



**TradeTech
Solutions**

KOMPASS
Your route to business worldwide

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO B2B ECOMMERCE



The Essential Guide to **B2B eCommerce**

Making B2B eCommerce Simple for British SMEs

Increase Sales – Find Finance – Reduce Risks – Save Money

(It also reduces your Carbon Footprint. So, what's not to like?)



**Bounce Back from the Covid-19
Lockdown and Prosper!**

Second Edition, April 2021

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Foreword

Digital Transformation is not just a good idea, it's a matter of corporate survival.

eCommerce is not simply selling online; it is another (more limited) term for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It means transforming your business by digitising as many of your operations and processes as possible.

TradeTech Solutions' mission is to bring the benefits of B2B eCommerce to British SMEs. We have therefore written this Guide to be of practical use. For every solution and explanation proposed, there is a link to a relevant service which delivers immediate economic benefits.

We sincerely hope that this Guide and the services described here will help your company to adapt and prosper. If you think there is anything missing in this Guide – or can be improved – just drop the [editor an email](#). We are here to help.

N.B. The very nature of eCommerce encompasses rapid change as new services are brought online. Therefore, this Guide will be updated on a regular basis. To see if you have the latest edition and/or to receive free automatic updates, [register here](#).

TradeTech Solutions makes no charge for this Guide – neither do we charge for The ExportersAlmanac, B2BCentral, The AEO Directory services which are linked to this Guide. However, if you feel you benefit in any way from these services, we would ask you to make a donation (however small) to [NHS Charities Together](#); the umbrella organisation that coordinates the UK's NHS charities and the official national charity partner of the NHS – throughout the UK.

Don't miss out on the benefits that eCommerce can bring to B2B trade - ***unlock your potential!***

If you think there is anything missing in this Guide, or can be improved, just drop the editor [an email](#). We are here to help.

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What's New in the 2nd Edition

Well, it's less than one year since we published the First Edition and the Second Edition is already 50 pages longer.

All chapters have been subjected to editing; however, the main additions are:

1. [Remote Working](#) (12 pages) is now a separate chapter.
2. [Digital Marketing](#) (13 pages) has been strengthened with the addition of sections on:
 - Email marketing.
 - Push messaging.
 - SMS campaigns.
 - Live Commerce.
 - Product Information Management.
 - Visual Configuration.
3. [Virtual Events](#) (4 pages) is now a separate chapter– with the offer of a [Free Virtual Event Guide](#), if you would like learn more.
4. [Trading with the EU \(Brexit\)](#) (6 pages) is a totally new chapter and deals with the issues that now exist when trading with the EU\EEA.
5. [Back Office Support](#) (14 pages) is greatly expanded; eCommerce is not just simply closing sales online.
6. [End Notes](#) (2 pages) is a new chapter where we indicate the new opportunities and challenges that we believe will arise in the not too distant future.

If you think we are missing any topic or issue, please [let us know](#) and we will try to address it and include it in the next edition.

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Summary

The global lockdown has forced companies and individuals to embrace immediate change; whether they like it or not. These enforced changes have shown many companies – sometime much to their surprise - that many of the barriers to eCommerce are not only imaginary but eCommerce brings many benefits to companies and employees alike. Moreover, the world is not going back to a pre-coronavirus reality any time soon; if ever. Therefore, we all have to adapt to these changes.

This Guide has been written to cover all aspects of the reality of B2B eCommerce. The emphasis is on **practical advice** for British SMEs that can bring you **immediate economic benefits**¹.

Due to the large number of nation specific resources and services available, in order to provide a complete Guide, we have had to focus on providing a nation specific Guide; which naturally for us is the UK.

As a first step, we would recommend that you print out and complete the eCommerce Readiness Assessment. This will help you determine what is relevant to your situation and formulate your action plan.

The Guide consists of chapters dealing with the topics outlined below.

1. eCommerce and Exporting – Dismantling “Phantom Barriers (2 pages)

These “phantom” barriers are of the type: (i) Jargon, (ii) “The technology is too complex” (iii) “We have to work together from the same office” (iv) “Exporting is difficult and high risk” (v) “I’m too small to export”.

