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STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DIGITAL INTERNATIONALIZATION

BASIC GUIDE

CREATED BY
INNOVA DIGITAL EXPORT

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ECOMMERCE STRATEGY

OBJECTIVE

This guide aims to provide companies with the guidelines of a strategic plan for internationalization through electronic commerce.

Specifically, if you intend to understand the dimension and importance of electronic commerce in a Post COVID-19 scenario and acquire the necessary knowledge about current Internet business models and their application in traditional or newly created companies. It is also intended to review the success factors for the definition of a correct online sales strategy, as well as its integration with the internationalization strategy.

Examples of decisions that companies must make before entering into operational aspects, such as technology, marketing plan, logistics, etc. will be analyzed.

UPSTREAM REGULATORY ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL

It is important to note that any e-commerce strategy, whether BtoB or BtoC, requires compliance with the regulations applicable to import-export operations for the products in question.

Each project requires a detailed and individualized analysis (including taking into account the typology of the companies concerned and, in some cases, their product), which would entail a very high use of resources and time for a standard consultation. By way of example, for the Chinese market, several of the products of the agri-food sector (such as beef, chicken, or certain precooked foods with heat-treated meat) are not allowed to be imported into China, or certain meat products are not allowed to be imported into the U.S. market.

We always recommend consulting specialized personnel, either in import/export operations or through the commercial **offices** of the embassies of the countries of origin of the product.

As an example, for the registration of agri-food exporting companies in China, you can consult the [quick guide for the registration of agri-food](#) exporting companies, which details the registration procedure of the exporter according to the type of product.

Additionally, many of the sub-sectors of the agri-food sector, such as the wine sector, must take into account specific regulations, as can be seen in the following wine market study, where answers to many of the questions related to the import of wines to China can be found.

The close relationship between the online and physical market makes it necessary to take into account the specific rules relating to e-commerce transactions in a given country. Examples of such regulations and options for developing digital strategies in the Chinese market can be found below: For the online channel, you can consult [the e-commerce report for the Chinese market](#), as well as [the cross-border ecommerce guide](#), a type of e-commerce related to the Chinese market, and very interesting for certain niche products).

For the U.S. market, for example, finished (non-perishable) foods are, for the most part, regulated by the FDA and must follow the regulations that apply to foods exported to the USA. This includes compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, the need to appoint an agent before the FDA, registration of corresponding facilities before the FDA, etc., so it is always essential to review the requirements on a case-by-case basis, given that there are specific restrictions for sectors such as fruits and vegetables or alcoholic beverages or the different regulatory treatment given to perishable and non-perishable products.

As an example, you can consult the previous aspects for the export of products in the American market.

https://www.icex.es/icex/wcm/idc/groups/public/documents/documento_anexo/mdezmj_u1/~edisp/dax2013255463.pdf

In this market, for example, a change occurred a few years ago that obliges importers (and, consequently, exporters must adapt their work systems) to comply with the Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP) standard, which in turn derives from the FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act).

These laws lead us to a system in which the U.S. administration, through the FDA (*Food and Drug Administration*), strives to ensure food safety. The way to achieve this is to name the importer as the responsible party and require it to implement a system with all its suppliers that ensures food safety. Therefore, each importer must implement a corresponding system with its suppliers.

The FSVP focuses on ensuring the safety of the food that the importer imports. The system that each importer decides to implement to comply with the standard is an individual matter of the company and the policies that it decides to follow and require its suppliers in order to comply with FDA requirements and ensure that it is organized for a possible audit by the FDA.

Some reference links:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm361902.htm>

<https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm560689.htm>

In any import operation into the USA the exporter/manufacturer is responsible for demonstrating to their importer and, consequently, to the FDA that the food to be introduced into the U.S. market complies with FSMA requirements, which include:

- *Current Good Manufacturing Practice,*
- *Hazard Analysis*
- *Risk-based Preventive Controls for Human Food regulation (referred to as the Preventive Controls for Human Food regulation)*

As we can see, the exporting company must ensure that it is accredited to sell its products in the corresponding market, given that this requirement is prior to and independent of the sales strategy, both physical and online.

GENERAL INFO ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ECOMMERCE

Currently Internet sales are a booming market that does not stop developing and evolving. We tend more and more to a global market, in which the user looks for what he wants nationally or globally, and who buys where he wants, for the reason (price, comfort, range of offer) that he decides most importantly.

The percentage of retail sales made online has grown steadily, growing from just over 10% in 2014 to around 15% in 2019.



The recent Covid-19 pandemic has further accentuated the growth trend of e-commerce. The lockdown and other measures taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have led consumers to increase e-commerce purchases and use of social media. These new trends have led to a sudden increase in business-to-consumer commerce and an increase in business-to-business e-commerce.

According to international studies on purchase intentions through electronic commerce (GlobalWebIndex), 49% of users worldwide and 36% of consumers in the case of Spain, stated that they intend to use electronic commerce more, even after the pandemic is over.

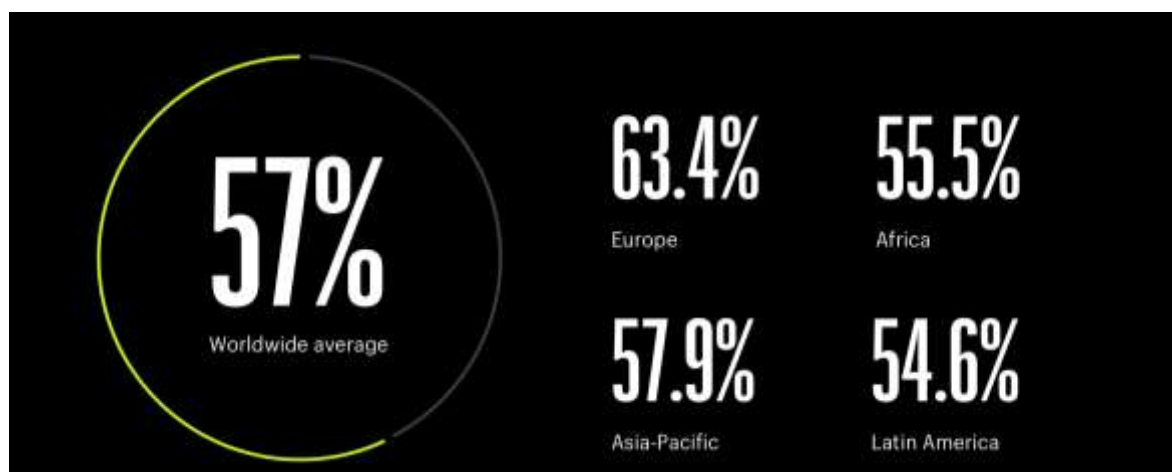


E-commerce **website traffic data worldwide grew by 43% and 36% respectively in May and June 2020**, compared to the same months in 2019 (SemRush data).

CROSS-BORDER VS DOMESTIC ECOMMERCE

Developing an online sales channel allows access to more potential customers thanks to greater geographic coverage. Customers will be able to buy your products without leaving home regardless of where they reside, so expanding your radius of action to other national provinces or selling abroad is no longer a barrier.

The opportunity for electronic commerce is indeed international, especially since the online consumer is extremely easy to buy products on foreign websites. According to a Nielsen study, 57% of online shoppers make purchases on foreign websites and in Europe this figure rises to 63.4%.

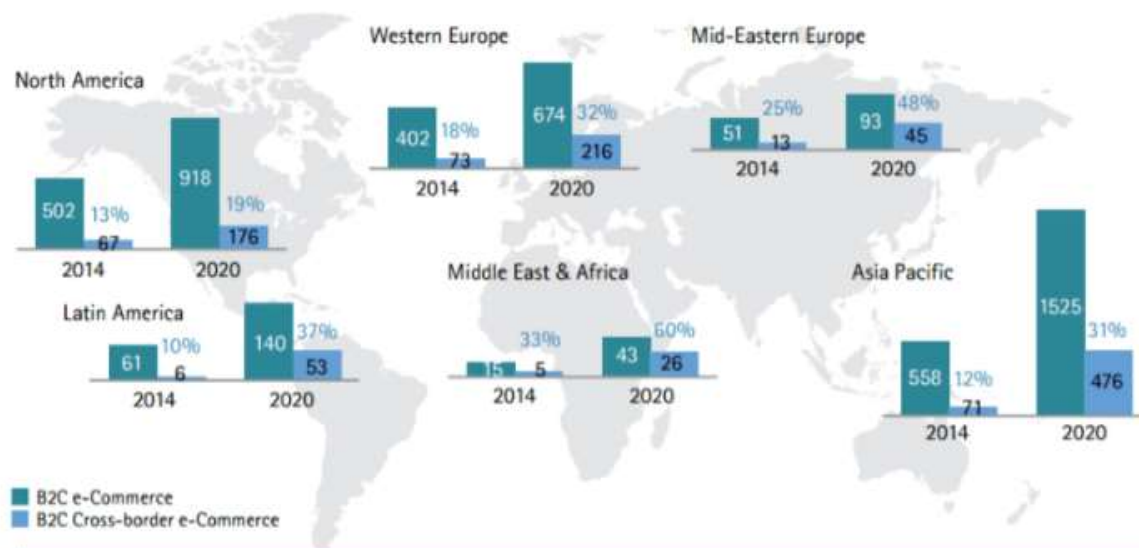


Fuente: Nielsen

In the specific case of electronic commerce, the internationalization of intangible products or services can be found whereby local culture and habits can pose insurmountable barriers, as in the case of the use of unknown or unfriendly interfaces for local users. In the case of consumer goods, the barriers are more focused on logistics, marketing and incompatibility problems of the means of payment, in the case of direct sales to the end user / consumer.

Cross-border trade grows more than national trade, as we can see in the following graph:

Global transaction value of cross-border B2C e-commerce (billions of dollars)



In summary, the key points for online internationalization are:

- **Languages:** online product information must be correctly translated for target markets, such as product instructions and labels. Customer service also requires the local language needs of the destination countries. It may also be advisable to create specific Internet domains in each country (for example: .pt, .fr, .es, .it...).
- **Legal:** In addition to international standards, for example, Incoterms and rules of the European Union, we have to study the legal implications, import rules, product certifications, etc., of each destination country. Do not forget tax issues, such as cross-border VAT.
- **Logistics:** International logistics costs can make online sales unfeasible, especially for lower priced products. For more distant markets, the possibility of storing stocks in destination markets should be analyzed. In sales to the final consumer (B2C) it is necessary to deliver a product in a foreign country and attend to possible returns
- **Payments:** In addition to the most common payment methods worldwide (Visa, Paypal, ...), there are also local methods that are widely used, for example in the Chinese market.

MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN B2B AND B2C STRATEGIES

B2C commerce, being the customer the final consumer, is characterized by making individual sales, of lower value, but much more frequently. For its part, B2B ecommerce, being the customer a company, is a business process, for purchases of greater volume and value, which starts online and most of the time remains offline, that is, it is a process of capturing potential customers, leads.

B2C Customers	B2B Customers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one contact • Look for a product <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick purchase • Fixed prices • Promotional offer • Direct payments • Unitary delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique visits • Individual purchases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various contacts • Looks for a provider • Decision making process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiated prices • Price conditions • Deferred payment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulk purchases • Long-term relationship • Professional purchase

Digital marketing techniques also differ depending on the type of business.

B2C	B2B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotive comercial content • SEO and SEM • Google Shopping and Google Maps • Facebook, Instagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational / technical content • More SEO • Sectorial directories • Linkedin

Many manufacturers, whose offline business is entirely B2B, aim to create a B2C online business, to avoid intermediaries and retain all the commercial margin. However, it is essential to know all the implications and difficulties that a B2C online business entails, as we will see later in this guide.

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS: INTERNATIONAL ONLINE SHOP VS MARKETPLACES

Marketplaces or electronic markets are usually directories of providers specialized in business-to-business (business-to-business or B2B), business-to-consumer (business-to-consumer or B2C) or between companies and Public Administrations (business-to-government or B2G). They can allow transactions on their platform or simply serve as a meeting point between sellers and buyers in a certain market.

One of its main advantages **is to facilitate the internationalization of our company without great investment needs**, by allowing us to test new markets to see how our product works without the expense of creating a specific online sales channel and / or a customer acquisition campaign, or use them as an additional or alternative

channel for our sales outside the country, without involving a direct conflict with the traditional channel.

