INTERNATIONAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 15

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

No country or organization is sufficient unto itself. Organizations market goods and services that have no domestic demand in international markets and perhaps come back with products that have domestic demand. In some cases, industrial inputs such as labour, raw materials, capital and technology are imported from foreign lands to complement indigenous industrial inputs for efficiency and effectiveness. The importance of international marketing can never be overemphasized. In acknowledging this fact, Awoniyi (1999) states:

We are all affected by international marketing. We wake up in the morning with the help of Japanese alarm clock. At breakfast we eat Indomie or drink Maxwell or Colombian coffee and eat bread made of wheat from America. We glance at advertisement for French wine in the newspapers. Many of the goods and services we consume each day are imported. And over 70% of products made in this country (Nigeria) face direct foreign competition.

This analogy shows clearly that every individual, organization, even country is affected directly or indirectly by international marketing. Hence, this chapter intends to give a true picture of international marketing in theory, principles and practice.

International Marketing Defined

Cateora et al define international marketing as "the performance of business activities that direct the flow of the company's goods and services to consumers or users in more than one nation". It is the performance of business activities including marketing research, product development and management, and marketing intelligence, across national boundaries with the view of satisfying human wants and needs and achieving company's predefined objectives."

Majaro stipulates that any company that endeavours to market its products in more than one country such a company is involved in international marketing. Basically, what differentiate international marketing from international trade are the operative words of 'sense', 'serve' and 'satisfy'. International marketing takes place when a company senses or identifies currently unfulfilled needs and wants, design appropriate product to fill the gap and satisfy the consumers at profit. International marketing is entrepreneurial. It is innovative and dynamic, hence requires deliberate, holistic, and concerted efforts and programmes to make it successful. International trade is more or less individualistic in nature, may not be customer-centered, and may not require deliberate efforts in its operations.

Differences between Domestic and International Markets

In domestic market, there is homogeneity of currency, language and culture. There is little or no government interference; distance poses little or no barrier and marketing environment is not largely complex; whereas in international market, there are divergent cultures and languages, many currencies are involved, government interference to protect domestic markets and industries, distance barrier and business or marketing environment is largely complex, dynamic, and multi-dimensional; differences in legal systems, etc.

The Importance of International Marketing

The importance of international marketing can be looked at from two perspectives:

a. Its importance to the nation

b. Its importance to the organization

Its importance to the nation: In this case, international marketing derives its importance from international trade. Adam Smith made it clear when he stated that:

International trade carries out that surplus part of the produce of their land and labour for which there is no demand among them (exports) and brings back in return (imports for it something else for which there is a demand.

It gives a value to their superfluities by exchanging them for something else which may satisfy a part of their wants, and increase their enjoyment. Thus, international marketing makes available goods and services which are not or sufficiently produced in a given country, encourages even distribution of resources, goods and services. It increases the productive base and consumption level of a nation. The proceeds from international marketing contributes to the growth of both a nation’s gross domestic and gross national products (GDP and GNP) which are sound indicators of economic growth. Adam Smith also pointed out that “international trade encourages the nationals to improve the productive power and to increase the real revenue and wealth of society.”

International marketing encourages capital formulation and accumulation. It improves the living standard of the people; increase their per capita income through employment generation and entrepreneurial development. It is a sure means of revenue generation to the government through imposition and collection of taxes, levies and tariff. Umoren observes that for the powerless third world countries, international marketing or trade appears to be seen as the only viable route to economic development, economic emancipation and politico-economic independence. Hence, international trade is seen to them as a source of earning foreign exchange to accomplish their developmental dreams.

Its Importance to the Organization: A firm that engages in international marketing benefits in the following areas;

i. Achieving economies of scale through large-scale production and reduced per unit cost of production.

ii. Prospects for high returns in foreign markets: certainly, a firm that markets internationally tend to generate more revenue and profit than a firm entangled with domestic market.

iii. Corporate Strategy to escape tough competition at home. A firm can liberate itself from harsh competition at home by venturing into international markets where opportunity abounds for it to explore.

iv Need to Prevent Stagnation and Vulnerability: Home market may not sufficiently provide for organization's growth especially where domestic markets is saturated.

v. Need to prolong the life of its products: A product that has reached its declining stage in Nigeria may begin its introductory stage in Ghana depending on need, time and marketing programmes applied.

vi. National necessity: A firm can venture into international marketing because of the domestic country's foreign policy requirement. Nigeria sees Africa as centerpiece of her foreign policy, as such can direct all pharmaceutical companies, for instance, to take some of their products to other African states as a means of strengthening her foreign policy.

