



MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES & START-UPS WHILE GOING INTERNATIONAL

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Abstract

A marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan designed to accomplish the long-term goals of an enterprise, which includes a study of market needs, analysis of consumer behavior, product positioning, and the formation of a competitive advantage. The strategy outlines how the company navigates the market, which market segments it focuses on, and what value it offers.

A marketing strategy is especially important for small businesses since these types of businesses will have limited resources. Their success depends on the right focused marketing decisions, the right audience identification, and product customization. The main areas of marketing strategy for small businesses are:

- Segmentation and target market selection – determining who exactly should target the product;
- Positioning – determining what distinguishes a product or service from competitors;
- Formation of a competitive advantage - creating an advantage through price, quality, service or innovation;
- Brand strategy – formation of a reliable image in the mind of the customer.

So, marketing strategy for small businesses will ensure not only to increase sales, but also to gain a stable position in the market. The marketing environment plays an important role in the entry of small businesses into international markets. International marketing environment is a complex of economic, political, legal, cultural and technological factors influencing the external activities of an enterprise.



Table -1. Key components of an international marketing environment

Factor type	Description	Ta'sir darajasi
Economic factors	Exchange rates, customs payments, export-import policy	High
Political-Legal Factors	International Trade Agreements, Licensing Procedures	Medium
Socio-cultural factors	Local customs, consumer culture, language differences	High
Technological Factors	Digital marketing platforms, logistics systems	High
Ecologic omillar	Green marketing requirements, environmental certification	Medium

For small businesses, having the right analysis of these factors will help you execute the strategy successfully. For example, ignoring cultural differences can lead to a brand being misperceived in the international market. Also, small businesses with the help of digital technologies are able to directly connect with many foreign markets. Internet marketing, e-commerce platforms (Amazon, Alibaba, Etsy, etc.) are making it easier for small businesses to trade internationally.

In international markets, small businesses and start-ups use the following marketing strategies:

1. Digital marketing strategy. This strategy promotes the product to overseas consumers through social networks, search engines, and online advertising. For startups, this method is considered an inexpensive and fast result way. For example, you can reach your target audience via "Instagram Ads" or "Google Ads."
2. Content marketing strategy. Startups promote their products through engaging blogs, videos, or helpful articles. This method serves to build trust. For example, the Uzbek startup Express24 promotes its services through user stories on YouTube.
3. Differential strategy on price. One can enter a new market by offering lower or optimal price than its competitors. But in this strategy, the quality of the product is also important.



4. Innovative marketing strategy. Startups make products unique through new technologies, applications, or solutions. For example, startups "Payme" and "Click" have become a recognized brand in the international market thanks to innovative payment systems.

5. Brand marketing strategy. To succeed in the international market, it is necessary to create a brand image. A brand implies trust and stability to the consumer. For small businesses, it's a long-term investment.

The following factors contribute to the success of small businesses and startups in the international market:

- Flexibility – startups can make quick decisions, which gives them an advantage in a changing international environment.
- Innovative approach – new ideas and technologies will help to overcome the competition.
- Partnership networks – international exhibitions, accelerators and investor relations – will expand the business.
- Quality and service - the basis of trust in the international market is quality and service.

Together, these factors will enable small businesses to grow steadily and be competitive in the international market. Marketing strategy is seen not only as a means of selling the product but as a powerful mechanism shaping the image of the enterprise on a global scale. To ensure the competitiveness of small businesses in the international market, it is important to study and apply modern marketing technologies in depth.

In recent years, the role of start-ups and small business entities in the economy of Uzbekistan has been increasing. Their export potential, digital technology implementation and international cooperation are expanding. In the "New Uzbekistan Development Strategy" for 2022-2036, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan defines export expansion, support for small businesses and the development of the digital economy as a special priority.

Statistics: According to the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2024 the volume of exports by small business entities



amounted to 6.3 billion US dollars. Including IT startups, the share reached 7.5%.

Table-2. The main directions of start-ups in Uzbekistan in international marketing activities

No	Marketing yoʻnalishi	Adoption Rate (%)	Note
1.	Advertisement in social networks	45%	Subscribe to Telegram, Instagram, TikTok
2.	SEO and Internet Advertising via Google Ads	25%	redirects to online trading sites
3.	Collaboration with bloggers and influencers	15%	Strengthens the brand image
4.	Participation in exhibitions and startup forum	10%	' Provides an exit to investors
5.	Email-marketing and CRM systems	5%	Used for constant communication with clients

This analysis shows that the marketing activities of small businesses in the international market are mainly digital. However, their brand strategy, market research, and marketing budget are not well developed.