Among its drawbacks we must highlight that our products will be listed with those of our competition, so it will be critical to highlight our product or services to close an agreement or get a sale. Another drawback will be the need to share the margin with the marketplace, while in a proprietary online store the manufacturer or brand owner retains the entire sales margin.

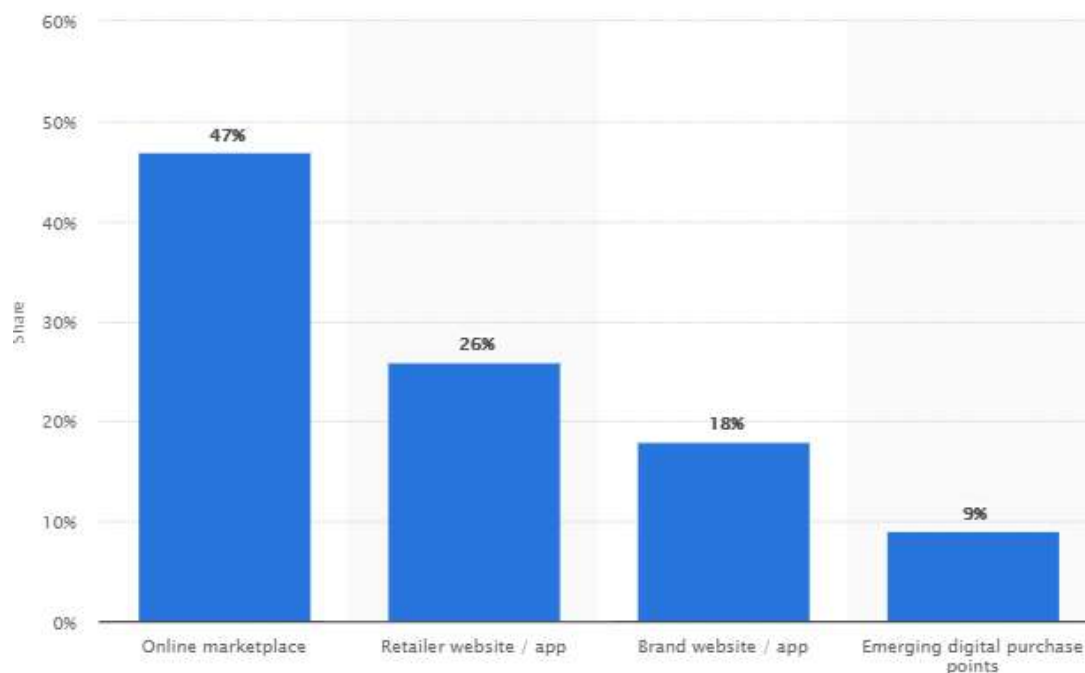
And why would it be interesting for a merchant to put his products or services up for sale in a marketplace when he can sell them himself? Its advantages as an alternative sales channel are:

- Access to a large number of potential buyers and increase the visibility of the company and its products on the internet, at low cost
- Reduction of investment costs, especially in technology.
- Minimize the risk of fraud, when carrying out the transaction within the marketplace.
- Benefit from powerful technological tools to segment and reach the potentially most relevant customers.
- Access the services offered by the marketplace, such as logistics, payment system, customer service and others.

 Advantages of a marketplace	 Disadvantages of a marketplace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is cheaper • Easier to operate • High customer traffic from the very beginning • Increased national and international visibility in search engines • Generates more confidence for the customer and the salesperson • It has many processes and services secured by the Marketplace. • Forget about technical and maintenance problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You pay commissions, the margin is reduced • Your competition is also present • Your customers are not your customers • You do not master the design and structure

The main data that we have to take into account is the growing weight that marketplaces have been occupying worldwide in online sales.

Distribution of online purchases worldwide as of July 2019, by channel



CONFLICT WITH MY PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL? POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In fact, electronic commerce has made it much easier for any company to sell online anywhere in the world, being able to do it directly without the need for intermediaries and paying the respective commissions.

But, what happens in the case of companies that already have other offline sales channels?

One of the critical aspects of an e-commerce strategy is to achieve its optimal combination with offline sales channels. In many sectors, the perception of the Internet has connotations of threat to the traditional channel, as it is interpreted as a cost-efficient channel capable of gradually replacing the physical medium.

Depending on the position of the company in the value chain (which will be very different if the company is a manufacturer or if it is a distributor / marketer / retailer), the options vary, the conflict resulting from manufacturers or brands launching being very common to sell on the Internet to the final consumer, coming into direct conflict with its traditional sales channel, which feels "attacked" by its current suppliers. On the part of the traditional channel, the resistance to the online medium will be greater the lower the value they contribute in this new chain and they must rigorously evaluate the perception that the new consumer has of their traditional business.

This situation, which evidently slows down the "digital" impulse, can give rise to different strategies on the part of manufacturers:

- Integration of the traditional channel in the online strategy: either because they provide some value in this new chain, serving, for example, as an intermediate warehouse or as a point of delivery / return of products, customer service, after-sales services, installation, repairs, etc. . It is a way for the online channel value

chain to use part of the physical channel in some part of the process. Sometimes, the benefits of the online channel are shared with the rest of the channel, assigning, for example, a commission to the distributor closest to the postal code of the online buyer.

- Sale of a range of different and / or complementary and / or discontinued products to the one marketed in the traditional channel: in this way, the problem of possible competition is avoided since there is no real conflict between channels, when different products are sold or to be able to use the Internet as a "settlement" channel for products from previous or discontinued seasons. This strategy of selling products from other seasons is precisely what has driven the success of private club companies such as Vente Privee, BuyVip or Privalia.
- Creation of a "second brand" for online sales: with this, manufacturers seek to take advantage of the cost advantages of the Internet without giving up their traditional source of income. However, this strategy does not allow to take advantage of the synergies of the online channel, since it does not allow the identification of the user with the well-known brand, in addition to forcing the development of a new product and its corresponding communication strategy, with the consequent investment requirements .
- Sale of "personalized" products: as they are unique products and different from those offered in the standard catalog by the traditional channel, the conflict disappears, offering added value to the customer looking for an exclusive product without detriment to the sale of common products standard catalog. The experience of www.nikeid.com or the Spanish www.cocoloon.com are good examples in this regard, offering sports products or customizable cosmetics, respectively.

The possibility in international environments that the distributor can provide greater value in the online sales process, through responsibility, for example, of the domestic logistics chain (local warehousing and delivery) is a positive factor in mitigating a potential conflict interest.

This option introduces the possibility of multiple strategies (for example, the physical sale of the product by the distributor, keeping the company managing the brand and online communication), seeking that the digital channel constitutes a source of business generation for the local dealer.

INTERNAL ANALYSIS OF THE COMPANY

When a company decides to start its internationalization process, it must consider a series of steps prior to making a decision about it, such as **studying the markets to which it is going to target**. Through various instruments, we will be able to obtain a broad and general vision of the digital economy in a given country, although we will need to address the main decision factors to successfully address the digital internationalization strategy.

Hence, the company must take into account the implications that the decision to internationalize will have at the following levels:

- **Product strategy:** Are my products / services competitive in the national and international market? What are my differential values? Are all my products exportable online?

- **Technological needs:** Do I have the necessary technology, as well as the optimal human resources to serve it and make it evolve in line with the evolution of the digital business? Is the technology I use suitable for an international sales environment with “multi” requirements (multi-currency, multi-site and multi-language?)
- **Human team:** It is necessary to address a key aspect: the conviction of the general management or the owner of the company in betting on the digital channel. Do I have the adequate human resources to develop and execute my international ecommerce strategy?
- **Logistics:** Is logistics an insurmountable barrier in my international strategy? Does my product have enough margin for cross-border logistics or for local logistics costs? What is my logistics strategy? Are there requirements for storage, delivery to the end user, or tariff and non-tariff barriers to market access? Do I have the right providers?
- **Customer service:** How will I support customers in new markets, with different languages? Do you have all the informative material? How are we going to answer your questions and inquiries? By what means?
- **Legal and tax aspects:** What legal and tax environment exists in the target market with regard to e-commerce activities? Are there specific sectoral regulations on my product or service that prevent or hinder their commercialization in a specific market? What is the applicable tax environment? Is the same tax applicable to B2B and B2C clients?
- **Marketing plan:** Regarding Marketing, there are many alternatives to invest, depending on various factors such as the maturity of the business, type of product, target customer, markets to be reached, etc. The most important are SEO (website content), SEM (search engine marketing), Display (image advertising), Social networks. But there are many other digital marketing techniques like Affiliates, Retargeting, Influencers, Emailing, etc.
- **Total investment required:** Given the level of current technology, it is important to emphasize that it is the online marketing and HR items that take the “lion's share” in the launch of an online channel.

LEVEL OF NECESSARY INVESTMENT: CRITICAL ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED

The existence of multiple technological options makes possible a total lowering of the total investment in technology, a situation possible thanks to the development of specialized platforms. There are many technological solutions for setting up an e-commerce store, either in free license solutions (OpenSource) or low-cost rental solutions (SaaS).

Many of the most successful ecommerce solutions on the market allow you to start a store with a very low cost, being able to improve and professionalize with the acquisition of additional Templates and Plugins. Currently the most used e-commerce store solutions in Spain are: Prestashop, Woocommerce, Ecwid, ZenCart, Shopify, Magento, Opencart and WixStores.

Developing an online sales channel is "building a company within the company", in which many areas of knowledge come together and whose execution requires a multidisciplinary profile.

The human resources necessary for ecommerce is one of the most important areas, since people are needed to manage the online store (products, images, texts, prices,

promotions, etc.), receive orders and proceed with shipping, customer service. client (inquiries, complaints, etc.), social networks and digital marketing. The latter alone is one of the largest investments that ecommerce will have, since it is necessary to attract traffic to our online store and highlight our products in the marketplaces.

The internationalization of the strategy can lead to an increase in the logistics section, especially if the chosen option is to store the product in the destination market. Obviously, if the strategic decision is to sell through Marketplace, the situation will be quite different, in the case of Amazon, for example, it is possible to use logistics services with very competitive prices.

FIRST STRATEGIC DECISIONS REGARDING ECOMMERCE

In summary, the main questions that help us define the best online internationalization strategy are the following:

- **What business model do we want to implement?** B2B and / or B2C? A manufacturer that sells its products to distributors must consider whether it intends to replicate the same online business that it currently has offline, or if it wants to create a new business model, directly to the end customer. In the case of international sales, this issue is extremely important, since the B2C business is much more complex (unit deliveries and returns, laws and regulations, languages, etc.)
- **What markets do we want to export to?** If, on the one hand, the online presence is an open door to the whole world, on the other hand, the specificities of each country and the physical distances require a definition of strategy by region, or even by country. Selling globally from your home country website can work when you're targeting a region or country similar to yours in language, culture, and social norms, or when similar markets are geographically close, such as the EU.
- **Type of channel: Own store and / or Marketplace?** The number one mistake your business can make with global expansion is investing significantly up front before validating that your brand and products resonate with target markets. Initially, you need to test, learn, and iterate. Before launching a localized online store, consider experimenting with a Marketplace that serves your destination country or region. More than 50% of global online sales are made in Marketplaces.
- **Product catalog:** If you decide to sell to the customer online directly, to decide which products to export online, you will have to take into account aspects such as, if the price is competitive, if the packaging is adequate, if the logistical value is adequate for individual international shipments, it has professional product images and correct descriptions in different languages, labels, regulations, etc. Sometimes it may be necessary to create specific products to export online, for example, to combine several low-value products in one package.
- **Human and Financial Resources:** The most critical issue will always be the investment value necessary for online internationalization. The highest values to take into account will always be investments in Digital Marketing, to compete in the global market and costs in Human Resources, with the new valences of ecommerce. The Marketplaces solution, possibly using outsourcing services, should always be considered by entrepreneurs, in order to test and gain experience in online export.

RESEARCH – COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

We can summarize it in two main objectives in this chapter of the guide:

- Identify the sources of information necessary to obtain competitive intelligence on the possibilities of companies in the online world and the situation of their competitive environment.
- Know the main tools for analyzing markets, clients, competitors, distribution channels and marketing.

Competitive intelligence is knowing the market and rivals. It is the result of a company's efforts to gather and analyze information about the industry, the business environment, competitors, and competitive products and services.

It is so old that Sun Zu already mentioned it in her book *The Art of War* "Know your enemy and know yourself, and you will be victorious in a thousand battles."