We blow these barriers away! Glossaries explain the jargon in lay terms. The only part of technology that has to be understood is what it can do and how you can benefit from it – and it should be explained in those terms. The lockdown has shown that not only is it possible to work from home – but also that there are distinct benefits from doing so. Exporting can actually represent a reduction in risk and we explain how you can implement a low-cost, effective export program.

2. Remote Working (12 pages)

Working from Home has exploded over the past year. We are now in a much better position to understand the benefits and disadvantages that this brings. What is clear is that remote working is here to stay – and that the workplace and working practices will permanently change as a result.

This chapter covers all the issues that you will need to manage in order to make the most of the advantages, remove the disadvantages and cover a number of legal points that you will have to address.

3. Market Profiles and Opportunities (7 pages)

The UK and international markets are profiled – and the arguments for developing or expanding your export program are set out. The section on the Kompass Directory coverage indicates how you can reach the vast majority of potential buyers – globally.

¹ These benefits are available to all companies of all sizes in all sectors.

4. Website Optimisation (7 pages)

This chapter covers:

- a. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) - To make sure that your website attracts the maximum number of relevant visitors – from home and abroad.
- b. Improving your website - To maximise the user experience.
- c. eCommerce platforms – How to maximise the sales function of your website.
- d. Website Traffic Analysis and Response - Having attracted visitors to your site, how do you respond to maximise your sales potential?

5. Digital Advertising (9 pages)

There is a wealth of zero to low-cost opportunities to advertise your products and services online to generate sales leads – both at home and abroad. The chapter covers the Industry and Business Directories (especially Kompass) where you should register your company. It then goes on to explain how to effectively use:

- Digital advertising media.
- The D.I.T.'s Exporting is Great Program.
- Digital advertising agencies.

6. Digital Marketing (12 pages)

By using the tools and channels described here, you can make the most of:

- The contacts your sales and marketing teams have collated.
- The contact information generated from your site.

These enable you to proactively, positively contact and interact with current, past and potential clients.

These tools and channels are:

1. Email campaigns.
2. Push messaging.
3. SMS campaigns.
4. Kopiki's marketplace platform.
5. LinkedIn.
6. Newscipping services.
7. Spotler's Automated Marketing Tools (and Services).
8. Kompass Digital Marketing Campaigns.
9. Live Commerce.
10. Product Information Management.
11. Visual Configuration.

Combined, they can become even more powerful capable of generating significant increases in sales and reductions in the sales cycle.

7. Virtual Events (4 pages)

Virtual Events offer most of the features of a physical event and a number of significant improvements (cheaper, easier to attend, more flexibility, better event statistics) – and therefore are destined to become an increasingly important facet of digital marketing.

Expect even established physical events to become hybrid in the future – the virtual event supporting the physical.

8. Increase Sales (7 pages)

Having:

- Identified your sales prospects.
- Optimised your website.
- Launched your digital advertising campaign.
- Launched your digital marketing campaign.

This chapter then sets out what else you can do to increase sales; namely:

- a. Check out digital marketplaces and business networks. (For procurement contracts, you may need particular policies dealing with: child labour, slavery as well as bribery corruption in place.)
- b. Have your responses to sales queries prepared (including “thanks, but no thanks”) – in different languages.
- c. Qualify your sales leads – in particular, take out credit reports if you are taking any sort of financial or commercial risk on them.

9. Competitor Analysis (3 pages)

Your competitors are likely to be both domestic and foreign. There is a wide range of resources available which enable you to analyse the competition (and maybe find some competitors you didn't know you had) and your relative positioning. Once you have carried out your analyses, you can then determine how to optimise your strengths and redress any weaknesses.

10. Find New Suppliers (2 pages)

Recent events have demonstrated the dangers of depending upon single suppliers and/or suppliers from a single country and indeed from the EU. The Supply Chain challenge for the future is how to diversify.

In this chapter we set out how you can search for new suppliers without leaving your desk. Essentially you use the same tools and techniques as set out in In Market Profiles and Opportunities – as well as having the option of publishing your own RFP on Kopiki's Marketplace Platform.

11. Trading with the EU (Brexit) (6 pages)

Although there is a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the UK, this does not mean that there are no barriers to trade or extra measures that you need to take or extra costs that you will have to cover.

