BRINGING INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS TO FOREIGN MARKETS THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING

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Abstract. *This paper examines digital marketing as a mechanism for bringing innovative products developed by enterprises in Uzbekistan to foreign markets. Drawing on research into digital marketing and Internet-enabled internationalization, it distinguishes online visibility from commercially viable market entry. A phased approach integrating market selection, value proposition localization, digital channel selection, lead qualification, and performance evaluation is proposed. Particular attention is paid to communicating product advantages and assessing customer acquisition costs against export contribution margins. The proposed framework is conceptual and requires empirical validation using enterprise-level data.*

Keywords: *digital marketing, innovative products, foreign market entry, export development, value proposition, customer acquisition, digital channels, Uzbekistan.*

Introduction

Bringing an innovative product to a foreign market requires more than attracting online attention. Enterprises must identify potential customers, explain the economic value of an unfamiliar product, establish credibility, and convert interest into commercially viable orders. Digital marketing should therefore be considered part of the market-entry process rather than an isolated promotional activity.

For enterprises in Uzbekistan, the central managerial question is how to connect digital marketing expenditure with measurable export results. Website visits, advertising impressions, and social media engagement provide information about audience behaviour, but do not independently demonstrate demand or profitability.

The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual approach to bringing innovative products to foreign markets through digital marketing. The analysis focuses on market selection, value communication, channel allocation, and the economic evaluation of customer acquisition.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

Kannan and Li present digital marketing as a framework encompassing multiple customer touchpoints and their relationship with marketing strategy. Their approach supports an integrated analysis of customer discovery, evaluation, purchase, and subsequent interaction rather than an exclusive focus on advertising channels.

Jean and Kim examine how website and platform capabilities influence the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises. Using evidence from Chinese SMEs, they identify positive relationships between these capabilities, export marketing capabilities, and export performance. They also show that product complexity and competitive intensity condition the relationships under investigation. These findings support a capability-based interpretation of digital marketing, although they cannot be transferred directly to enterprises in Uzbekistan without empirical verification.

Lemon and Verhoef emphasize that customer experience develops across multiple touchpoints, channels, and stages of the customer journey. This perspective supports evaluating digital marketing as a coordinated process extending from initial product discovery to purchase and post-purchase interaction.

Tiago and Veríssimo highlight the importance of relationship-based customer interactions in digital marketing and social media engagement. Accordingly, the proposed approach treats digital communication not merely as a means of generating inquiries, but as a mechanism for supporting dialogue, clarifying customer requirements, and maintaining commercial relationships.

The present paper combines these perspectives through conceptual synthesis and process analysis. Its proposed framework is intended for enterprises in Uzbekistan but is not based on a representative national survey. Accordingly, the recommendations constitute methodological propositions rather than verified descriptions of current enterprise practices.

Communicating the Value of Innovative Products

For the purposes of this framework, the main communication challenge is the difference between technical novelty and customer-perceived value. A product may incorporate a new technology without clearly demonstrating why a foreign customer should purchase it.

The proposed approach translates product characteristics into three categories of customer benefit:

- economic benefits, including lower operating costs or reduced resource consumption;
- functional benefits, including improved performance, reliability, or convenience;
- implementation benefits, including easier integration, maintenance, or user training.

Claims should be supported by appropriate evidence, such as comparative tests, demonstrations, technical documentation, or verified customer experience. Unsupported superiority claims should not substitute for a substantiated value proposition.

Localization should also extend beyond translation. Product descriptions, commercial terms, measurement units, service information, and supporting documents should be adapted to the requirements of the selected customer segment. The objective is to reduce uncertainty throughout the purchase decision.