Competitive intelligence information can be gathered through Google searches, visits to websites, social networks, online stores, marketplaces, etc.

The most advanced competitive intelligence requires the use of specific tools, such as SemRush, Jungle Scout, Alibaba BizTrends, Helium10, Similarweb, Alexa SiteInfo, etc. Competitive Intelligence Tools are a fundamental area for decision making in the definition of international digital strategy. They allow to manage expectations, obtaining a realistic approximation of the probability of success of the company. They are tools, mainly pay-per-use, with accessible and important costs for the operational management of our strategy, but which require specialized personnel for proper analysis and interpretation. For what questions do we want an answer?

- What is my competition's business model?
- What Internet channels and platforms are you using to attract customers and sales?
- What pricing policy are you using?
- What is your sales success?
- What techniques and investments in marketing?
- What strategies are you using?

A FIRST INTERNAL ANALYSIS

International consumers may already be interested in the goods and services you offer, even if you never thought of expanding internationally. Finding out if you appeal to a global audience can help you decide where and how to expand. You can do this by analyzing current traffic and sales data by country in your analytics dashboards:

- **Google Analytics:** View your location report (Audience> Geo> Location) to get detailed information about the location of your visitors. Set up segments to break down

international traffic by continent, country, region or city, and to understand customer behavior.

• **Website or e-commerce platform:** If your website or e-commerce platform offers robust reports, create dashboards that show sessions by country, customers by country, and sales by billing country to find out if you are involved in cross-border commerce. Parallel segment comparison helps inform your decision to expand.

Ideas like these are likely to emerge:

o If you find that Asian customers bounce off your checkout page then it may not offer payment in local currencies, display prices that include tariffs, or include the proper address fields

o If you find that Australian visitors bounce off your returns page then your returns policy may not support international purchases, or it may lack transparency and details.

When you have significant traffic from a particular region or country, but you're not converting visitors at the same rate as your home country, consider creating a localized online store and paying to drive sales.

MARKET AND PRODUCT RESEARCH

Search engines

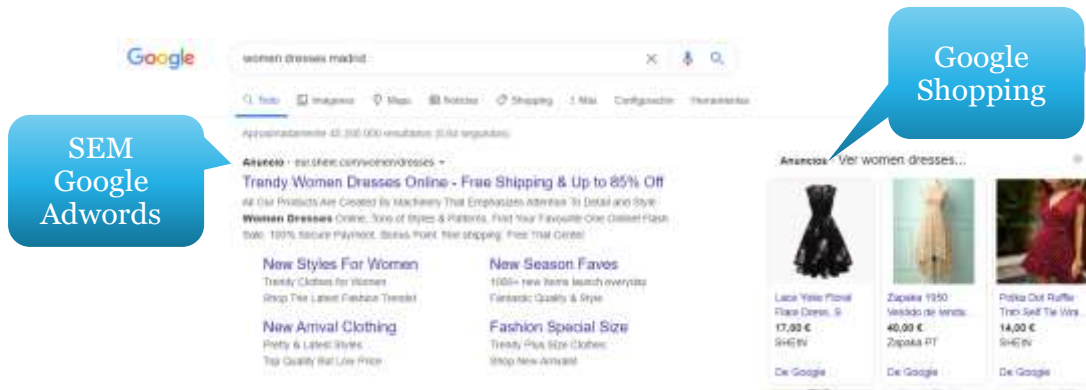
The most common way to conduct market, product and competition research is a search engine, such as Google. This is where we must begin the analyzes that we intend to do, always bearing in mind that we must do the searches in "**private browsing**", so that the results are not influenced by the browsing and search history.



What do my competitors do and where do they sell?

If we search for a specific product or a competitor brand, we will see very important information about our competitors on the first page of results:

- Competitors' ads appear at the top of the page, that is, which brands are betting on **SEM** (Search Engine Marketing), especially with **Google Adwords**.
- Also on the first page, the stores that bet on the presence in **Google Shopping** can appear, with images of products and prices. It is also common for many small businesses to bet on their presence on **Google Maps**, which can also appear on the first page of Google results.
- The organic results list (without ads) are the websites that best invest in **SEO** (search engine optimization) in their online content, as well as the main sales and online marketing channels: **Marketplaces, eRetailers, Social Networks**.



Google Market Finder

https://marketfinder.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/es_es/

Google Market Finder is Google's free international market research tool. It is a powerful market research tool, which is based on data from searches carried out by users around the world through the Internet, obtaining statistics on the number of times a user searches for a keyword in different languages and countries of the world, provides us with statistics on trends, keywords and consumer behavior, all classified by country. It is a quick way to locate possible markets for our company and analyze the feasibility of expanding our online business outside the borders of our country. In short, the Market Finder tool recommends the best markets for your company and provides you with all the statistics you need to investigate the viability of carrying out your own global business plan.



Statista

<https://www.statista.com/>

AGROSMARTglobal

Statista is a German online statistics portal that makes market and opinion research data available to the user, as well as economic indicators and official statistics in German, English, Spanish and French. According to data from the company itself, its platform has more than a million statistics on



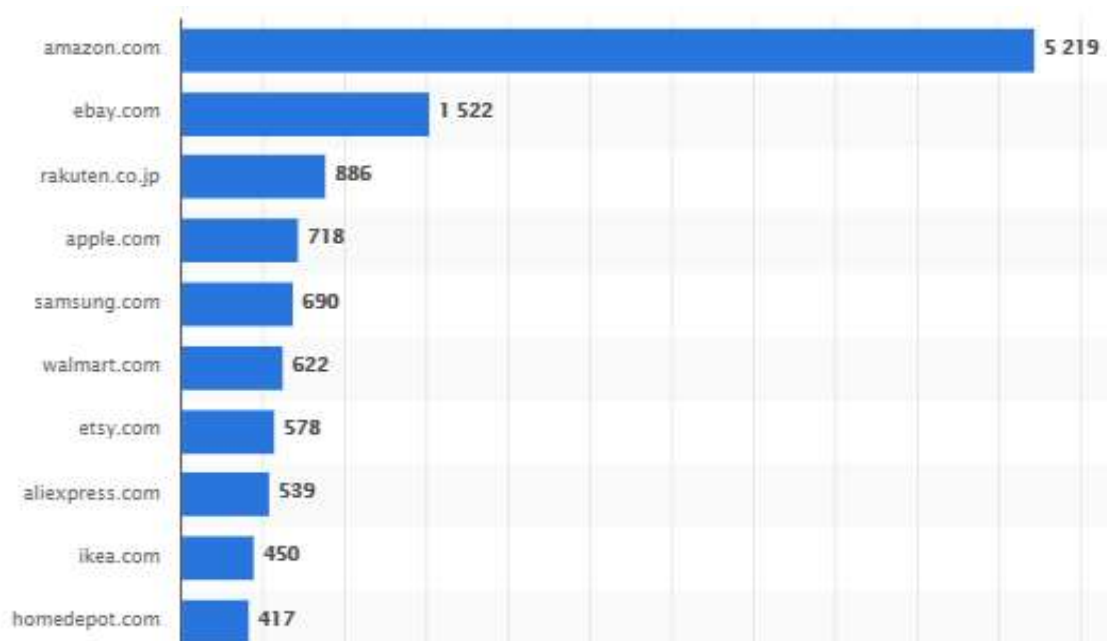
around 80,000 topics from some 22,500 sources. With this, 170 different sectors are covered. Statista currently has 2 million registered users.

With the Base Account (free) you can already have access to many basic statistics and downloads with Office. The Single Account, ideal for accessing all statistics, has a cost of € 49 per month with access to more than a million statistics, optimized search, download in various formats and access to reference sources. The Corporate Account, which allows access to dossiers, forecasts and studies, as well as international databases, has a cost from € 625 per month.

For e-commerce analysis, we can look for data from:

- o Countries
- o Sectors
- o Distribution channels
- o Trends
- o Consumption habits
- o Social networks
- o Competitors

An example graph from Statista: Most popular ecommerce websites worldwide in **June 2020, by unique visitors (in millions)**



Source: Statista 2020

Google Trends

<https://trends.google.es/>

Google Trends is a free tool that allows you to track the evolution of the number of searches for a particular keyword over time, it allows you to compare search trends in a given country or globally against seasonality.



The data available in the service is extremely valuable for any digital marketing strategy, for example:

- o Content production
- o Campaign planning
- o Look for trends
- o Comparison between search terms

Market Access Database

<https://madb.europa.eu/madb/>

The Market Access Database (MADB) website provides information to companies exporting from the EU on import conditions in third country markets.



How does this help you? / What information can you get?

- o Duties and taxes on imports of products in specific countries
- o Procedures and documents necessary for customs clearance in the destination country
- o Statistics on trade flows of goods between EU countries and third countries
- o Trade barriers that affect their exports
- o Food safety / animal health / phytosanitary measures
- o Preferential agreements and rules of origin
- o Services for SMEs
- o Commercial information of the country

TOOLS TO ANALYZE MY COMPETITORS

Similarweb

<https://www.similarweb.com/>



Similarweb allows you to analyze the traffic volume of a competitor or any other website that we may be interested in analyzing, for example, a possible distribution channel.

The free version allows access to very interesting data from a large number of websites worldwide, as long as you have relevant traffic. We can consult data such as:

- o ranking of the website in relation to traffic (global, by country and by category);
- o total visits in the last 6 months;
- o average length of visit;
- o pages per visit;
- o site bounce rate;
- o percentage of visitors by country;
- o traffic sources (direct, referral, search, social, email, display ads);
- o referrer sites and destination sites;
- o search keywords (organic and paid);
- o source of social media traffic;
- o profile of the visiting public (categories of interest, other websites accessed);
- o competitors and similar sites (by topic and rank in search results).

To use the tool, simply go to the Similarweb website and enter the address of the website from which we want to obtain information.

Alexa Site Info

<https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo>



Site Info is an Amazon Alexa Rank tool that offers us information about our website or competitors:

- o SEO keyword opportunities, including keywords that drive traffic to competing sites, but not yours.
- o Competitive benchmarking, which includes how your site's traffic from searches, keywords, and backlinks compares to your biggest online competitors.
- o Website traffic statistics, including Alexa ranking, engagement metrics, referral sources and more for any site in the Alexa database.
- o Audience statistics, including the sites that share an audience with your site, the topics your audience cares about the most, and the keywords they are searching for.

To expand the information it is necessary to upgrade to the paid version with prices from € 149 per month.

SEMrush

<https://es.semrush.com/>

It is an SEO tool for web analysis and competitor analysis, which offers several important metrics and data related to SEO positioning to define and analyze the content strategy. SemRush is an online tool that allows you to do a complete monitoring of keywords, either for organic positioning or for paid searches.



With the Semrush tool we can analyze a website or a specific keyword. The main tools of SemRush are the following:

- o **Organic and paid traffic analysis:** Domain analysis is one of the most used options by users of this tool. We just have to put the domain in question in the search engine, select the country and wait for it to generate the organic and paid traffic data; Backlinks, Display Advertising; Organic keywords; Main organic competitors; Best paid keywords; Main payment competitors; Sample ads; Better links; Referring domains

o **Keyword Magic Tool:** One of the most important actions in the positioning of a page, whether at an organic or paid level, is the search for keywords and SEMRush, in this aspect, generates results for volume, number of results, CPC and competition.



With the free access version it is already possible to access certain website information and keywords, but SemRush has a large number of tools, with paid packages starting at \$ 99.95.

Builtwith

<https://builtwith.com/es/>



Through the Builtwith website we can investigate what technologies our competitors use. We can obtain advanced information on the market share of each technology and analysis by country for all web technologies. BuiltWith covers over 45,665 internet technologies including analytics, advertising, hosting, ecommerce, CMS, and many more.

BuiltWith is a website profiling, lead generation and business intelligence tool that provides technology adoption, e-commerce data, and usage analytics for the Internet. It helps to create lists of websites that use particular web technologies and also lists of websites within specific e-commerce categories.

Ghostery

<https://www.ghostery.com/>



Ghostery shows you the invisible web (cookies, tags, web errors, pixels, and beacons) and provides you with a list of over 1,900 ad networks, behavioral data providers, web publishers, and other companies interested in your activity. We then help you obtain information about those companies, so you can make informed decisions about what you are or are not willing to share and control your privacy online.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS TOOLS FOR MARKETPLACES

Jungle Scout

<https://www.junglescout.com/>



Analyze the **Amazon Marketplace** with Jungle Scout.

