

Exploring international e-commerce opportunities.

Taking your first steps to trading internationally has never been easier but it still requires careful planning. Here is a handy checklist for the six critical areas to consider:

1. Planning your entry into a new market

- Research the demand for product
- What is the local infrastructure?
- Is there a desire for your product?
- What is the competition for your product?
- What are the possible routes to market?
- Be aware of cultural differences
- How are you going to promote your presence?

2. Accepting payments

- Offer the payment methods that local customers will be comfortable with
- Offer the ability to pay in the local currency, or offer a currency converter.

3. Shipping services

- Offer a clear delivery policy
- Offer a clear returns policy with a 'no questions asked' structure.

4. Taxes, laws and regulations

- Investigate whether the duties and taxes of the market you plan to sell to, apply to the items you sell
- Customs and documentation – make the right declarations to ensure safe delivery
- If selling in the EU, be aware of the EU Distance Selling Directive
- Understand local data protection laws - such as how to correctly store customer data.

5. Setting up your in-country presence

- Build confidence and credibility by paying attention to detail, especially with translated text
- If possible, feature local currency and customer testimonials.

6. Great local customer service

- Display an email address for customers to easily contact you
- Offer a customer helpline telephone number
- In addition, offer Skype or instant messaging.