This chapter covers these issues and indicates where you can find solutions.

A (small) consolation may be that in preparing for trade with the EU, you will find it much easier to trade with the rest of the world.

12. Logistics, Tariffs and Supply Chain Management (5 pages)

This chapter helps you cover any concerns you may have regarding: transport, tariffs and taxes, international trade documentary formalities, packaging and labelling, shipping insurance and supply chain management platforms. (The previous chapter deals specifically with trade with the EU and the EEA. This chapter covers international trade in general.)

In addition, the chapter indicates online services where you can check whether you are getting the best transport and insurance deals available. The cost of logistics can be a major element in the cost of a product and any savings provide an immediate benefit to the bottom line.

13. Financial Services (5 pages)

One of the biggest limits on expanding SME business is the difficulty and cost of accessing financial services (debt collection, funding, foreign exchange services and insurance). If these are problems that you are facing, it is important to find the right financial support for your business; ***especially how to find the funding you need, fast!***

There is also a section on using [online payment services](#) to support your online sales.

14. Risk Reduction (11 pages)

Whether it is conducted online or offline, commerce entails risk. The key is to manage and reduce these risks. In this chapter we look at how you can identify, reduce and cover these risks.

15. Back Office Support (14 pages)

eCommerce is not just simply closing sales online. There are many services which can simplify, facilitate and reduce the costs of your back office support. Check these out to see whether any of these can benefit your company's bottom line.

16. End Notes (2 pages)

In this chapter, we give an overview of eCommerce developments that we see coming your way. In this edition we highlight the impact that the following could make:

- Artificial Intelligence;
- Blockchain\ Distributed Ledger Technology; and
- Environmental, Social and Governance.

You do not need to make any immediate changes to incorporate these, but you should be aware of them – and expect them to affect you in the not too distant future.

In conclusion, we believe that we make good on the claims made on the Front Page to help you to:

- Increase Sales.
- Find Finance.
- Reduce Risks.
- Save Money.
- Reduce your Carbon Footprint.

.... and provide immediate access to services delivering concrete economic benefits.

Recommendations

The steps you should take will depend very much upon:

1. How much you have already prepared and developed your eCommerce program.
2. The industry sector that you are engaged in.
3. Your ambitions.

Therefore, although there are few specific recommendations, we can make that are relevant to all readers, we would urge you to print out and complete the eCommerce Readiness Assessment. (This will help you assess what you need to do to.)

Following this, get some easy, quick “wins”. In particular (if you haven’t done so already):

- Check out your own online company profile (See [B2BCentral – Check Your Own Company Profile](#)).
- Register for free advert listings – especially with Kompass, see: Relevant Industry and Business Directory Registrations.
- Get a line of trade finance credit from Ebury – also if you have foreign exchange requirements then sign up for Ebury’s Foreign Exchange and International Payment Services.
- Improve your export opportunities by subscribing to The ExhOL Platform.
- See if you can save money by getting competitive quotes; see:
 - Back-Office Support.
 - Find New Suppliers.
 - Foreign Exchange.
 - Insurance.
 - Logistics.

With that, we wish you all the best on your journey through the seas of eCommerce – and we hope that the Guide helps to smooth your way.

(P.S. Given the fast pace of change, don’t forget to [register to receive free updates](#) of “The Essential Guide to B2B eCommerce”).

Background

A few years ago, we launched [The ExportersAlmanac](#) to provide an online information resource to help British SMEs increase their exports. This gave us the opportunity to review tens of thousands of information and service providers from around the world – and to develop close working relationships with the best of them. We used this experience and network of relationships to launch [B2BCentral](#). B2BCentral offers time and resource restricted UK² companies access to practical, best-of-breed, eCommerce services. This in turn has led us to prepare this Guide which bridges the two services.

Before Covid-19, one of the biggest barriers large enterprises faced to successful digital transformation projects was people lacking the right mindset to change. However, companies and employees now know all too well the need for change is real and urgent. Those companies reliant on pushing paper around the organisation or operating off on-premise systems will understand the imperative more than ever to digitise operations.

The evidence of the shift in B2B eCommerce is there to be seen. The global B2B eCommerce market size was valued at US\$ 12.2 trillion in 2019³ - to put this into context it more than 6x the value of the global B2C market. Currently, Asia Pacific is leading the way with a market share of almost 80%, leaving North America and Europe far behind – showing the potential that can be achieved.