JungleScout is a cloud application whose main objective is to show data and statistics that will help in the selection process of the products to sell, identifying market niches and studying the competition.

The Product Database provides you with the entire Amazon catalog. It allows you to filter thousands of products by category, price, demand, sales index, ratings, size, and more, to find the best products to resell.

With Jungle Scout, you can analyze and make decisions based on real results and statistics. You can extract and export the following information in Excel:

- o Product name
- o Brand
- o Price
- o Category
- o Classification
- o Sales estimate
- o Estimated income
- o Evaluations
- o Average score
- o BSR
- o Weight and measurements
- o FBA cost

The JungleScout Niche-Hunter calculates the ability to sell a product, showing the main distributors and the quality index for each search key. The Product Tracker can track your competitor's activities, including loose prices and inventory, with just one click.

Helium10

<https://www.helium10.com/>

Helium 10 are software tools for Amazon sellers.



It contains more than a dozen tools that help Amazon sellers find keywords, identify trends, study the competition, and fully optimize product listings to increase sales exponentially.

Through the HELIUM 10 tool, we can analyze the category in AMAZON by:

- o TOTAL INCOME FROM PRODUCT CATEGORY
- o AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME OF THE CATEGORY
- o AVERAGE PRICE OF
- o AVERAGE RATINGS
- o PROBABILITY OF SALES SUCCESS

What is Helium10 for?

- o **PRODUCT SEARCH:** Discover winning product ideas and drill down into these markets to research and validate those ideas.
- o **KEYWORD RESEARCH:** Discover the keywords that drive traffic to help drive more traffic to your list.
- o **PRODUCT LAUNCH:** Launch products and rank for keywords. Determine how many units you will need to sell to rank your keywords on page 1.
- o **LISTING OPTIMIZATION:** Quickly create and optimize your product listings to generate sales.
- o **FOLLOW THE KEYWORDS:** Track all your keywords, including their ranking and Amazon badges.
- o **REFUND:** Get a refund for lost or damaged inventory that Amazon has not refunded

Terapeak

Terapeak is an Ebay Research Tool.

EBay-owned Terapeak Research provides comprehensive information and analytical data that helps eBay sellers make decisions on inventory, pricing, listing tactics, and more.



With Terapeak Research, sellers can see the performance of products and categories in all eBay marketplaces. To get personalized and targeted information on specific markets of interest, sellers can search by keyword or product and apply filters such as listing type, starting price, buyer's country, and time of day.

BizTrends

Biztrends is an **Alibaba.com Research Tool**

It is a real-time statistical analysis tool developed by Alibaba.com to help selling companies to analyze the performance of their profile, better understand the behavior of buyers and maximize the return on investment by analyzing a given market and your competitors. It is an essential tool for optimizing the results within the platform and, above all, for decision making.

It combines the knowledge of the performance ratios of my profile with data from both the sector and its main competitors.

It brings together digital analytics and competitive intelligence, in a unique service in the B2B e-commerce market.



Biz Trends is only available for **Gold Suppliers**, it is a paid membership for suppliers on Alibaba.com. Members have comprehensive ways to promote their products, maximizing product exposure and increasing return on investment.

Alibaba allows you to know the demand of a sector at a global level, through the number of RFQs - Son Request For Quotation, that is, requests for information from potential customers on Alibaba, who upload an advertisement on the Alibaba website with the products what do you need. Sellers can send proposals to those potential customers.

How to Search for Marketplaces

Emarketservices

<https://www.emarketservices.es/>

ICEX provides a tool for Spanish companies to search for the most suitable marketplaces worldwide to export their products.

One of the main services offered by eMarket Services is its directory of electronic markets or marketplaces. It is a catalog that currently has about 1,000 electronic markets and other online sales platforms out of the more than 3,000 analyzed.

The purpose of the eMarket Services directory is to facilitate exporting companies the search for active electronic markets that may be of interest to their international activity. The idea is to provide assistance in this first phase. Next, it is necessary to study the functionalities and services of the electronic market in question, and assess their relevance to the needs of the company.

Marketplaces research can be done through:

- o country
- o Sector
- o Type of seller
- o Platform type
- o Focus

AICEP

<https://www.portugalexporta.pt/>

The Portuguese Investment and Foreign Trade Agency created a support service for Portuguese companies, carrying out a digital diagnosis for the company and suggesting markets for the export of their products.

ENCONTRE O SEU MERCADO

Consulte a análise de mercado que os nossos especialistas desenvolveram, desde o ambiente de negócios, evolução das importações e exportações, até à recomendação de oportunidades e tendências.

Mercados digitais Mercados



Other examples of websites to Search for Marketplaces

lengow.com

AGROSMARTglobal

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DIGITAL
INTERNATIONALIZATION



linnworks.com



MAIN MARKETPLACES AND TOOLS FOR B2B STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

We can define **marketplaces** (or electronic markets) as electronic platforms where commercial exchanges take place between different companies or between companies and individuals. Its main **value proposition is to increase the possibilities of selling products or services, by providing a meeting point between buyers and sellers where the company benefits from the investment in traffic generation in which the marketplace has invested.**

Its functionalities are very broad and depend to a great extent on the market to which they are directed: we can place your products in them, search for suppliers, dispose of excess stock in a timely manner with auctions or classifieds, generate greater visibility for our own online store ... **Some examples oriented to B2C are Amazon or eBay, but there are also for B2B such as Alibaba.com, or other sectorial ones to sell to specific companies.**

In the process of strategic definition of the online sales channel, it is necessary to identify both vertical marketplaces (those specialized in specific products or markets that seek specific consumer niches) and horizontal ones (more general by definition, but also typically with greater capacity to generate traffic as it is aimed at a wider audience).

Marketplaces face the challenge of needing critical mass on both sides of the scale: buyers and sellers. If at any given moment it manages to attract many sellers and they cannot sell

their products, they will give up leaving the marketplace empty of content. If, on the contrary, an aggressive marketing campaign is carried out and a large number of new customers are attracted, but they do not find an attractive offer, they will not only not buy, but probably will not return in the future because they consider it a waste of time. Therefore, determining its degree of critical mass (usually measured in terms of traffic) will be a key factor in determining the interest of a certain marketplace for our strategy.

In some cases, it is the marketplaces themselves (such as Amazon, Yoox Net-a-Porter in the fashion sector or JD.com in China, for example), who, in the case of certain products, do not limit themselves to renting the virtual space and serve as shop windows or “virtual shopping centers”, but instead buy the product directly from the manufacturing company (or, in addition, from large distributors) for sale through the marketplace, obtaining a greater margin for the purchase and consolidating, through through this model, as authentic virtual retailers.

In the most advanced marketplaces, such as Amazon or Alibaba, the most interesting thing is their determined commitment **to become integral providers of the ecommerce value chain**, providing services such as **logistics** (Fulfillment by Amazon or Fulfillment by Aliexpress), **payment services** such as Amazon Pay, Pay Later on Alibaba.com or PayPal itself) or **digital advertising** (such as Amazon Marketing Services or Alibaba.com's Keyword Advertising Service). Even certain marketplaces, such as the case of Alibaba or Amazon, have recently entered the provision of financial services, entering into a direct confrontation with banks.

In short, the large marketplaces are postulated as major players in the internationalization of digital business, even more so with the paralysis of world trade, as there was no precedent, **motivated by the global pandemic of Covid-19**.

We can say that the B2B, whose maximum exponent is Alibaba.com, has thus found the perfect storm to vindicate its need in the face of new unexpected events that limit contacts; but not only for that reason, but also for the advantages and cost savings of being in contact with a potential buyer, anywhere and at any time.

B2B Marketplaces allow (companies) customers and suppliers to interact without the need to travel, whether it is the case of a transactional Marketplace (Amazon Business, for example) or not (as is the case with Alibaba.com, which is “limited” to put them in contact, to agree on the transaction outside the Marketplace).

ALIBABA.COM: B2B MARKET LEADER

At present, **Alibaba Group** is a group of Internet business-oriented companies. It was founded in 1999 by 18 people and was spearheaded by **Jack Ma**, a former English teacher in Hangzhou, China, who has aspired to help make the Internet accessible, reliable, and beneficial for all. Currently, the Alibaba Group employs more than 45,000 people worldwide and has more than 70 offices in China, Singapore, India, the United Kingdom and the United States.



Its **mission is to facilitate the task of buying or selling anywhere in the world**. Since its creation, it has developed leading companies in the e-commerce sector:

- Online payment method (Alipay)
- International B2B Sales Marketplace (Alibaba.com)
- B2B sales marketplace in the Chinese market (1688.com)
- C2C Sales Marketplace (Taobao.com)
- Luxury B2C Sales Marketplace in China (Tmall.com)
- B2C Sales Marketplace (Aliexpress.com)
- Group purchasing platform: (Yuhuasuan)
- Cloud computing (Ali Cloud)
- Shopping search engine (Etao.com)

The original company, www.alibaba.com, launched in 1999, is the leading **B2B e-commerce platform for companies around the world**. Its objective is to be the go-to-market platform in the English language for cross-border trade and to help companies around the world to expand their international presence and identify business opportunities.

Currently Alibaba is a B2B platform with more than **160 million registered importing companies** (buyers) and more than **6 million exporting companies** (sellers) registered to offer their products in more than 200 countries, it presents products ranging from raw materials to finished products, in more than **60 industry categories**, including fashion, beauty, personal care, electrical supplies, home and garden, machinery, agriculture, etc.

Among the potential buyers / distributors we highlight China, USA, Russia, United Kingdom, and Germany, although Alibaba is present in any country since it is a global portal.



Buyers on Alibaba.com are usually commercial agents, wholesalers, retailers, manufacturers and SMEs engaged in the import and export business.

The moment a potential buyer contacts the distributor, they leave their contact details, thus initiating an offline export negotiation (via messages within the portal, Skype, telephone, etc.). This type of contact can be mediated through two channels:

- **RFQ (Request For Quotation):** The buyer, in a public way, makes a request for an estimate so that the Gold Supplier companies respond with a proposal.
- **Inquiry:** The buyer, individually, looks for suppliers and makes a query (Inquiries). The vendor must have a Gold Supplier membership to be able to respond to a greater number of requests for quotes.

There is the possibility of opening a free account, although Alibaba's **business model focuses on the suppliers becoming Gold Suppliers**, that is, suppliers that pay an annual fee to Alibaba.com for increasing their visibility within the platform. There are **3 payment packages** (Basic, Standard and Premium), with an annual fee of \$ 1,399, \$ 2,999 and \$ 5,999, respectively. The difference between the 3 packages lies in the greater visibility in searches within the platform, a higher level of Showcases, that is, the possibility of highlighting those products that the company decides and a greater capacity for storing photos.



Any international online sales strategy must take into account Alibaba, the e-commerce giant that is unmatched by any other in numbers. Selling internationally with the Chinese giant Alibaba is a guarantee of success for any digital business. But to take a business to a higher level it is necessary to become a Gold Supplier, that is, to be one of the most privileged members of the Alibaba network to reach the millions of buyers around the world at any time.

Buyers can locate a product by browsing the catalog or using the general search engine. As in the vast majority of electronic markets, the products that are marketed on this platform do not belong to Alibaba, so the inquiries and purchase / sale requests made of any of the published products or services are sent directly to the manufacturer, and the payment and delivery conditions are also agreed between the parties.

What is NOT Alibaba.com?

- **ALIBABA.COM is not a CHINESE marketplace**, it is a marketplace (platform) of Chinese origin where we find exporting companies from all over the world offering their products and importing companies from all over the world demanding their products.
- **ALIBABA.COM is not a B2C marketplace**, that is, it is not a marketplace to offer its products to the end consumer. Alibaba is a cross-company marketplace for exporting / importing products. The final consumer version of Alibaba is called ALIEXPRESS.

Next, **we list other companies of the Alibaba group**, especially useful if the international online strategy is focused on the Chinese market:

o **1688.com** is the marketplace belonging to the Alibaba group that facilitates export to China. This B2B marketplace allows Spanish companies to contact or be contacted by those Chinese companies that want to import our products.