International Marketing Environment

International marketers operate within the ambits of a complex set of environments (controllable and uncontrollable), which can mar or make their aspirations. The uncontrollable environment includes economic, socio-cultural, politico-legal and technological factors, while the controllable factors are the 'popular' four Ps of marketing, in other words called the marketing mix.

The Economic Environment: Every country has unique economic factors that influence business decisions and activities. There are diverse prices for goods and services, diverse purchasing habits, difference in monetary and fiscal policies, position of GDP, interest rates, balance of payment business customs and practices, etc. For instance, investment seems to concentrate more in countries with moderate tax regime than countries with harsh taxation. The economic system practiced in an economy also influences business decisions and international marketing. Countries that adopt free market system tends to be more liberal and easy to penetrate than ones that adopt centrally planned system. Penetration into centrally planned economies requires government direction, scrutiny and surveillance and in some cases government interference which may not augur well for the international marketer.

A countries position in GDP signifies her level of economic development, investment and consumption. Countries with high GDP growth rate are prone to high consumption level whereas countries with low GDP growth rate are prone to low consumption level and do not encourage investment. This explains why third world countries have low investment. Also, the financial climate that prevails in a country influences the international marketer's decision to a launch his offer in such a country. A stable financial climate (stable financial institutions, monetary policies, and encouraging interest rate) encourages business decisions while the reverse is the case for unstable and unhealthy financial climate.

Socio-Cultural Environment: This environment houses factors such as culture, social institutors, language, aesthetics, attitude and value, religion, etc which shape the behavioural pattern of a particular people. Culture has been defined by Vern Terpstra as the man-made part of our environment or the distinctive way of life of a people. Culture consists of material and non-material elements. Material elements of culture are those aspects of culture that can be seen, touched, tasted smelt and heard, e.g. products. Non-material aspects of culture cannot be seen, tasted, touched, smelt but could be heard e.g music; thus, non-material elements of culture are abstract in nature. Culture plays enormous role in determining and defining a market to venture into. An international marketer must be conversant with the people's total way of life before taking decision on what to produce, how to produce, for whom to produce and what should constitute price, promotional and distribution strategies. It is on this note that Umoren observes that there is need for greater sensitivity on the part of the international marketer to the cultural realities of his market. Cateora and Hass called it "Factual Knowledge" which provides the marketer with the knowledge and appreciation of symbols and other meaning of everyday things of life folded in the indigenous people. It determines the acceptance of a product. Close to a century, there has been a debate as to whether there is superior culture or inferior culture. In most responses, the answer has always been "no." However, the attitude of third world countries towards foreign made products has gone a long way to negate this response. In the third world countries such as Nigeria anything foreign is usually seen as superior to home made, as such desired and preferred. This is a behavioural pattern inculcated to us by the colonial masters and has been referred to as colonial mentality.

Social institution such as schools, churches, mosques, the press, government and its agencies, peers (age group, clubs, etc) and organizations also influence the behavioural pattern of the people. For instance, the level of education (i.e literacy level) influences the choice of advertising messages, mode of advertising, marketing strategies to be adopted and marketing institutions existing in a country.

Aesthetics is the beauty of the people expressed in their music, art and dance. Aesthetics and material culture are important in product type and design, quality, use, packaging, advertising design and effectiveness and total product presentation. Language showcases verbal and non-verbal expression to culture and it is indispensable to communication effectiveness in marketing. Language is found in product packaging, labeling and promotion.