The Main Differences between B2B and B2C eCommerce

Essentially, B2B eCommerce transactions are fundamentally more complex than B2C. The vast majority of B2B products cannot be simply sold on an online shopping cart by credit card.

	Prices	Marketing	Logistics	Documentation	Risk	Payments
B2C	Fixed	Easy to showcase	Easy	Easy	Low	Easy & Small Values
B2B	Variable	Complex	Complex	Complex	High	Complex & High Values

Table 1 - Main differences between B2C and B2B eCommerce

To complete a B2B sale, it is often necessary to conduct complex negotiations and accommodate specific requirements to produce a tailored solution. Therefore, the sales process often consists of a number of dis-jointed steps which do not easily lend themselves to being standardised within the framework of a mass online marketplace.

Nonetheless, B2B eCommerce services can bring significant improvements to existing processes – especially for SMEs. Optimised hybrid solutions will bring you the best of both worlds. Therefore, although the focus of the Guide is on eCommerce, it is recognised that eCommerce cannot (and will not) completely replace established “offline” methods and supporting services.

This Guide, its supporting services plus input from the contributors listed in the

² Although eCommerce in theory should be blind to borders, in practice there are so many nation specific resources, it made sense to focus on one country – which naturally enough for us is the UK.

³ [Statista](#).

Acknowledgments represent a distillation of many decades of experience and years of research. We have organised and condensed all of this to allow you to quickly access the information and services you need to adapt and benefit from the developments in B2B eCommerce.

Enjoy and Prosper!⁴

Introduction

As we have explained, this Guide has been prepared for UK⁵ SMEs engaged in B2B⁶ commerce – and in particular for:

- Owners.
- Managing Directors.
- Finance Directors.
- Sales and Marketing Directors\Managers.
- Buying Directors\Managers.
- HR Directors\Managers.

Engaging with your customers online is now the normal way to do business⁷. Your B2B ecommerce strategy for 2021 and beyond should reflect how you plan to adapt in order to benefit from the opportunities open to you.

The recent Coronavirus crisis will only accelerate this necessity.

Each chapter describes specific benefits that eCommerce can bring to your company. Where appropriate, links are indicated to relevant services⁸ and sources of more in depth information.

The goal of this Guide is to provide a complete view of – and access to - the overall, practical opportunities that B2B eCommerce presents⁹.

As we indicated in the Foreword, if you think that we are missing something – or that something can be improved – [please let us know](#) and we'll do our best to reply and cover this in the next edition.

⁴ To misquote Spock.

⁵ Non-UK based companies may also find some of the content of interest.

⁶ Although some services described here will be relevant for B2C and B2G business.

⁷ Business research specialists, Forrester, predict that 55% of B2B purchases will be made via eCommerce platforms by 2020.

⁸ Where there are relevant business cases, we also outline these in the Appendices to further emphasise practical benefits of using online services.

⁹ In Appendix One – Online Reference Resources we provide a list of – and access to – a number of reference resources which you may find helpful.

eCommerce Readiness Assessment

It may be helpful to use the following as a checklist to see if you have optimised your business to fully benefit from the opportunities that eCommerce can bring. Not all services will be appropriate for all businesses in all circumstances. However, we would suggest that you can only benefit by considering all options.

N.B. If you answer “No” to any question, the relevant section in the Guide will help you to address the issue.

Remote Working	Y	N
Have you identified the IT, infrastructure, security and communications systems that you require? If so, are they in place?		
Have you formulated a Telecommuting Policy? If so, have staff been made fully aware of its provisions?		
Have you identified which hardware and software support systems that you will supply your staff? If so, has the hardware been distributed? Are all the software systems in place and are they being used?		
Have you reviewed the legal considerations that will apply to your organisation? If so, have you taken all the steps necessary to update and protect your organisation’s operations?		
Are all your Data Protection and Confidentiality considerations covered?		
Have you identified any areas where your staff will require extra training? If so, have you implemented a training plan?		
Have you reviewed your sales contracts to cover changes in circumstances caused by (a) Covid 19 effects and (b) Brexit?		
Is your insurance company refusing to pay out under your business interruption policy? If so, have you registered your claim under the FCA’s test case?		
Have you commissioned anyone to keep legal changes under constant review, so that you can make any necessary changes as and when necessary?		