- o **Taobao:** it is the most popular C2C shopping marketplace in China.
- o **Tmall.com:** China's most popular B2C luxury shopping marketplace. Tmall Global allows you to reach the other side of the spectrum, that of foreign companies that want to approach the Chinese market without the bureaucratic, legal and investment requirements necessary to develop a business in China.
- o **Aliexpress:** is a global B2C marketplace, made up of sellers of small and medium-sized companies
- o **Alipay:** it is the online payment method owned by the group and the true cornerstone on which the Alibaba group pivots
- o **Alibaba Cloud:** it is the company that offers computing services in the "cloud".

OTHER B2B MARKETPLACES

Amazon Business

Sector: Multisectoral

Geographical scope: USA, Canada, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Japan and India,

Estimated traffic per month: 1,160 million visitors.

Amazon Business is an additional service for Amazon sellers, which meets the purchasing needs of any type of business. It is the Amazon that we already know, but available for B2B sales.

It currently has more than 1 million business users, with Amazon Business Seller, you have access to all existing Amazon customers and the additional opportunity to increase your sales, by reaching new commercial customers of all types and sizes, from freelancers and SMEs to large global corporations.

To have access to Amazon Business it is necessary to have a Seller account, it is not necessary to offer your B2C products, but you will have to have an account registered on the platform. You can sign up for Amazon Business for free, from your central Seller account with one click.

Your inventory on Amazon and Amazon Business is exactly the same, but the prices don't have to be. As an Amazon Business seller, you can set different business prices or quantity discounts for your business customers and take advantage of Amazon logistics and the automatic ability to sell throughout the EU, as well as other continents where the service is active.

Respond to a request for a quote: As in Alibaba.com, when a buyer is interested in your product, they will contact you and a negotiation will be opened, where good agreements can be reached and a lasting business relationship can be created.

Additional services: As an Amazon Business seller, you will be able to offer quantity discounts and exclusive offers for companies, as well as the display of prices with VAT excluded and the issuance of VAT invoices for all your offers on Amazon.

Conditions to be a seller: Register a seller account, for this, you must provide all the seller information and all the necessary information about your business (type of business, place and date of establishment, company registration number, VAT number,

bank account information, etc.) and attach them to the platform. Amazon may ask you for additional information at any time to verify your business.

1688.com

Sector: Multisectoral

Geographical scope: China

Estimated traffic per month: 18.2 million

Belonging to Alibaba Group and with more than 120 million users, and more than 10 million stores covering 49 industries, 1688.com connects foreign exporters with Chinese retailers.

SoloStocks

Sector: Multisectoral

Geographical scope: Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Morocco

Estimated traffic per month: more than 5.5 million visits (globally)

Solostocks.com is the leading online sales portal for companies and professionals in Spain and with a strong international presence, mainly in Europe and Latin America.

Virtual Expo

A selection of Marketplaces belonging to the Virtual Expo group, a world leader in the online B2B lead generation market.

It has six B2B Marketplaces, each one specialized in a sector, aeronautics, agriculture, architecture and design, industrial, medicine and technology, navigation and maritime. In total there are more than 39.5 K exhibitors, 1.6 million distributors, 1.2 million products and 451 K catalogs.

ArchiExpo, AgriExpo and MedicalExpo are 3 of the most important marketplaces of this group.

Direct Industry

Specialized in the industrial sector, it is aimed at buyers, production managers, maintenance managers and consulting engineers.

Geographical scope: Global, with greater presence in Europe

Monthly traffic: 2.2 million

Global Sources

Sector: Multisectoral

Geographical scope: Global, with greater presence in Saudi Arabia, China, Egypt, United States, India, Japan

Estimated traffic per month: 12,800,000 visits

LINKEDIN FOR B2B STRATEGIES

LinkedIn is the world's largest social network for companies and professionals, with more than 600 million active users in more than 200 countries. In this social network

you can find companies and professionals who seek to promote themselves, do networking and business.

LinkedIn is an effective tool to generate B2B leads, many companies have not yet explored in depth and this becomes a great opportunity, a very interesting B2B strategy to penetrate specific markets.

LinkedIn has a B2B sales tool, "LinkedIn Sales Navigator" that allows you to optimize the search to find the desired target, getting the leads that can guarantee the most conversions. It provides information on sales, advanced search tools, recommendations from potential clients, email messages and other functionalities.

Showcase Pages are mini landing pages, extensions of your LinkedIn page. At the moment, a product page can only be associated with a LinkedIn main page (that is, it does not have an independent existence) and is designed to highlight a brand or a business line, adapting it to the segment of the audience you want to target.

Up to 10 product pages can be created associated with your LinkedIn home page, including a featured image, description, destination URL, and specific content.

Fixed cost: Sales Navigator service € 59.99 per month

Additional services: LinkedIn has a large number of tools available for Company Pages, including the "Analytics", "Products and services" and "Careers" tabs, various forms of advertising and marketing options: Sponsored Content Sponsored InMail (Sponsored InMail) Text Ads (Text Ads) Dynamic Ads (Dynamic Ads) Video Ads (LinkedIn Video Ads)

Conditions to be a seller: No specific criteria are specified, you only have to create your company page on the platform.

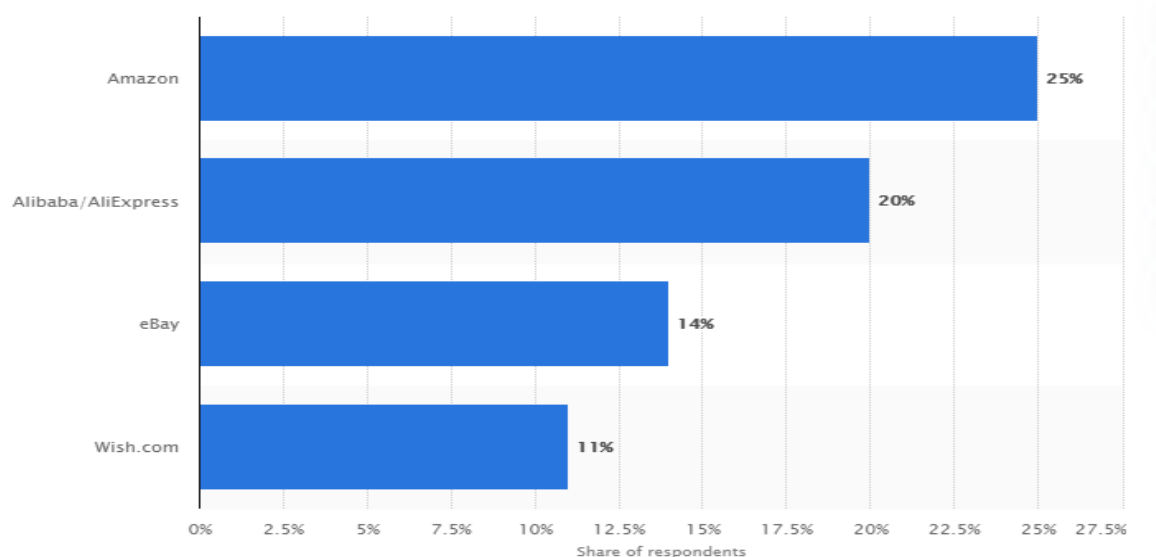
MAIN MARKETPLACES FOR B2C STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

Let us now in this chapter analyze the value proposition and main functionalities of the most important marketplaces in a B2C environment, especially the Amazon ecosystems, and also analyze the critical areas of knowledge of an online sales channel, its main costs, benefits, tools and main suppliers.

In international purchases (crossborder) the main e-commerce platforms are Marketplaces:

Online platform where international digital buyers from around the world made their most recent international digital purchase in September 2019.



Fuente: Statista 2020

The cross-border e-commerce shopper study, conducted in 26 countries, revealed that Amazon, eBay and Alibaba accounted for 60% of all international purchases.

AMAZON

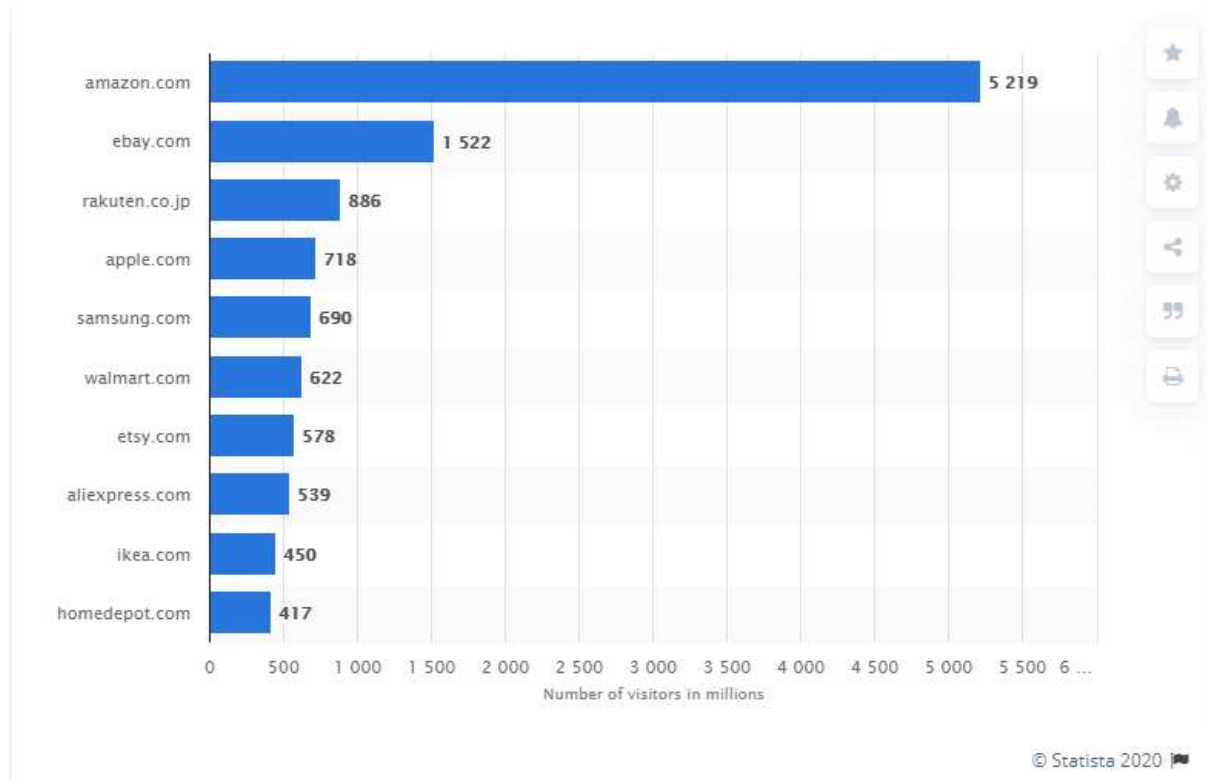


Founded in 1994, Amazon was one of the Internet pioneers in putting the customer at the center of its attention, and from there, working backwards in the value chain with a single goal: to provide consumers and companies with a unique site to find any type of product that can be purchased online.

The value proposition for consumers is to offer through its website the widest variety of products, at the best price and with the greatest possible comfort, surpassing Google itself in cases where the buyer intends to purchase; its objective, unlike other models such as private sales clubs, was not to offer limited discounts in time on a certain category of products, but to offer low prices on a continuous basis. **Their websites are designed to allow millions of unique products, across dozens of product categories, to be sold by both the company itself and third-party sellers.**

Amazon leads the global online trade:

Most Popular Online Retail Websites Worldwide in June 2020, by Unique Visitors (in Millions)



For sellers, the **value proposition** focuses, as a good marketplace model, on the traffic generated by Amazon, which grants a **privileged position or "single point of purchase" for consumers** and, therefore, being a site where sellers are interested in positioning their product. These, regardless of whether they had their own online store, are aware of the advantage of additionally selling in a global marketplace, with very low costs (**between 7% and 15%, depending on the products**) and with the possibility of benefiting from both a trusted brand and a series of services, designed to facilitate the user's purchase and maximize the conversion of visits into sales.

Sellers can open their store on Amazon, reaching millions of customers in any of the following categories: Books, video games, software, electronics, music, DVD, computers, toys and games, kitchen, home and garden, DIY and tools, instruments musicals and sound. Likewise, they have multiple support tools: the possibility of uploading inventory lists automatically, generating reports and other information related to sales, as well as technical support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Amazon works with two clearly **different models, Amazon Vendor** (also called Amazon Retail) and **Amazon Seller**.