Politico-Legal Environment: Another important aspect of the international marketing environment is the politico-legal factors. A country's political structure and practices as well as her legal framework have great influence on international marketer's decision to market his product there. There are diverse laws or legal systems guiding business activities in different countries. There are laws regulating business, which make procedures for business registration, ownership, structure and composition, size and type of business (sole proprietorship, partnership, joint stock, and cooperative businesses). In many countries, there are laws guiding business practices. For instance, in Nigeria, there are Sale of Goods Act, Company and Allied Matters Act 1990, the Nigeria Enterprise Promotion Act 1972 and 1977, etc. An international marketer should be familiar with the laws guiding business activities in the country where he wants to penetrate.

Another subset of this environment is the political setting of a country. It is important to know the form of political system a country adopts before launching in their market. The following questions would guide the international marketer in his decision making process:

– *What is the political system of the country?*

– *What is the country's political structure?*

– *How stable is the government?*

– *Is the judicial system effective?*

– *What are the litigation procedures?*

– *Does the country respect international conventions?*

We must note that, international conventions include:

1. The Parish Convention
2. The Inter-American Convention
3. The Madrid Convention
4. The Lame Convention

Technological Environment: The level of technology prevalence in a country affects the level of production, innovation and assortment of goods and services that a marketer can market there. Today, firms are confronted with the challenge of using modern or improved techniques in production. Modern technique encourages mass production, innovation and greater returns on investment. For instance, the use of computers has replaced the use of thumb method that usually involved much paper work and mistakes. Thus, the use of computer is faster, reliable, accurate and gives up-to-date information about stocks.

Technology can also be found in the area of communication where different equipment and gadgets have been developed to ease and fasten communication. Today, we have the internet, fax, telephones, etc which guarantee effective communication. It should be the concern of an international marketer to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with technological advancement and use them to better his lots.

Problems in Marketing Internationally

The probable problems encountered by an international marketer are not different from the international marketing environment and they have been explained above. These problems are: divergent culture, divergent political/legal framework, geographical location, difference in currencies, inadequate communication devices, technology and competition.

DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

There are basically six ways through which a firm can involve in international marketing, namely: Casual involvement, Indirect export, direct export, foreign involvement without investment, foreign involvement with investment and multinational operations. This is shown in the diagram below:

Fig. 15.1: Degree of involvement in international marketing.

Casual Involvement: The firm in this involvement does not actively or intentionally intend to internationalize as such it does not sense nor respond to the needs and wants of consumers in the international markets. This firm may fill a one-time order but does not consider or include it in its strategy thrust for long-term investment.

Indirect Export: In this case, the firm does not intend to go internationally but its products could be taken to international markets by resellers. These resellers are exporters, export merchants or export brokers who could be used by a firm to expand its sales base.

Direct Export: In this case, a firm can create export department which will take its product to the international markets or it can sell to international customers who invariably sell to the host consumers. According to Awoniyi in direct export, a firm begins to view international markets as a long term opportunity for sales and profits.

Foreign Involvement without Investment: This occurs where a firm intends to launch its product in a foreign market but does not wish to establish its production facilities in that country. By this, a firm can negotiate to license its production technology to a domestic investor who can establish the production facilities in that country.

Foreign Involvement with Investment: In this case, a firm finances the establishment of production facilities in the foreign land. This is effected when a firm realizes that the host country is juicy enough to guarantee sizeable returns on investment.

Multinational Operations: This operation is carried out by multinational corporations. They see the whole world as global village, hence make decisions within a global framework. Multinational corporations see the world as source of supply and a set of markets, as such, does not distinguish between national and international markets, e.g. of MNC is Unilever Plc.

Strategies for Entry

Entry strategy to adopt is one of the fundamental decision areas in international marketing. This decision requires the international marketer to consider factors such as cost, risk, and control. A rational marketer would always want his programmes to incur less operational cost, low degree of risk and exercise larger control.

