

How to adapt your marketing strategy when expanding to new regions

By [Ryan Kh](#)

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Globalism has both opened new doors and created new challenges for startups all over the world. Digital technology, new trade agreements, the trend towards cultural assimilation and other factors have enabled businesses to reach customers in other countries. Even the United States, which is the world's largest economy, only accounts for [17% of global GDP](#).



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However, penetrating new markets is rarely easy. Brands must understand the cultural, regulatory and economic differences between these regions to successfully engage with new customers. Here are some questions startups must ask before marketing to customers in new countries.

What advertising laws must my company comply with?

Marketing laws are far from universal. Brands must understand the regulations in every market they serve.

Strict privacy laws are among the biggest differences US-based companies must prepare for when marketing the customers in the European Union. Brands must warn customers if they use cookies or other software to track their activities. They must also comply with the right to be forgotten law and other policies that protect customer privacy.

Certain products are also banned or restricted in different regions. For example, gambling and certain forex advertisements are prohibited in United States, while they are perfectly legal in many other countries. There are also [different policies on monitoring customer credit](#) in different regions as well. If there are restrictions on your product in other regions, it's important to know them to avoid facing civil or criminal penalties.

What are the psychological differences between people of different nationalities?

When you create marketing campaigns, it's easy to base them around your own references and expectations. These biases are programmed into us based on the culture we grew in.

This means that the selling points that work best for people in your own or similar cultures won't necessarily be ideal elsewhere. Here are some significant cultural differences to be aware of:

• Individualism vs collectivism

Some cultures are more individualistic, such as the United States and Japan. Other cultures, such as most smaller European countries tend to be more collectivist.

• Color differences

In most parts of the world, the color black is associated with death and the color white is associated with life. This relationship is reversed in India, so marketers must keep this in mind when using these colors in their campaigns.

However, Mashable's Erica Swallow reports this [is changing in many ways](#), so you should be mindful of these trends.

“In most of Europe and the Americas, for example, white is associated with purity and marriage. In Japan, China and parts of Africa, though, white is traditionally the color of mourning. But don't be fooled — in Westernized Asian cities, white weddings are becoming more common.”

• Views on beauty

In many cultures, men are more attracted to blonde and petite women. In other cultures, they tend to be more attracted to larger women with darker hair. This difference is particularly significant for marketers promoting dating sites. However, it is also relevant to any company using women in their advertising creatives.

Take the time to research the psychographics of your customer base in every region you intend to serve. You may be surprised by how different customers think and how you can improve your ROI by appealing to their own intrinsic desires.

Understand the best mediums for the local market

Many brands make the mistake of using the same mediums to reach customers in every geography. The problem is that customers in other countries use different sources of information. While Google is ideal for reaching customers in virtually every country, the preferred television networks, news sites and blogs differ from country to country.

You will need to research the channels customers go to for information in every region. This will help you decide where to place your ads to reach your target demographic.

When in Rome...

Marketing to people in different cultures isn't easy, but it is a great way to expand your company. You just need to know how to engage with local customers without running afowl with the regulators.

ABOUT RYAN KH

I'm Ryan Kh, a business graduate, aims to contribute thrilling stories on startups, small businesses & big on shining platforms.

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