In the VENDOR model, Amazon acts as a **traditional distributor**, with direct purchase of a wholesale order from the customer, after negotiation with the customer.

In the **SELLER model**, Amazon operates as a “**pure marketplace**”, charging a monthly fee and a commission for each sale made.

Vendor	Seller (Pro)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You sell your products to Amazon wholesale • Amazon sets the price of your product and controls the stock • Payment for each Amazon order within 60-90 days • Managing your account: You can create various advertising / slow catalog update options (Amazon reviews it) • Amazon takes care of logistics and customer service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You sell to the end customer. Your expenses: € 39 per month + 15% commission on products • Full control over the price and stock of your products • Payment within 2 weeks after the sale. • Managing your account: You can create various advertising / quick catalog update options • You must take care of customer service and logistics • (optional to use Amazon logistics)

How to sell on Amazon Seller is simple: sellers upload their product inventory (which includes barcode), customers view and buy products. Amazon sends the purchase order to the seller after verification of the consumer's credit card. The seller then receives the order, sends the order to the consumer and confirms the order in their seller account. An additional value offered by Amazon is that, in the event of online fraud by the buyer, this is assumed by the platform. After shipment confirmation, the full amount of the sale is charged to the consumer, and in a 14-day cycle, all net profits from the sales are transferred to the seller's bank account. A requirement demanded by Amazon is the so-called price parity, according to which the seller agrees not to offer more expensive prices than in its other online channels, in the spirit always in mind of the company to offer the best prices to its consumers .

But perhaps one of the most interesting services for online sellers is to be able **to sell in a unified way through a single account in 8 Amazon marketplaces in Europe** (France, Germany, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Poland, Czech Republic and Holland.), expanding the market of potential clients. Once the appropriate modifications have been made to the product sheet (translations or different images by country, if applicable), this service allows the company to undertake an accelerated process of "digital internationalization", facilitating what would otherwise require high budgets of investment in online marketing in each of the markets and, assuming a complementary or alternative channel to direct sales through their own online sales channel.

Likewise, and reinforcing its character as a strong competitor to Google and Facebook, the leaders in the online advertising market, there is the possibility of advertising on Amazon, through its advertising platform, **Amazon Advertising**. The possibility of having an advertising model to highlight the products of its customers is an important source of present and future income for Amazon, as well as an interesting promotional tool to take into account in the marketing mix of companies that seek to differentiate themselves from their competitors .

In full coherence with the philosophy of services, Amazon has continued to develop services for third parties in the rest of the value chain. For example, **Fulfillment by Amazon is Amazon's own logistics system offered to third parties**. With FBA, the seller can send their products to Amazon to be stored in one of its logistics centers and take advantage of the physical distribution capabilities of the products once sold, either within Amazon or through the online store of the client.

The operation is equally simple: the seller sends their products to one of Amazon's warehouses, where they are stored. Customers buy their products and Amazon collects, packages and transports them to the end customer on behalf of the seller, injecting them into the usual logistics of products sold by Amazon or its sellers. There is no need to be an Amazon seller, so it is configured as an independent logistics service, yes, with the possibility of integrating with the rest of Amazon's services, if the seller so decides.

Also in the payment method, **Amazon offers its own solution: Amazon Pay**. It is a means of payment, similar to Paypal, that allows you to make secure purchases using the payment methods you use at Amazon.com on other internet websites that accept Amazon Payments, although it has not yet achieved the level of internationalization of other competitors such as PayPal itself.

With an Amazon Pay account, the buyer can make purchases without having to re-enter their payment information, highlighting the concept of “One-click payment”, highly recommended, as we will see, from a usability and conversion point of view. .

As an alternative to the use of bank payment gateways or systems such as **PayPal**, the **Amazon Pay** service allows the seller to integrate the Amazon payment solution in their online store, allowing the millions of Amazon customers to pay easily and the The processing process is outsourced to Amazon, and all this without leaving the seller's website and without the risk of fraud, as the seller benefits from the fraud detection capabilities of Amazon's risk management system.

The Pro plan gives you the opportunity to sell an unlimited number of products and pay a **monthly subscription fee of € 39 (excluding VAT) + commissions**.

OTHER B2C MARKETPLACES

Aliexpress: is a global B2C marketplace, made up of sellers of small and medium-sized companies that offer a wide variety of consumer products at great prices and mainly oriented to export. Launched in April 2010, AliExpress is dedicated to listing unique products in more than 20 major product categories to its millions of registered buyers in more than 220 countries and regions.



Like its “big brother” B2B (www.alibaba.com), Aliexpress offers security measures through its Alipay payment platform, through which the buyer deposits the transaction money on the platform and the platform reimburses them the amount if you do not receive the product correctly or if, once received, it does not meet the agreed characteristics. That is, the seller does not receive the money until the consumer confirms that what he has received and that it meets the characteristics of what you have bought. As we can see, one more mechanism to dispel any kind of distrust on the part of the buyer.

ADVANTAGES OF YOUR PROJECT IN ALIEXPRESS:

- The seller provides a specific catalog depending on the user's country of purchase (personalization of content, currency, etc.).
- Multiple forms of payment and shipping at the buyer's choice.
- Sellers have complete freedom to customize their shipments. Being able to maintain its brand image and favoring the loyalty of its customers.
- The commissions in the means of payment are supported by Aliexpress, the seller has to pay only the commission per sale.
- Each seller will have a person who will offer them support within the Aliexpress platform, an Account Manager.
- With a Cross Border Ecommerce model, you can sell anywhere in Europe. We suggest starting with a series of priority countries and then expanding to secondary target markets.

Ebay: Another of the Internet giants, Ebay, was born in 1995 as a bidding market for second-hand goods, although the evolution of its model has meant that, currently, 70% of sales come from sales of new items and that more and more professional sellers and companies are turning to its platform, in a new strategy focused on providing B2B2C services to companies that are increasingly seeking professionalization of their online sales and new marketing channels.



The main evolution of the eBay model has been the transition from an early private second-hand seller using an auction model to a professional seller, who sells new items using the “Buy It Now” fixed-price sales system.

Ebay has refocused in recent years its strategy towards the provision of services for its sellers in the international market, which again represents an international marketing alternative for professionals and companies; international sales on eBay offer the opportunity to:

- Make the company's products available to more than 116 million customers around the world.
- Increase sales by expanding the activity of the company to new markets.
- Discover new market niches for products.

To sell on Ebay, you don't pay a flat fee, but a 10% commission for each sale.

Google Shopping:

The evolution of one of the advertising formats most used by advertisers in **Google Adwords is leading to an online Marketplace** where manufacturers and sellers can sell on Google, with products appearing in the first search results for certain keywords.

To appear on Google Shopping, start by creating a **Google Merchant Center account** and uploading product information, then create a “Shopping” campaign in Ads. To appear among search results, Google works with an auction system.

**Shopping campaign requirements**

Before you can set up a Shopping campaign and create Shopping ads, you must meet several requirements.

- **Google accounts:** You will need to set up accounts with Google Merchant Center and Google AdWords and link them together.
- **Policies:** The content of both Shopping campaigns and ads must comply with Google Shopping policies, which are different from Google AdWords advertising policies. Before launching your advertising campaigns, you must ensure that your business type, your products, your promotions, and your website meet the Google Shopping requirements.
- **Product data:** You will have to send the updated data of your products every 30 days at least. Such data must meet Google quality standards, the purpose of which is to provide users with the best possible shopping experience and, at the same time, improve the performance of their ads. When providing your product data, you must adhere to the standards in the product feed specification and use Merchant Center to submit your products periodically.

Note: In the countries that are part of the European Economic Area (EEA) and in Switzerland, you can participate in Shopping ads through one or more shopping comparison services of your choice. Some of these services manage your product and campaign data on your behalf, while others provide tools with which you can manage your settings yourself.

The coronavirus pandemic has pressured the internet giant to accelerate its plans. Existing customers will be able to integrate their complete inventories and only pay if they want to promote some products on the platform

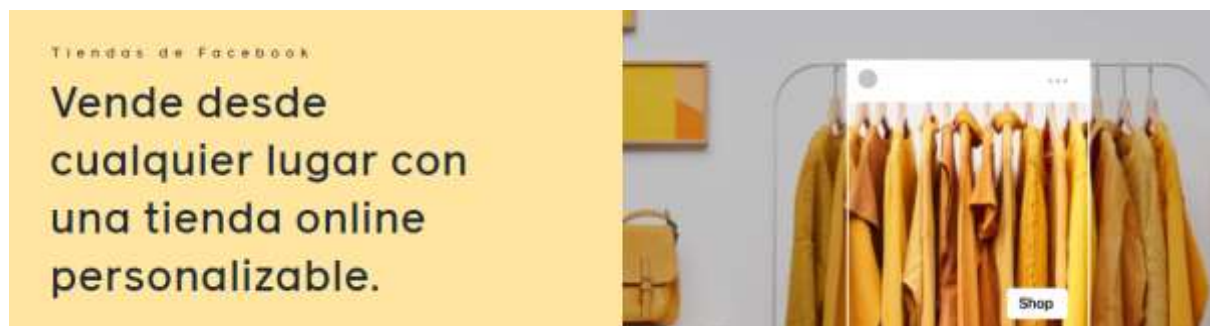
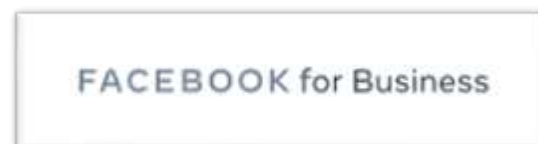
Google has partnered with PayPal to attract more merchants to the platform by allowing them to link their accounts to accept payments online. Google is also working with inventory management companies like Shopify and WooCommerce.

Facebook and Instagram

How to sell on Facebook and Instagram

The two most successful social networks worldwide launch stores, turning business profiles into shop windows.

Do you want to start selling on Facebook and Instagram?



Commerce Manager is Facebook's tool that allows sellers to sell on platforms, add inventory, manage orders, check account status, and much more. With Commerce

Manager, businesses can sell products on channels their customers like, such as Instagram, Facebook Marketplace, and Facebook Page Shops.

The first step in selling on Facebook and Instagram is setting up a business account for your business. To set up a business account, go to Commerce Manager and follow the instructions to get started.

How is the commerce on Facebook and Instagram?

People use Facebook and Instagram to connect with friends, family, and the brands they love. Today, people are spending more time on social media, and naturally the way they shop is changing too.

Currently, customers can make purchases directly from the posts they see on Facebook and Instagram.

Selling your products on these platforms makes it easier for customers to discover your business and even complete their purchases with just a few clicks.

By connecting commerce with the community, businesses like yours have the opportunity to grow, and potential customers can see your products on Facebook and Instagram.

Information on Facebook Page Stores

If you have a Facebook business page, you can add a store. You can use this section to display the products you sell and connect with more customers on Facebook.

Although any business can have a store, this feature is best suited for merchants, retailers, and e-commerce advertisers. We recommend it for companies that sell clothing, accessories (such as bags and suitcases), home furnishings, or baby and children's products. However, other types of businesses can also use a store to reach more people on Facebook. ~

Information about Facebook stores

Stores are a simple tool to create a personalized digital window in our entire family of apps. A store allows you to inspire customers and help them find the right products for them. In addition, the stores are very easy to set up and use, load faster than a mobile website, and allow you to have a global presence.

Stores work like this:

Sellers who had a store on an Instagram profile or on a Facebook page will automatically switch to the stores feature. Before setting up your store, you must have received an email or a notification that you can now use the Facebook stores. Certain businesses with a linked Facebook Page Store and Instagram Profile may have a shared store on Instagram and Facebook.

Information on Marketplace for Business

This feature is being rolled out gradually, not yet available in Europe.

B2C VERTICAL MARKETPLACES

There are currently thousands of markets, whether global, regional or local. In addition to general marketplaces, there are more and more marketplaces specialized in certain sectors, products or clients. These niche markets are called vertical markets. We list some examples of vertical Marketplaces that are reference at European level.

Arts, Crafts, Gifts: Artsy, Etsy, Live Auctioneers

Household items: BrickLink, Conforama, Delamaison, ePRICE, Wayfair, Westwing

Electronics: G2A.com, GAME, PC Components

Music: Bandcamp, Discogs, Reverb

Fashion: ASOS, Depop, Farfetch, Galeries Lafayette, Privalia, Spartoo, Zalando

Tourism: Booking, Tripadvisor

Wine: Bodeboca, Decantalo, Pour de Bon, Uvinum, Vinissimus, vivino.com

In the chapter on competitive intelligence tools we give some examples of how to search Marketplaces, either by studying the competition, or using specialized websites.