Table 2 Remote Working Questionnaire

Market Profiles and Opportunities	Y	N
Have you identified and assessed your UK target clients?		
Are you considering exports: For the first time? As an existing activity but which could be expanded?		
Have you considered how to improve your export potential? (If not, why not?)		
If so, have you identified and assessed which overseas markets: Interest you? Are to be excluded from any consideration?		
Have you identified and assessed your overseas target clients?		

Table 3 Market Profiles and Opportunities Questionnaire

Website Optimisation	Y	N
Have you carried out an SEO review and website audit?		
Are your goods or services exportable?		
If so, have you subscribed to the ExhOL service?		
Have you carried out a website review?		
If you do not use an eCommerce platform, have you reviewed whether now is the time to consider using one?		
If you use an eCommerce platform, are you happy with it?		
Do you monitor the traffic on your site?		
Do you capture site traffic for analysis?		
Do you import data from your visitors into your CRM?		
Do you have a visitor response policy?		
Have you subscribed to Spotler's; Communigator Freemium? Lead Generation? Or PRO? Packages.		

Table 4 Website Optimisation Questionnaire

Digital Advertising	Y	N
Have you registered your company within the Kompass Directory?		
Have you reviewed the other Industry and Business Directories where you can register your company?		
If so, have you decided to register with any of these? If so, have you done so?		
Have you registered with the Government's "Exporting is Great" program?		
Have you decided whether to use: Google? LinkedIn? YouTube?		
If so, have you formulated your advertising plans?		
Have you decided whether you need to commission a Digital Advertising Agency?		
If so: (a) Have you contacted any? (b) Have you commissioned an agency?		

Table 5 Digital Advertising Questionnaire

Digital Marketing	Y	N
Do you have a digital marketing plan?		
Do you conduct email campaigns?		
If so: (a) Have you implemented an anti-spam policy? (b) Are you using a Newsletter Mailing Service?		
Is Push Messaging appropriate for your business?		
If so, have you implemented a Push Messaging program?		
Would an SMS marketing campaign benefit your company?		
If so, have you implemented an SMS program?		
Do you use a Newscipping service? If not, why not?		
Have you considered whether the Kopiki platform is of interest to your company?		
If Kopiki is of interest, have you registered?		
Will you be using LinkedIn?		
Will you be using Spotler's Communigator services?		
Will you be using Kompass' Digital Marketing Campaign services?		

Table 6 Digital Marketing Questionnaire

Virtual Events	Y	N
Will you be organising any virtual events?		
Have you organised your pre-event team?		
Have you organised your post-event team?		
Have you established your success criteria?		
Will you be attending any virtual events?		
Have you organised your post-event program?		

Table 7 Virtual Events Questionnaire

Increase Sales		
Have you considered and reviewed all the digital marketplace opportunities for selling online?		
Have you registered to be considered for procurement opportunities?		
Do you take out credit reports on potential and current buyers?		
If you are exporting and sales to a particular country are growing significantly, do you have plans to expand within that country?		

Table 8 Increase Sales Questionnaire

Competitor Analysis	Y	N
Have you identified and assessed your domestic competitors?		
Have you carried out a country analysis to determine where your overseas competitors are based?		
Have you identified and assessed your overseas competitors?		
Do you use a Newsclipping service to track your competitor's media coverage? And compare this with your own?		
Have you checked the quality of your competitors' websites?		
As a result of the above, do you have plans to deal with any weaknesses you have found that relate to your business?		
As a result of the above, do you have plans to leverage any strengths you have found that relate to your business?		

Table 9 Competitor Analysis Questionnaire

Find New Suppliers	Y	N
Have you identified new potential UK suppliers?		
Are you registered with Kopiki as a buyer? Have you issued any RFPs?		
Have you identified where potential overseas suppliers are likely to be based?		
Have you identified potential overseas suppliers?		

