

Beyond Borders: The Must-Do Prep Work Before Seeking International Buyers

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Expanding into international markets is an exhilarating opportunity, but it requires meticulous preparation, and a deep understanding of the complexities involved. Here is your comprehensive guide, packed with essential tips and strategies, to ensure your success in the global arena.

1. Company Preparedness: Building a Solid Foundation

Before you even think about stepping into international waters, your company must be rock-solid. This involves ensuring that your people, resources, and innovations are all aligned to produce outstanding quality at competitive costs. Scalability and sustainability should be at the forefront of your strategy.

Tip: Invest in your team. Empower them with the necessary training and tools to drive innovation. Remember, a company is only as strong as its weakest link—do not let that link be an untrained employee who does not know the difference between a Gantt chart and a coffee break.

Example: Imagine expanding into a market like Germany, known for its precision and quality. If your team is not prepared to meet these exacting standards, your business will stand out—for all the wrong reasons!

2. Product Preparedness: Crafting a Compelling Offering

Your product must be more than just “good”; it must have unique selling propositions (USPs) that make it irresistible compared to the competition. Equally important is delivering excellent customer service—before, during, and after the sale.

Tip: Focus on what makes your product stand out. Is it more durable? More efficient? Better designed? Whatever it is, make sure it’s clear to your potential buyers. Also, provide stellar customer service—think of it as the cherry on top of your already-delicious sundae.

Example: A pen company once boasted, “Our pens can write in zero gravity!” To which a competitor responded, “Our pens can write under water!” Both are great USPs—unless your customer just needs a pen that will not explode in their pocket.

3. Build Credibility and Respectability

Your company and product need to have a formidable reputation. Credibility does not come overnight; it’s built over time with consistent performance and reliability.

Tip: Start by making sure your domestic market knows and trusts your brand. Use customer testimonials, case studies, and awards to showcase your achievements.

Example: “We’ve been the top choice for 90% of skydivers for over 20 years!” sounds impressive—until you realize they sell parachutes. Your credibility must genuinely reflect your strengths.

4. Build Respectable References and Select High-Respect International Markets

Having a powerful reputation in your domestic market makes it easier to gain trust abroad. Once you have solidified your domestic base, find international markets that hold high respect in your industry.

Tip: Use your domestic success stories as a springboard into international markets. Target countries where your success will resonate and where your brand can align with respected local businesses.

Example: Imagine launching in Japan, where attention to detail and respect for quality are paramount. If you have been a market leader in your home country, it’s much easier to earn respect in Japan—just make sure your packaging doesn’t accidentally translate to “stinky fish” in Japanese.

5. Understand the PESTEL Business Environments

Before entering a new market, thoroughly understand the PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal) factors that could impact your business.

Tip: Conduct in-depth research on the target market’s PESTEL factors. Understanding these will help you navigate potential risks and capitalize on opportunities.

Example: In a country with strict environmental regulations, launching a product with eco-friendly packaging could give you a significant edge. Just make sure your “biodegradable” bags do not turn into a sticky mess in high humidity!

6. Travel and Engage with Key Stakeholders

Travel to your target markets and meet with the commercial sections of Indian embassies, relevant chambers of commerce, and business associations. Gather insights from leading industry figures, understand the challenges of doing business there, and **identify** your competition.

Tip: Prepare a list of targeted questions to ask during these meetings. Focus on understanding the major challenges and customer pain points in the market.

Example: “So, what keeps you up at night—other than spicy food?” is a humorous way to delve into serious business challenges, but make sure you follow up with thoughtful solutions.

7. Master the Art of Rapport Building

When meeting people from diverse cultures, it is crucial to build rapport quickly. Smile, keep eye contact, and be mindful of your body language. Pay attention to cultural norms, and remember when in Rome, don't accidentally insult your host by turning down their food.

Tip: Study the culture of the market you are entering. Learn the dos and don'ts of greetings, body language, and even dining etiquette. The secret is in mirroring and matching their behavior.

Example: In Japan, a firm handshake might be replaced by a respectful bow. On the other hand, if you are meeting in Italy, you'd better get comfortable with a lot of hand gestures!

8. Encourage Meeting Over Meals

Business deals often happen over meals. This is your opportunity to build rapport in a more relaxed setting.

Tip: Always accept meal invitations and be aware of dining etiquette in the target market. This is another chance to impress by understanding and respecting cultural norms.

Example: In China, it is considered polite to taste every dish on the table. Just make sure you are not using your chopsticks like a drumstick—unless you are auditioning for a local band!