A Phased Digital Market-Entry Framework

Table 1

Digital marketing stages for bringing innovative products to foreign markets

Stage	Main managerial task	Decision criterion
Market screening	Compare customer needs, competition, accessibility, and delivery economics	Evidence of an accessible target segment
Value proposition localization	Explain product benefits and adapt supporting information	Relevance and credibility for target customers
Channel selection	Match search, content, platforms, and direct outreach to customer behaviour	Ability to reach qualified potential buyers
Pilot campaign	Test messages, offers, and landing pages within a limited budget	Cost and quality of generated inquiries
Commercial conversion	Qualify inquiries and manage demonstrations, quotations, and negotiations	Conversion into commercially viable orders
Expansion	Increase investment in validated market–channel combinations	Sustainable acquisition costs and contribution margins

Market screening should precede significant advertising expenditure. Digital interest in a product is insufficient if delivery costs, mandatory requirements, or service obligations make the transaction economically unattractive. The proposed screening process therefore combines marketing information with operational and financial assessment.

Channel selection should reflect the customer's purchasing process. For technically complex products, the proposed approach emphasizes searchable technical content, demonstrations, professional platforms, and direct communication with decision-makers. For products suitable for standardized online purchase, transactional websites and relevant marketplaces may also be considered. Channel choices should be treated as testable hypotheses rather than universal prescriptions.

A pilot campaign should have a defined target segment, offer, budget, and evaluation period. Its purpose is not simply to maximize traffic, but to determine whether a particular message and channel combination produces qualified commercial interest.

Lead Qualification and Organizational Coordination

An inquiry should not automatically be treated as a sales opportunity. The proposed qualification process assesses the potential buyer's product requirements, purchasing role, expected volume, destination market, and purchasing timeframe.

This distinction is important because a campaign generating numerous irrelevant inquiries may appear successful in advertising reports while consuming sales resources without producing export revenue.

Digital marketing should consequently be coordinated with sales, technical, and export functions. Marketing identifies and attracts potential customers; technical personnel substantiate product claims; sales personnel evaluate commercial opportunities; and export specialists assess delivery and transaction requirements.

A shared customer relationship management system can be used to record the progression from initial inquiry to quotation, order, payment, and repeat purchase. For evaluation purposes, the enterprise should define each stage consistently and record the source of the customer relationship.

Economic Evaluation of Digital Marketing

The proposed evaluation system distinguishes communication indicators from commercial outcomes. Impressions, clicks, and engagement describe exposure and interaction. Qualified inquiries, orders, and contribution margins provide information closer to the enterprise's export objective.

Two principal indicators are proposed:

$$CAC = \frac{C_a}{N_c},$$

where CAC is customer acquisition cost, C_a is the acquisition expenditure attributable to the assessed campaign or customer cohort, and N_c is the number of new customers acquired.

$$CR = \frac{N_o}{N_q} \times 100\%,$$

where CR is the qualified-inquiry-to-order conversion rate, N_o is the number of qualified inquiries resulting in an initial order, and N_q is the total number of qualified inquiries.

The numerator and denominator should relate to the same customer cohort and an appropriate observation period. Otherwise, long sales cycles may distort the assessment.

Acquisition costs should include the relevant advertising, content, platform, and sales-support expenditure rather than advertising payments alone. They should be compared with the contribution generated after product costs and directly attributable export transaction costs. Where acquisition expenditure is expected to be recovered through repeat purchases, the assumed retention rate and repayment period should be explicitly justified.

Finally, recorded conversions should not automatically be interpreted as sales caused entirely by digital advertising. Enterprises should use controlled comparisons where feasible and acknowledge attribution limitations where several channels influence the same purchase.

Conclusion

Digital marketing can support foreign market entry when it connects customer identification, credible value communication, and commercial conversion within a single management process. Online visibility alone is not an adequate measure of export success.

For enterprises in Uzbekistan, the proposed approach combines market screening, localized value propositions, pilot campaigns, lead qualification, and financial evaluation. Its central principle is to expand digital expenditure only after the relationship between customer acquisition costs and commercially viable export orders has been assessed. Further research should test this framework across product categories and foreign markets using enterprise-level data.

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