CRITICAL AREAS OF A B2C CHANNEL

Creating your own online store has some advantages in relation to the exclusive use of marketplaces, such as:

- **More direct communication with the customer:** In our own store we have full control over information and relationships with customers
- Possibility of creating a brand: In your own store you can enhance the brand more effectively, choosing colors, logos and the way the products are presented
- **Autonomy of the company:** You establish your own rules on your own website. Investing a little more time and resources, we will have decision-making capacity in terms of design, programming, content creation, etc.
- **Avoid competition:** In our online store only, our products are present

However, the requirements and the respective costs are quite considerable:

- o **Technologies:** Acquisition of the ecommerce platform / application, domain and hosting, graphic design and content
- o **Digital Marketing:** Generation of traffic to the point of sale
- o Development of the **logistics model**, deliveries and returns
- o Legal and **fiscal processes** for each destination market
- o Selection of **payment and security systems**
- o Development of **after-sales service** processes: responses to complaints and claims, policies, processes.

ECOMMERCE SOLUTIONS

The first big decision a company faces is whether to **develop a custom solution or opt for more standardized solutions**. Custom development is, in principle, more expensive and slow, being more used by large companies or companies that already have

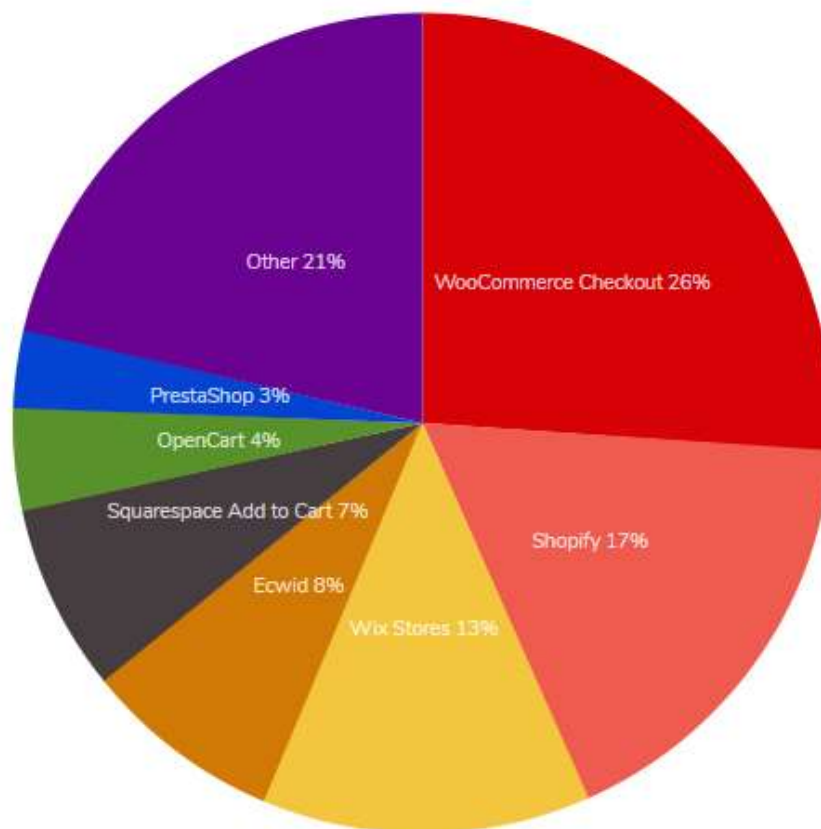
great success in online sales. **Bespoke solutions allow maximum customization**, meeting all business requirements and products sold, but a total dependence on the development team.

Within the standardized solutions, that is, e-commerce **software packages**, there are all kinds of solutions on the market, but they usually require some technical knowledge of website management and development. The most **successful solutions on the market are Open Source**, which allow companies to start up an online store at low cost and have many payment solutions (templates and plugins) to improve the online store over time. Some examples are **Woocommerce, Magento, Prestashop, Opencart solutions**, etc.

An alternative with an upward trend in the market, in line with the rise of cloud computing or cloud computing, is the use of electronic commerce platforms in software as a service (SaaS) mode, they are a great way to start ecommerce business, easy and low cost, but high quality. Shopify is the most successful in the world, but there are many others like Squarespace, Wix, Biscommerce, etc.

The distribution of the use of electronic commerce throughout the Internet by ecommerce technologies is as follows:

Distribution for websites using eCommerce technologies



Source: Builtwith

DIGITAL MARKETING

Once the online store has been created, the real challenge begins: capturing traffic. How do we make our store known to potential consumers?

The Internet has become the perfect tool for a company to manage communication or promotion campaigns in any country in the world from a specific location. The cost savings it allows, and the immediacy it provides, make the network our best ally when it comes to following any of the objectives of an international strategy.

SEO - Search Engine Optimization

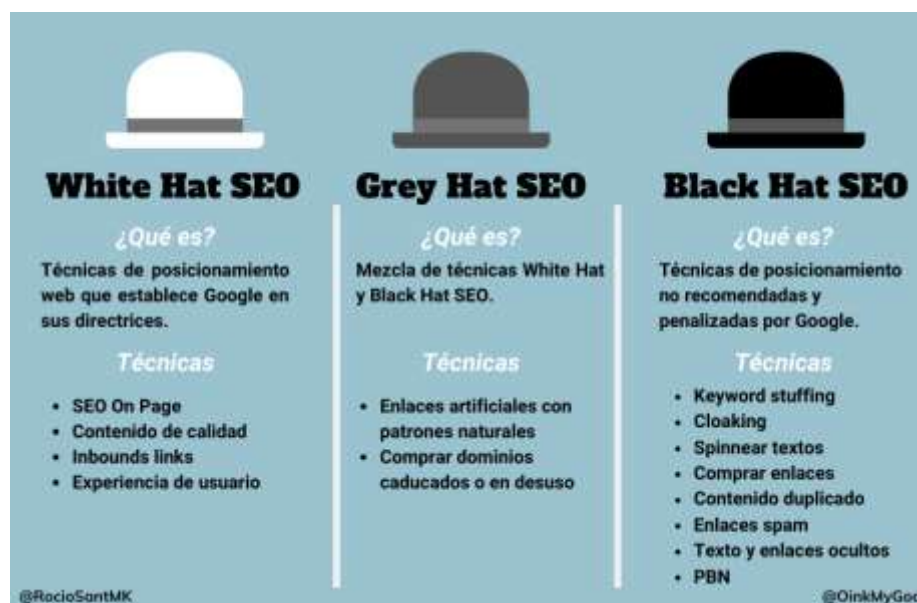
The first technique consists of making consumers find us, that is, that we are as visible as possible within search engines, especially Google.

The statistics speak for themselves: almost all of the visits that most web pages receive come from search engines such as Google. This places great importance on positioning in search terms that companies find most interesting.

SEO on site represents the set of rules that Google establishes to understand the structure and content of a page in order to offer users more relevant results in their searches. Its search algorithm changes quite frequently. **On-site SEO** includes the optimization of keywords, user experience, loading times, optimization of the code and format of the URL's.

Off-site SEO focuses on factors external to the website, such as the number and quality of links, social media, local media mentions, brand authority, and performance in search results.

It is essential that our website / store is performed excellently and that it is up to date. Technical knowledge is needed, so it is normal to resort to outsourcing the services of SEO specialists, hiring services from digital marketing agencies and using specialized tools in SEO analysis, such as: Google Analytics, Search Console, AHrefs, MagesticSeo, SemRush.



Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

It is the action that consists of positioning sponsored links according to payment and relevance (quality level) within search engines such as Google. Sponsored links are an advertising format of text (Google Adwords) and graphic (Google Display and Shopping) or video (YouTube videos), adapted to mobile devices, which contains a link to an advertiser's web page (generally called a page of landing page). The search engine is paid only when the user clicks on said link (CPC model).

Next, we are going to explain the main campaigns that you can develop as a Google client:

- **Campaign on the Google search network:** Ads activated by the keywords that we buy and we will always pay for the clicks made according to the price set per click (Maximum CPC).
- **Campaign on the Google Display Network:** Google gives the option of placing our advertising on third party web pages. To do this, it has previously developed the so-called "Display Network", which brings together by subject all the web pages of third parties interested in receiving extra remuneration for advertising.
- **Video campaigns:** These are campaigns that either seek to insert advertising into existing videos on YouTube or seek to promote a video on the display network or the search network.
- **Remarketing campaigns:** Remarketing tries to re-impact our brand with advertising to users who have already expressed an interest in our product by previously entering our website.
- **Google Shopping campaign:** It is very powerful, since it shows the products in our catalog in such a way that when someone clicks on the image, they go directly to that product's file to buy it. To do Google Shopping we have to import a feed of products from our store to a section called "Google Merchant" so that, in this way, Google can collect the information directly in our online store and show it to users who search using a keyword related to the product.

Social Media

Social networks are a fundamental channel of traffic to our website, they are a communication channel with potential customers and a customer service channel. With social networks we create interactions that significantly increase references to our brands on the internet and the "**backlinks**" to our website, that is, they can help improve our search engine positioning.

Based on the great segmentation capacity that each of the social networks has, these offer another way of use, fully focused on the creation and development of business, which consists of making available to brands and companies specific locations for promotion formats and advertising.

The formats to which we will refer below, have the particularity of being able to generate global and strictly segmented campaigns, both in the target audience and in the destination country, according to the purposes pursued by each one. In this sense, they allow companies enormous flexibility when creating a configuration adapted to their needs.

In addition, there are analytical tools (own or third-party) in each of the campaign management platforms of each social network, which allow obtaining current and exact information on the results obtained and the performance and return of each euro invested.

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are social networks with a presence all over the world, but in many countries they are not the most important. In Russia the most prominent is Vkontakte (VK), in Iran Cloob stands out, in China Renren or Sina Weibo stand out, etc.

Facebook Ads

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks worldwide. This has a wide variety of options to promote content, products or services through ads.

The types of ad formats available on Facebook are:

- Sequence or carousel.
- With photos or images.
- With videos. Of collection.
- Instant experience. Presentation.

On the other hand, the platform has three ad positioning options.

- Right column: The ad appears on the right side of the user's feed or main news page.
- Computer news section: These types of ads appear in the user's feed as soon as they access Facebook from a computer. These are usually expensive.
- Mobile news section: They are displayed in the user's news feed much like a regular post.

Instagram Ads

Currently Instagram and Facebook share the same advertising platform. This makes running a campaign for both apps a breeze.

If you want to advertise on Instagram, you can make ads in stories, ads with photos, with videos and sequences. For you to be successful, we recommend that these have a high visual potential.

Twitter Ads

Twitter is an excellent alternative for advertising. Your campaigns can be easily tailored to various goals such as: increasing conversions, leads, and more.

One of the advantages that this social network has over others is that its content is highly valued by users. So the ads you make in this could influence your audience in their purchase decision.

Among the most effective ads are:

- Promoted accounts: The platform will suggest users to follow your account with the promoted tag. The payment is made in relation to the number of new followers you get.
- Promoted Tweets: They are ideal for improving your reach and promoting your brand.
- Promoted trends: It consists of paying for your hashtag to be a trending topic in your country

YouTube Ads

If you want to promote your content or products (especially if they are videos or applications) YouTube is an excellent alternative.

Some of the types of ads that you can find are TrueView, standard banners, exclusive for mobile devices and more.

LinkedIn Ads

If one of your goals is to capture a professional audience, this social network is ideal for your advertising campaign.

This professional platform has the following types of ads:

- Ads with text.
- With Display Format.
- Dynamic.
- Sponsored content.
- InMails.

Snapchat Ads

Although the advertising platform of this social network is not so popular, you can take advantage of it to be one step ahead of your competitors, you can make story, collection and filter ads. These can help you achieve the following goals:

- Awareness: Increase your brand awareness and increase your audience.
- Consideration: Generate more power customers, interactions, sales, downloads or visits to your website.
- Conversion: drive conversions for visits to your website or sales.

Pinterest Ads

Pinterest is an excellent social network for advertising. It has some alternatives so you can promote your pins. These are:

- Ads manager: This allows you to select the objective of your campaign. And later design your advertisement.
- Promotion button: With this option you can create an ad from an existing pin. Try to promote your top performing content.