In the world experience, a number of models have been developed for the successful implementation of marketing strategies in the entry of small businesses and startups into international markets.

1. US experience – Lean Marketing approach. This approach allows small businesses to achieve maximum results with minimal resources. Startups rely on rapid testing, analysis, and customer feedback. Both Dropbox and Airbnb have achieved rapid growth in the marketplace through this method.

2. Experience of European countries – "Growth Hacking" strategy. This strategy relies on data analysis, user behavior, and experimentation. Spotify, for example, has expanded rapidly internationally with its system of engaging its users via friends.

3. South Korea and Japan experience – export-oriented marketing. These countries have established export incubators and shopping centers by



government to prepare small businesses for export activities. Marketing activities are supported by the state.

4. The Turkish experience is a brand-based strategy. Creating the "Made in Türkiye" brand for small Turkish producers, they promote their products under a single image in the international market. This system reduces marketing costs for small businesses.

By adapting these experiences to the conditions of Uzbekistan, startups can strengthen their position in the international market. Thus, it is desirable to introduce the following strategic directions to enhance the competitiveness of small businesses and startups in the international market:

1. Strengthen digital marketing infrastructure. For small businesses, it is necessary to expand the use of a single digital platform, online sales systems (marketplace), CRM and analytical software. This reduces marketing costs and increases efficiency.
2. Developing a brand and design culture. Brand design, logo, color and slogan are important to success in the international market. For startups of Uzbekistan it will be useful to introduce a single brand concept of "Made in Uzbekistan" or "UZ Product".
3. Deep market segmentation and localization. The product or service needs to be adapted to the language, culture, and consumption habits of different countries. For example, when entering the markets of Turkey, Russia or Europe, the language and advertising styles must be different.
4. Creation of a marketing support system based on public-private partnerships. It is necessary to strengthen cooperation with organizations such as IT-Park, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Export Promotion Agency. Marketing grants, trainings and incubation programs should be organized for startups.
5. Increase marketing competencies for small businesses. It is important to introduce the subject of "startup marketing" at universities, to conduct trainings for young entrepreneurs based on international experience. This knowledge and skills will give a high result in their practical activity.

The following model can be effective in the entry of Uzbek startups into the international market (Table-3).



Table -3. "5-Step Startup Marketing Model"

Phase	Activity Contents	Purpose
1	Market analysis (market research)	Identification of demand abroad
2	Product Customization	Cultural and linguistic adaptation
3	Digital Marketing Campaign	Social Networks, SEO, Online Advertising
4	Partnerships and Brand Building	Work with bloggers, export agencies
5	Effectiveness assessment	Revision of strategy based on KPI, ROI analysis

This model charts a step-by-step development path for startups and helps to direct their marketing strategy accurately. As a result, the key factor to increase competitiveness in the international market for small businesses and startups is the integration of innovative, digital and brand-based marketing strategies.

Conclusion

The article analyzes in depth the role and significance of marketing strategies in the international market of small businesses and startups. In the course of the work, theoretical and practical aspects of developing and implementing effective marketing approaches for small enterprises in the conditions of global competition were studied.

The article covers the process of entry of small businesses and startups into international markets, the essence of marketing strategy, types and their place in the economic system. The role of digital marketing, brand building, market segmentation and innovative approaches in increasing the export potential of small businesses was analyzed. On the basis of international experience, the importance of creating favorable conditions for small businesses, the development of marketing environment and state support mechanisms were revealed.

The strategy of small businesses and startups to enter the international markets in Uzbekistan was also analyzed. On the basis of case studies of local start-ups, their marketing activities, barriers and opportunities in exporting were explored.



According to the results of the analysis, the following key areas were identified as important for small businesses to succeed internationally:

- Widespread use of digital marketing tools, in particular through social networks, SEO and content marketing, attracting foreign clients
- Promotion of the brand at the international level, creating a reliable image through the harmonization of national values and quality;
- Developing innovative products and services to differentiate themselves from competitors and expand export opportunities;
- Strengthening public-private partnership, expanding export financing and consulting services in entering foreign markets.

In conclusion, for small businesses and start-ups, entering the international market is not only an economic opportunity, but also a factor that enhances the country's competitiveness in the global economy. In this regard, the scientifically based development of marketing strategies and its integration with modern technologies plays an important role in the sustainable development of a small business.

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