

Expand your online retail business internationally



By [Precious Gross](#)

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WALTHAM, US: One of the wisest decisions you can make to expand your online retail business is to start selling your products internationally.

A big part of e-commerce is the ability to reach customers in almost any country. Limiting your audience to one country or region severely cuts back on your potential profit and your ability to reach new markets.

According to [eMarketer](#), the boom of the ecommerce industry is not only present in the US. China, Japan, and other Asia Pacific countries continue to grow every year in ecommerce spending.

Customers worldwide are taking advantage of how easy it is to shop online, making it the perfect opportunity to sell internationally. The great thing about making this move is that expanding your online retail business internationally is a lot simpler than you may think.

Think local

There is more to offering international sales than just announcing that you ship to other countries. In order to be successful on an international level, your company and website has to embrace the local language, culture, currency, and payment methods. Failure to do the proper research will result in lower conversions due to an untargeted shopping experience.

Before your begin offering your products internationally, do some research into how the local economy functions, test out a few e-Commerce sites from local businesses, and develop a strategy to have a successful transition.

Collecting payment

One of the most important details to examine is how your company will handle payments from international customers. There is a strong chance that you did not look into the [global payments and multi-currency](#) options when you first chose your payment processor unless your products were initially meant to be sold abroad.

In order to make sure your website is optimized for international customers, your site should be able to translate into other languages, have a shopping cart with built in currency conversion, or redirect your main site to another version of your site based on where the traffic is coming from. This builds a level of trust and comfort between potential customers and your business. Just seeing a foreign currency may have potential customers thinking you do not ship to their location.

Make sure that the payment methods you accept are country specific. For instance, areas such as the US, Canada, and the UK are frequent users of credit cards.

However, in certain areas such as Russia, they are more cash based and rely on services like Qiwi Wallet.

Fraud protection

A major concern for many companies that are considering international online sales is security. The benefits of doing business abroad are plentiful, but the potential to be scammed or fall victim to fraud increases as well. Because of this, it's very important that you take the necessary precautions.

Offering local payment methods that have payment guarantees will help decrease the likelihood of payment defaults. In addition to payment guarantees, you will also want to make sure you have ample fraud-protection as well.

Popular payment services such as PayPal and Qiwi offer merchants some level of protection when doing business internationally. However, if you are a software company selling intangible goods, you must be extra vigilant.

[PayPal's Seller Protection](#) does not cover intangible goods, so you will have to take other measures such as ensuring each purchase has a separate license key and has a secure download page.

Taxes, shipping, and policies

If you will be selling physical items, shipping is fairly simple thanks to many shipping companies offering global services. However, products will have to go through Customs which can present a new challenge.

Taxes and tariffs may be handled through full service providers which makes the process much easier on the merchant.

Another often overlooked aspect of international e-Commerce is handling returns. Clearly state your return/refund policy for each payment method you offer.

With online shopping expected to continue on its upward trend, offering your products globally is a wise decision. Do your research, set up a plan, and you will be well on your way to achieving success internationally.

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