of a significant competitive advantage or superior quality. Whatever the strategy, pricing should be carefully evaluated and justified to maximize market penetration and the company’s objectives and resources.

***Describe your products/services strategies to penetrate your export market by focusing on your positioning, differentiation, sales tactics and adaptation in the identified international market.***

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#### **Distribution**

**For Product companies:**

* Your distribution plan should explain how you will supply your products to your customers. Example: will you develop an e-commerce strategy?
* What type of logistics will you be using to maximize efficiency?
* Will your customers buy from distributors or other retailers?

**For Service companies:**

* Your distribution plan should explain how you will supply your products to your customers. Distribution channels may include:
* On-Site consulting: providing on-site work, which would mean intensive resourcing from your end
* Virtual Delivery: interacting with clients via phone, email, cloud-based project software, which would expand your ability to distribute your services
* Third Party Consulting: distribute your services by working for another service provider who does the marketing and legwork of finding clients.

\*Note that your distribution strategy is directly linked to your market-entry strategy

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## INTERNATIONAL SALES STRATEGY

Expending internationally requires a winning international strategy, which, in turns requires the right knowledge, skills and the ability to share information across all levels of the company, including external partners.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Companies which succeed internationally tend to display the following common traits:

* Aggressive staff training, including sales force based in foreign markets
* Maximum leveraging of external experts and government support
* Effective integration of internal company experts with the international team

***Describe your HR strategy for international expansion, including the name and position of staff dedicated to export growth***

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### **PROCESSES**

Your internal processes are directly linked to the measurement of your company’s efficiency and the Value it is creating. Once you have clearly identified your export strategy and objectives, it becomes essential to map your internal processes to describe how you are going to achieve that strategy. Keep in mind that processes exist throughout your organization – whether they are formally defined or not – that they create value and are a critical part of your value proposition. They differentiate your company from your competitors.

#### **1. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

Although running a CRM system can appear daunting and unnecessary for a smaller company, the implementation of solid customer relation processes will track basic information such as supply chain, sales pipeline and age analysis, accounts and shipments which are absolutely vital to limit your overheads and streamline your company’s internal functions.

***Describe, whether in Word, table form, excel sheet or other, how your company is/will be planning to manage customer relationships in an international context. Key areas should include:***

* ***Customers selection***
* ***Customers retention***
* ***Customers acquisition***
* ***Enhancement of customers relations***

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#### **Processes Compatibility**

Planning the implementation of your internal processes will give you the ability to integrate all systems smoothly, thus creating significant savings in the longer-term. While it is tempting to invest in new technological solutions as the company grows and needs increase, the multiplication of ad-hoc independent solutions will eventually become detrimental to overall productivity.

Keep in mind that cloud-based systems are often more effective, especially in a global environment as everyone in the company has access to any information at any time.

***Describe your IT architecture e and design and how it will ensure a smooth integration of all your company’s functions, from manufacturing, finance, CRM, administration, and others.***

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### **IMPLEMENTATION & ACTION PLAN**

An Action Plan consists of several action steps defined to achieve your company’s objectives. Each action step should include the following information:

* **What** actions or changes will occur
* **Who**will carry out these changes
* **By when** they will take place, and for how long
* **What resources**(i.e., money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes
* **Communication**(who should know what?)

**Example of Action Plan.** Insert content with your own plan, including dates, names, etc. and using various colours to make it easier to read. Other columns can be added such as “priority level”, “date of completion” or “notes”. Action plans can be designed in Excel, Microsoft Project, or any other available software packages.

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| Objective | Tasks to be completed | Desired outcome | List of needed resources | Person responsible | Date to begin | Due date |
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### **CONTROL**

One of the most challenging aspects of international trade is to monitor and keep control of all foreign activities, including sales. To keep track of goals and objectives, processes must be implemented to monitor activities and their outcomes. You will need to establish standards, measure performance against standards and correct deviations from those standards.

Typically, control measures will be based on sales volume, sales value, market share gains, consumer feedback or any other appropriate or relevant measure.

**Example of a control measure for directing a foreign sales force:**

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|  | Company/person contacted | Nature of call | What was discussed | What was decided | Date to be completed | Follow-up action |
| Date | Name, title, contact details | Meeting/call/  plant visit… | List of subjects covered | Actions and name of person responsible |  | Includes description and date |

Action sheets can easily be requested on a weekly basis, for past or future calls in any industry. Numerous tools can be found to increase the monitoring of sales representation in foreign markets.