The entry strategy adopted by an international marketer goes a long way to shape his programme, as such; holistic approach should be employed if he was to make reliable and rewarding decision. Osuagwu and Eniola identify factors necessary for entry strategy decision to include; the company's objectives and expectations of the volume of business to be generated, the size of the company and its financial resources, patterns of involvement in other foreign markets, the managerial culture and levels of international marketing expertise within the company, the nature and degree of competition within the market, the nature of the product and whether it has any distinct competitive advantage either in terms of its technology, patent production, or trademarks and the market's political infrastructure and whether any tariff or non-tariff barriers exist or are likely to be introduced. Other factors that need consideration according to them are; investment needs of each market, the manpower requirements, levels of political and financial risk, the administrative needs, the marginal marketing cost, the degree of flexibility and control that is possible. All these and many more guide international marketer in his entry strategy decisions. *Below are the international market entry strategies available to a marketer.*

Exporting: This is the most popular strategy in developing countries and in countries where government takes active part in business ownership. This strategy involves direct and indirect exporting. In direct export, a firm sells its product to international customers. In this case, the firm is beginning to view international markets as goldmines, long-term opportunity for sales and profits (Awoniyi, 1999). Indirect export entails selling to domestic customers. These customers can be organizations or individuals who sell the products in the international markets. In indirect export, the firm has no intention of internationalizing and does not view international markets as opportunities for sales and profits, and does not include it in its long-term strategy thrust. Exporting strategy is best for companies with complementary products. Many firms adopt this strategy in order to earn foreign exchange, which aids in importation of required raw materials and other inputs.

Licensing and Franchising agreements: Licensing is a contract or agreement between an international firm and a firm in a host country in which the international firm grants a host country's firm the permission to use its patent, trademark, manufacturing process and technical assistance for a payment called royalty. This agreement gives the host country's firm a degree of freedom to produce and market its products. Coca-Cola (a USA Multinational Corporation) has granted license to many firms in the third world countries. Licensing is mostly applied to marketing of physical products.

Franchising on the other hand is mostly applied to service firms but retains all other characteristics of licensing. The franchisee honours specification on nature of operation directed by the franchiser. A good example is McDonald, which franchised its hamburger operation in many countries in Europe and Asia.

Piggyback Operations: Here an international marketer uses his own foreign distribution network to sell another company's products alongside his. It is mostly adopted when he realizes that the other product can complement and smoothen the sale of his own products. To an extent, this strategy is similar to exporting strategy. This strategy is beneficial to the marketer in that it guarantees greater economies of scale, expands product range and boost sales.

Contract Manufacturing and Management Contracting: An international marketer may decide to hand over manufacturing of a product to host country' firm(s) while retaining the marketing of the product. This is called contact manufacturing. It is usually adopted where local labour is efficient and cheap and there are stringent government restrictions on foreign manufactures. Management contracting entails a situation where a firm provides management skill and proficiency while domestic firms own the production facilities. This strategy is mostly seen in the service industries such as hotels and airlines. For example, Imo Concorde Hotel is managed by a foreign firm. There is relatively low risk associated with this strategy.

Assembly Operations: This is another strategy of entering into international market. This strategy involves product assembly and manufacturing in a host country. There are many factors which encourage the decision to adopt this strategy, namely, need to avoid tariff and non-tariff barriers, existence of cheap labour and other inputs, favourable tax rates, cheap capital, favourable business laws, unsaturated and less competitive market, etc.

Local assembly involves the manufacturing of component parts in a parent country and coupling them in the host country. Local assembly is expensive to operate as it involves multiple labour and operational costs especially in shipping, tariff, labour (domestic and abroad). Local manufacturing is cheaper especially where the host country provides good source of raw materials and labour. Peugeot and General Motors are using local assembly strategy in Nigeria.

Joint Ventures: Joint Ventures approach is another strategy of entering into international markets. It is very popular in developing countries. In Joint Ventures strategy, a foreign firm looks for local firm with which it can pool resources together to run a programme in the host country. It is a form of partnership in which a foreign firm enters into business with one or more domestic firms to achieve specific objectives. There are different laws guiding joint ventures in different countries. For instance, in Nigeria, the Nigerian firms control about 51% equity or at least 40% equity depending on the line of business. The problem with joint ventures is that of control and tendency for loss of investment. Control is shared between host firms and the foreign firm and there is the possibility of losing out especially where the alliance is with government or aggressive domestic partner owing to political, legal and economic trends in the host country. However, it allows for greater economies of scale in technology, production, marketing, and information generation.