Affiliation marketing

We speak of affiliate marketing when we refer to that **advertising channel where various web pages (affiliate network) make their own commercial space available to companies (advertisers) that want to carry out advertising campaigns for their brand, product or service (affiliate program), to earn an income.** Unlike SEM models, where the usual contracting models are CPC or CPM, in affiliate marketing advertisers only pay for the results obtained, according to the remuneration contracted with the affiliate. In the case of online stores, it is usually by CPA system (pay per sale), although hybrid models between CPC, CPL and CPA can also be used.

Affiliates have websites with content defined for certain audiences, so they will tend to work with advertisers who have a link with the public that consumes their content. For

example, a women's fashion blog may work with cosmetics advertisers, given that their audiences are similar (women concerned about aesthetics).

That said, there are many ways to work with affiliation when it comes to formats (banners, email, mentions, sponsored articles, etc.). All of them are based on the same formula, which is none other than putting "tagged" links to identify and measure the traffic that each affiliate brings to the advertiser, checking if that specific traffic has been converted as stipulated, to collect the commissions agreed.

Specific software tools for creating our own affiliate network are Post Quality Pro, Clickinc or Hasoffers, among others.

Hiring third-party networks. They are intermediary companies between affiliates and advertisers, who guarantee the affiliate the collection and the reliability of the measurements, and an extensive catalog segmented according to the needs and objectives of the advertiser. The main affiliate networks are: Zanox, Tradedoubler, or Matomy. Its main advantage is precisely its international nature, which allows it to reach a certain market with an adequate selection of the target of affiliates, given its extensive database of international contacts.

E-mail marketing

Although it seems on the decline due to the rise of other options such as social networks or affiliate marketing, it is still one of the most used online marketing actions in any digital plan. In the case of email marketing, we always talk about what is known as permission marketing since in order to send shipments it is essential to have properly obtained the express consent of the recipient to receive commercial communications.

Influencers

Influencers have become big brand bets. They use brand products, take photographs that they send to the blog and / or their Instagram account and, thus, they manage to influence the taste of their followers. Each influencer has a different rate. There are those who simply ask to receive the products, and there are those who work with agencies and charge up to thousands of Euros per published photograph, it all depends on the number of followers they have and how famous they are.

When choosing the right Influencers, a number of factors must be taken into account:

- **Number of followers.** This number will give us an idea of the relevance and influence of the prescriber.
- **Number of comments on Instagram photos.** It is useless for the influencer to have many followers if it is a community that does not interact with the images that are sent to their social networks. Therefore, more than the number of followers, it is more important that the prescriber has many comments on each photo or post.
- **Influencer style.** The images and texts that the prescriber publishes on his social network or website must correspond to the values that the brand wishes to transmit.
- **Possible budget:** € 500 - € 1000 to publish photos on your blog and Instagram

Heepsy is a tool designed to facilitate the search for influencers of companies, through a platform that allows them to reach the influencers that best suit the needs of the company or brand.

MAIN LOGISTICS STRATEGIES

Logistics is very important in the e-commerce strategy, it can even be a factor that prevents the sale of certain products, or **forces the adaptation of existing products or even the creation of new products, it is very important to define which products are going to sell in the online store and assess its difficulty in delivery.**

Not least, we have to evaluate **reverse logistics**, a service that deals with the returns that the customer can make. Return rates in e-commerce are considerably higher than in traditional commerce, as the buyer has no contact with the product prior to delivery.

The main players in international logistics are traditional transport companies such as DHL, UPS, DTT, etc., which have been developing services adapted to e-commerce. However, new ecommerce players already provide logistics services such as Amazon, which has a highly competitive logistics service, even for companies that do not sell on Amazon.

New logistics businesses associated with e-commerce have also appeared, such as price buyers or integrated logistics services for online stores, such as Packlink, SendCloud, iContainers, Shiptimize, Eurosender, Genei, etc.

The new trends in e-commerce logistics, highly oriented to final delivery to the customer (Last Mile Delivery), go through existing offers in the market such as Automatic Lockers (DHL, Amazon) and collaborative economy models for deliveries (Amazon Flex, Uber).

LEGAL AND FISCAL ASPECTS

Electronic commerce is governed in Spain by a series of regulations that range from the data protection law to the legislation on distance selling, the general contracting conditions, electronic invoicing and guarantees for consumer goods. One of the most important was the transposition into the Spanish legal system of Directive 2011/83 / EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on consumer rights. With this reform, the distance selling right of the Member States was harmonized, laying the foundations for the creation of an internal market for electronic commerce throughout the European Union.

For practical purposes, some of the main obligations of stores that operate online are:

- **Information requirements in a distance contract:** provide the consumer, in a clear and understandable way, the main characteristics of the goods and services object of the contract, their identity (company name, address, etc.), the final total price of the product (all inclusive);
- **Right of withdrawal:** the consumer has a period of 14 days to exercise this right and for the merchant to proceed with the refund
- **Payments:** the merchant must obtain the express consent of the consumer for any additional payment to the agreed remuneration
- **Delivery times:** deliver the goods purchased within a maximum period of 30 calendar days.
- **Unsolicited shipments:** It is forbidden to send and supply the consumer and user of unsolicited goods or services that include a payment claim.

- **Warranty:** All consumer goods have a free warranty for a period of two years.

To open an eCommerce you have to make sure you meet a series of requirements so that all your operations are within the law:

o **Legal information:** Law of services of the information society and electronic commerce. This law includes aspects about how the value of the products should be shown, what period of returns the company contemplates, the imposition of putting a dissent form for users or the exposure of the company's data publicly, among other obligations.

o **Cookies policy:** the banner that appears every time we enter a page is mandatory. Its purpose is that the user accepts the cookie policy of a web page, in order to consent to the collection of user data about their browsing habits.

o **RGDP (European Data Protection Regulation):** a couple of years ago this law was in the conversations of all businessmen. Its approval required companies to regulate the processing of personal data to guarantee their protection and privacy.

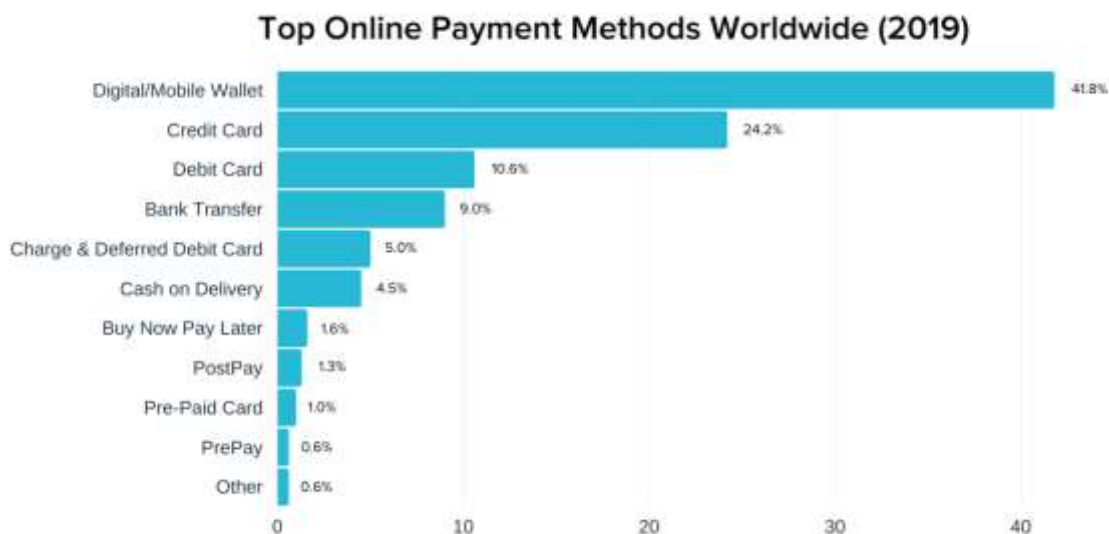
o **Issuance of invoices:** online companies can offer an electronic invoice for purchases made with the VAT rate that corresponds to the transaction carried out, since they have the same legal validity as physical ones.

PAYMENT METHODS

It is in **B2C e-commerce models where the means of payment acquire a fundamental nature**, as the click of "Place order" is the authentic "moment of truth" and the definitive step in which a website, until that moment, focused to communication, it becomes a transactional business.

If the sale is international, the company must adapt to the preferences of its buyers, who may be used to paying through a local means of payment, such as the Dutch I-Deal, the Brazilian Boletto Bancario or the Chinese Alipay (which, for example, it represents 60% in a market where Visa and Mastercard have only a 2% share in online transactions).

Globally, the preferred payment methods are already digital wallets, which have been gaining in importance relative to traditional bank cards.



Source: Oberlo . worldpay globalpayments report 2019

In Latin America, for example, the payments market is highly concentrated in Brazil and Mexico, which represent 73% of online payments on the continent, with a strong presence of bank cards. In Brazil, the presence of a local payment method such as Boleto Bancario stands out, as well as a strong predominance of deferred payment in online purchases.

In Asian markets, we are witnessing a distribution dominated by local means of payment, with a special predominance of Alipay, the payment system of the Alibaba group. The low presence of “traditional players” in the banking market is significant in the Chinese market, which shows the strength of Internet players in a market as critical for the development of the digital economy as that of payment methods. Likewise, the irruption of WeChat Pay as a key element in TenPay's strategy represents fierce competition to the traditional dominance of Alipay in the world of Chinese online payments.

Credit / debit card (payment gateway or virtual POS): it is the most common electronic payment system accepted today given the widespread use of credit / debit cards. It is the most common both nationally and internationally, due to the universality of the cards it accepts (Visa, Mastercard, American Express, etc.). The virtual POS service is provided by banks, with a commission.

PayPal: is the most advanced and most widely used online payment “alternative” system at an international level, present in more than 190 countries and with more than 250 million users. It was acquired by eBay in 2002 and although initially it was mandatory to have a "PayPal" account to be able to make payments, today it works as a true virtual POS, where you can pay with a credit or debit card without the need for said account, offering a very complete and specialized service.

New trends: the market for payment methods is one of the most dynamic and where a greater positioning of all companies with interests in the online market is being observed: “pure players”, banks, telcos, etc. Apart from the existence of numerous alternative players seeking to communicate their differential value proposition, the largest in the sector have their own payment models that are progressively bringing them to the market: Amazon Pay, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay, Pay with Square are examples of this bet.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service begins during the process of selling the products or services. It starts the moment we include promises about our products and services on our website. Every promise we make about the quality of the products, prices, return policies, delivery times, etc., we must be able to fulfill, because, if not, the work to be done when an error occurs will be much more difficult and expensive to do. manage. There will always be errors in logistics and operations management, the big difference will be marked by the way we manage these incidents.

The customer service tools start from traditional forms of contact such as telephone, email, web form and move towards more modern tools such as chat, social networks and chatbots with artificial intelligence.

The most important cost comes from the Human Resources necessary to cover the diversity of hours and languages available for service in international settings. The customer service department is our window to the outside and it must be equipped with the tools that allow it to interact with customers, but we also have to properly dimension the costs that this exposure implies to customers with different customs, languages and time zones. .

Automation of customer service, especially through artificial intelligence technologies, has evolved significantly. Artificial intelligence will enable the automation and personalization of many e-commerce tasks.

The **advantages of Artificial Intelligence** for the company are varied:

- Greater employee satisfaction, avoiding repetitive and cumbersome processes, leaving them in the hands of bots (although it is possible to replace them in the future).
- Reduction of errors, avoiding the human factor.
- Better customer service, managing possible doubts or incidents more quickly.
- Greater speed and efficiency in procedures, processes produce immediate results.
- Creation of new profitability opportunities thanks to a better relationship with the client.
- Competitive differentiation thanks to the best quality of products and services.
- Above all, cost savings.

At present, any technological platform allows us from the integration of a customer service chat to the use of a social network such as Twitter to provide services that interact with the client, in a cost structure generally associated with monthly fees and price ranges (for average) of between 30 and 100 euros per month. Companies like Iadvize, Zendesk and Amazon Connect offer very sophisticated technology solutions with remuneration schemes generally based on the traffic generated on the platform.

Besides Amazon Connect, there are other CRM solutions available in the market, such as: Smartsupp, WebCentrix, Salesforce, Bimyou.