Table 10 Competitor Analysis Questionnaire

Trading with the EU (Brexit)	Y	N
Do you trade with Northern Ireland or are you based in NI?		
If yes, are you aware of all the new trading rules and have adapted your processes accordingly?		
Do you trade with the EU?		
If yes, are you aware of all the new trading rules and have adapted your processes accordingly? Including relevant EORI and VAT registrations?		
Have you all the necessary Certificates of Origin to all you to trade tariff free?		
Do you have the correct HS Codes for all your products?		
Do your goods need any import\export licences?		
Have you advised your clients whether there will be any changes to delivery terms and prices?		
Do you have a .eu domain but are not established in the EU?		
If yes, you will not be able to renew. Do you have an alternative domain you can use?		

Table 11 Trading with the EU (Brexit) Questionnaire

Logistics, Tariffs and Supply Chain Management	Y	N
Do you need the services of a freight forwarder? Would you like a competitive quote?		
Are you aware of the advantages of becoming or using an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)?		
Do you need advice concerning: tariffs, taxes and/or tax reporting relating to your exports?		
Do you need advice concerning: tariffs, taxes and/or tax reporting relating to your exports?		
Do you need assistance with customs clearance?		
Do you need assistance with export\import documentation?		
Do you need assistance with packaging for your export shipments?		
Do you need assistance with packaging or labelling requirements for your exports?		
Could you benefit from a reduction in transport insurance premiums?		
Are you using or considering to use a Supply Chain Management Platform?		

Table 12 Logistics, Tariffs and Supply Chain Management Questionnaire

Financial Services	Y	N
Do you need assistance with debt collection?		
Do you need to access new sources of finance\funding?		
Are you getting the best deal on your FX & International Payment Service requirements?		
Are you getting the best deal on your trade credit insurance?		
Are you getting the best deal on your shipping insurance?		
Are you getting the best deal on your general business insurance?		
Do you need the services of an online payment provider?		

Table 13 Financial Services Questionnaire

Reduce Risk	Y	N
Do you have a Bribery & Corruption policy in place?		
Do you have a list of countries with which you will\will not trade?		
Have you taken out credit references on your main suppliers?		
Have you taken out credit references on your main buyers?		
Do you have a complete cyber security policy?		
Have you covered any foreign exchange exposure you may have?		
Do you sign foreign agreements?		
If so, do you take suitable legal advice?		
Do you confirm identities of companies and individuals with whom you are dealing online?		
Do you have systems to use eSignatures?		
Are you covered for shipping\transport risks?		
Are you covered for trade credit risk?		
Are you covered for general business risks?		
Do you fully protect your Intellectual Property?		
Have you determined your pricing and payment policy for exports?		

Table 14 Reduce Risk Questionnaire

Back-Office Support	Y	N
Could you benefit from support for Accountancy and Tax Advisory Services?		
Could you benefit from support for (a) manual Administration Systems and/or (b) better integration of your various online services?		
Are you benefiting from the best: communication and online collaboration services and platforms?		
Could you benefit from outside support for the management of your company documentation?		
Are you using eInvoice services?		
Do you need to hire personnel? Permanent? Temporary? Freelance?		
Would you benefit from access to low-cost legal templates?		
Would you benefit from online UK legal advice?		
Would you benefit from access to lawyers overseas?		
Do you require the services of translators? Interpreters?		
Do you have access to high quality, speedy and low-cost translation services?		
Could your staff benefit from online courses – on almost any topic?		

Table 15 Back Office Support Questionnaire

eCommerce – Dismantling “Phantom” Barriers

eCommerce is easy. However, there are a number of “phantom” barriers which are holding companies back. These are preventing SMEs from benefiting from the full benefits of eCommerce and from realising their true potential – for both domestic and export sales.

The purpose of this chapter is to remove “the mystery” from B2B eCommerce.

Jargon

In any situation, jargon is a barrier to the non-initiated. However, scratch the surface and you see that jargon is simply hiding basic concepts. The key ones¹⁰ that you can expect to meet in eCommerce are listed in Appendix Thirteen – Glossary. For more complete Glossaries covering Digital, Trade and Trade Finance terms see: [The Exporters Almanac – Glossaries](#).