Wholly-Owned Subsidiaries: A company may decide to wade into the international markets by building its (wholly-owned) subsidiaries there. This gives complete control over marketing, administrative and production decisions. Before, a firm adopts this strategy, there is need to assess the potentiality and viability of the market and macro-environmental factors prevailing in the host country. There is high risk associated with this strategy particularly in the area of financial commitment and operation. It is mostly adopted by multinational corporations.

Multinational Operations: When a firm operates in more than one country and makes its production, marketing and administrative decisions within a global framework, it is called a multinational corporation. A multinational corporation views the world as a set of markets and sources of supply (Awoniyi, 1999). Its decisions (production, marketing and administrative) are centered on the entire world, hence it has no room for distinctive marketing programmes for different market segments.

Global Marketing: This strategy is related to multinational operations strategy. It is defined as "selling the same product, the same way, everywhere," The customers are seen the same way; thus the notion that they are similar and have same preferences and that developing standardized product and application of integrated marketing mix to all markets can guarantee customer and organization satisfaction. Coca-Cola is a good example of Multinational Corporation adopting global marketing. Others are General Motors, Exxon, IBM, Toyota Motor Co; etc.

Marketing Mix Decisions in International Marketing

The marketing mix is fundamental to marketing decisions. They shape all marketing activities and performance. The marketing mix as propounded by McCarthy is product, price, place and promotion. A lot have been said about these 4Ps, as such, decisions areas will be highlighted only.

Product: Decision areas include quality, packaging, features, labeling, sizes, brand name, servicing, product policies, design, uses and usage.

Price: Decision areas include price list, discount, payment period, credit terms and allowances, pricing policies, strategies and methods. Factors affecting price in international marketing are government legislation, competition, the buyer's level of disposable income, demand elasticity of the product, nature of the market, cost of production, pricing objective (pricing strategy and pricing policy).

Place (also called distribution): Decision areas cover channel of distribution, location and coverage, inventory, transportation, warehousing, etc.

Promotion: This covers advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and publicity.

Taking decisions on the marketing mix requires the international marketer to understand the market he intends to serve; the culture of the people, consumer behaviour and dispositions, taste and preferences, business customs, and laws guiding business activities in the host country.

Organizing for International Marketing

Organization for domestic marketing shares similarity with organizing for international marketing except in geographical expansiveness. Therefore, the reader is referred to marketing planning, organizing and control. This section will only serve as a remainder. There are six major organizational structures, namely:

1. Functional structure

2. Product groupings structure

3. Market or customer groupings structure

4. Geographical or territorial structure

5. Channel of distribution-base structure

6. Matrix approach: This combines functional structure with any of other organizational structures.

Other Areas of Consideration

Apart from the marketing mix, there are other important areas which an international marketer should prioritize in order to achieve his objective. These areas are summarized as the 12Cs of international marketing. They include:

Country: The marketer must be acquainted with the country where he intends to sell his product. He should know the country's policy to import, business customs, business laws, the country's marketing and business infrastructure.

Culture: Looks at the peoples culture as expressed in their norms and values, language, behaviour, aesthetics, arts, music, technology, etc.

Concentration: Looks at geographical concentration of the people in the target country showing age distribution, income distribution, access to channels of distribution, access to decision makers, density of population, etc.

Communication: Available communication media, channel media, language, the choice of promotional media.

Channels of Distribution: Direct or Indirect marketing channel, distribution strategy to adopt, mode of transportation, etc.

Capacity: Capacity of the consumer to pay; capacity of customers or clients to reach contractual agreements.

Currency: The acceptability and stability of local currency; the use of hard currency.

Control and Coordination: Ability of the international marketer to exercise a degree of control over international marketing activities goes a long way to influence the success of his venture. There should be clarity and coordination of plans, policies, objectives and strategies; coordination of agencies and individuals involved in the chain of command and distribution channel; ensure effective communication, set and reach performance measurement criteria (standard).

Commitment: Commitment to quality and service.

Choices: The international marketer must consider the marketing mix choices available in the prospective or target markets and use them to satisfy the market at profit.

Contractual Obligations: This looks at payment terms and conditions, credit terms and period, warrantees, guarantees of delivery; stages of payments to be made by the customers, penalties for late delivery or failure to deliver; financial deposits (in hard currency) required as evidence of the marketers good faith.