9. Focus on Building Positive Emotions

During all interactions, whether in professional meetings or over meals, your goal is to create positive emotions. People do business with those they like and trust.

Tip: Avoid any negativity. Keep conversations light, positive, and focused on solutions rather than problems.

Example: “You know, I once made the mistake of complaining about the weather during a business lunch in London. Let us just say, it did not go over well. Instead, compliment their tea—everyone loves a good cup of tea.”

10. Master the Art of Effective Communication

Your communication skills can make or break your international business deals. Tone, clarity, and visual materials are crucial.

Tip: Prepare high-quality visuals, such as product samples, brochures, and videos, to make a powerful first impression.

Example: “Imagine walking into a meeting and showing a video of your ultramodern facility, complete with a drone flyover. It is hard to top that—unless you accidentally include the blooper reel.”

11. Ask the Right Questions and Provide Quick Solutions

Understanding your customer’s needs is key. Ask insightful questions to uncover their challenges and be ready with quick, tailored solutions.

Tip: Be a good listener. Sometimes the best way to sell is by letting the customer tell you exactly what they need.

Example: “Tell me, what’s your biggest headache right now?” is a good start—just be prepared with aspirin (or a brilliant solution) right after they answer.

12. Understand Both Professional and Personal Needs

During your interactions, it is essential to understand not only the professional but also the personal needs of your customer. This will help you design a more compelling sales pitch.

Tip: Pay attention to what your customer values personally. This insight can be key to building a stronger relationship.

Example: If your client mentions they are a fan of a particular sport, subtly weaving it into your pitch can create a personal connection—just do not mix up football with soccer in Europe, or you might kick your opportunity out of the park!

13. Never Speak Ill of Your Competition

Talking negatively about your competition can backfire and damage your credibility.

Tip: Focus on what makes your product superior, not what makes your competitors inferior.

Example: Instead of saying, “Our competitors are terrible at customer service,” say, “We pride ourselves on our exceptional customer service, and our clients have told us it’s one of the main reasons they chose us.”

14. Go Well-Prepared into Meetings

Research everything you can about your customer and their challenges. The more you know, the better you can tailor your pitch and surprise them with your insight.

Tip: Being over-prepared is better than being under-prepared. Know their business inside and out before you walk into that meeting.

Example: “During my research, I noticed you have recently expanded into e-commerce. We have developed a solution specifically designed to streamline online operations. Let us talk about how we can help you dominate this new space.”

15. Create a Collaborative Plan for Market Success

Present a plan showing how you can help your customer compete better in their market and gain more market share through collaboration.

Tip: Focus on collaboration rather than selling. Show your potential customers how partnering with you will make them more competitive.

Example: “We can help you increase your market share by 15% within the first year by leveraging our combined expertise in product innovation and market strategy.”

16. Master the Art of Monetization

Show your customer the monetized benefits of your offerings. During your sales presentation, highlight how your product will improve their bottom line.

Tip: Speak the language of profits. Quantify the benefits of your product or service in monetary terms to make your pitch irresistible.

Example: “By switching to our energy-efficient solution, you could save \$500,000 annually on operational costs. That is enough to fund your next big innovation—or at least a few extra bonuses!”

17. Embrace Environment, Sustainability, and Governance (ESG) with Ethical Marketing Practices

In today’s global market, consumers and businesses alike are increasingly focused on sustainability and ethical practices. Integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into your business strategy is not just a trend—it’s a necessity. Your marketing practices should reflect your commitment to sustainability and ethical standards, resonating with customers who value corporate responsibility.

Tip: Showcase your company’s dedication to ESG by highlighting your sustainable practices, ethical sourcing, and commitment to fair trade in your marketing materials. Be transparent about your efforts to reduce your environmental impact and engage in socially responsible initiatives.

Example: “Our product line is not only designed for superior performance but also with the planet in mind. We’ve reduced our carbon footprint by 30% and ensure all materials are ethically sourced. By choosing us, you’re not just investing in quality—you’re investing in a sustainable future.”

Incorporating ESG into your business and marketing strategies can set you apart from competitors and build a loyal customer base that values ethical and sustainable practices.

Conclusion: Preparation is the Key to Success

Expanding into international markets is no small feat. It requires thorough preparation, a deep understanding of your target market, and the ability to build strong relationships across

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These references will provide a solid foundation for the concepts discussed in your article, supporting the strategies and tips for successful international market expansion.