Caveats: This has to do with the important aspect of the marketing environment which the international marketer should not ignore. The international marketer should pay attention to:

a. His company's reputation; the quality of its products, delivery on time, long term presence in the market.

b. Motivation of export salesmen.

c. Local risk

d. Political stability

e. Economic trends state of the economy

f. How business is done in the target country. (Morden; A. R., 1991).

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Ten ways to improve your international marketing strategy

"Made in Britain" is a symbol of quality around the world, so making the most of it should be part and parcel of your marketing campaign if you are promoting your goods and services overseas. Rachel

Miller explains how to approach international marketing and why it is worth doing

1. **Find out if your product will travel**. Many UK firms get occasional orders from overseas - thanks to the reach of the internet. But should you actively market your products abroad? Not every product travels well so if you plan to expand into new territories, find out if your product can be sold widely without having to be adapted.
2. **Research new territories.** Your experience and the resources you have built up in the UK means that you're not starting from scratch. But you need to know how to leverage them appropriately - and that means researching new markets and thinking about issues such as logistics, order fulfilment and customer service.
3. **Assess the size of the market**. How big is the market for your product in other countries? You'll have to see how established it is, find out how many players there are in that sector and how big the customer base could be. Are there any potential trade barriers or restrictions?
4. **Adapt your marketing strategy**. You may have a product that can easily cross borders but your marketing strategy will have to be adapted. Local values, customs, language and currencies will all impact on your marketing plan. Look at your unique selling points and your branding. Are they right for the new markets you are targeting?
5. **Work with local partners**. Working with affiliates, partners, distributors, licensees or agents can help you get established in a new market. Close consultation with business partners on the ground will ensure that your marketing materials have local appeal and don't include any mistakes.
6. **Check your prices**. Pricing is not just about understanding currency differences - you need to research price levels in each new territory. Your overheads may also be higher so ensure that your prices take into account the cost of freight and transport, packaging and agent's commission.
7. **Adjust your media mix**. The marketing channels you use will vary in each territory. In some countries, you may rely mostly on social media or online advertising. In other places, it could be local newspapers, outdoor advertising or radio.
8. **Learn local customs**. When it comes to customer service, what works in one country may not work in another due to cultural differences, language and health and safety regulations. Levels of formality, business etiquette, the way you address them - all these are issues that could make or break your expansion plans.
9. **Get the timing right**. Timing is everything. In some places, what you sell may be ahead of its time, in others it could be seen as outdated. Is demand for your type of product already peaking? Or is it just starting to grow?
10. **Exhibit overseas**. Taking a stand at trade shows abroad is a good way of dipping your toe in the water, meeting contacts and making your first sales in a new market. It's also a chance to see what your competitors are doing.

Group Assignment - International Trade & Marketing

Students are requested to submit their group assignments by designing an international marketing plan for a Company of their choice. Students will be pre-assigned to groups of (up to) 4 members according to their preference. All members of each group are expected to contribute equally to the assignment.

The report should cover below given areas:

a) Market choice: Selecting a country/countries to enter for international expansion and entry mode. (All members should agree upon in market selection).

b) Researching the internal and external environments of the company. No descriptive summary of the research findings will be requested in the final report. Instead, an analysis of the information uncovered (for example, using a rigorous SWOT analysis, PESTEL and/or Porter's Five Forces model) will be required.

c) Developing actionable, realistic, measurable international marketing objectives, which are directly in line with the research results. These should be adequately justified.

d) Designing international marketing strategies aimed at achieving the set objectives. This should cover STP and Marketing Mix Strategies and Tactics. At this stage of the report, creativity, realism, and precision will be rewarded.

e) Implementation, Monitoring and control of the plan - Indications of how to implement the plan and control for its success should be included.

A comprehensive report and a Power point Presentation on your marketing Plan is required to be submitted on or before ……………………….

Notes :

Students are requested to keep records of group meetings in the form of attendance list / minutes to allow for evaluation of contribution and effort (include attendance and non-attendance, objectives set, contribution of each *individual, targets met etc.). By doing this, individuals who consistently miss group meetings or fail to deliver on agreed objectives should be highlighted.*

[redacted]