The Technology is Too Complex

There are indeed a lot of very clever, complex technology solutions out there. However, the thing to bear in mind is that they are simply servicing needs that have always existed – but making them easier, cheaper, faster and better than traditional services. Remember, their whole rationale is to make your life easier. It is true that the presentation of these solutions is often in “nerd-speak” – but you can get over this by asking the standard questions:

- What does it do for my business in practical terms?
- How does it fit in to my existing operations?
- How do I save money?
- How does this improve my offering to my clients?
- How can I increase sales?
- What are the risks?
- How much does it cost?

If you do not get simple answers to these, ask them to provide someone who can – and if they can’t find someone else, move on to another supplier – there are plenty of them around.

We Have to Work Together from the Same Office

Well, the experience of the lockdown is that this is not always the case. Most people have found that they can work just as effectively¹¹ from home (WFH) without all the costs and time spent in travelling to and from the office. Business attitudes and expectations have had a significant shift in favour of balancing working from the office and from home¹². For more information and suggestions how to manage your workforce at distance see: Remote Working.

¹⁰ For access to a more complete Glossary of eCommerce terms see Appendix One – Online Reference Resources – Glossaries.

¹¹ Subject to access to suitable wi-fi bandwidth.

¹² A survey of just under 1,000 firms by the [Institute of Directors](#) (IoD) shows that 74% plan on maintaining the increase in home working.

Chapter Summary:

Jargon: Just hides simple concepts.

The technology is too complex: You don't have to understand the technology – just what it can do for you.

We have to work together from the same office: No, you don't. This has been proven providing benefits to: employees, managers and shareholders.

Remote Working

One of the prime examples of the expansion of eCommerce into our lives has been the explosion of Home Working as a means to contain the Covid 19 pandemic. Thankfully, many of the tools and infrastructure necessary to cope with this explosion were (fortuitously) in place and many companies already had some experience in including Home Working within their operations.

The pandemic has caused an acceleration for digital transformation as companies adopt new ways of offering visibility into cash flow and valuable data. The more internal processes have been digitalised, the easier it is to offer home working.

The benefits of WFH to employees have been clear:

- Less commuting time.
- More flexible working hours.
- Savings on travel and the costs of lunch.

The disadvantages can be:

- Lack of suitable workspace at home.
- Young children at home.
- Loneliness – lack of direct, human engagement.
- Inability to divide “work” from “home” time.

These disadvantages can be mitigated by:

- Finding and using a local office-type workspace (e.g. a library, coffee shop, temporary office hubs etc.) which provides the right working environment and contact with other people; although not necessarily from the same company.
- Developing a hybrid solution where staff come into a central office at regular intervals.

Then, there are the benefits to employers:

- You can reduce the amount of your office space¹³ – and reduce office rent and related costs accordingly.
- You can re-locate your smaller office to a lower cost (more prestigious) location.
- The reduction in the costs that your staff enjoy by not commuting into the office, are the equivalent of a salary increase.
- You can recruit from a much wider pool of talent.

For employers and managers, the prime concern prior to the crisis was the issue of “trust”¹⁴. How to manage and monitor employees was at the heart of wanting staff to work from the office. This issue has been seen to be manageable and sustainable.

¹³ Offices will still be needed – and staff will still need to meet, but not every day. See: the BBC article “[How offices will change after coronavirus](#)” which sets out some thoughts on what changes can be expected.

¹⁴ There are companies that offer software monitoring systems (e.g. [Hubstaff](#) and [Sneek](#)) but their use can be resented by staff: see the [research by the Chartered Institute of personnel and Development](#).

This has resulted in a clear change in attitude: A number of studies suggest that the majority of Britons want to maintain at least some aspects of home working¹⁵ and will consider this an important factor in choosing future employment possibilities.

However, there is a word of warning. If your staff are situated in another country (e.g. The Republic of Ireland working for companies based in Northern Ireland – or a fortunate enough to be able to relocate to an overseas idyll – there can be tax implications that have to be resolved for both the individual and the company. In these cases, we suggest that you contact your accountant for advice or check out the [Avalara Brexit Hub](#).

Therefore, although there will undoubtedly be some return to the office, Home Working for at least some of the working population for some of the time is destined to remain.

This Chapter therefore deals with some of the practical and legal aspects that have been raised in managing a workforce that will continue to work remotely.

Implementing a Telecommuting Policy

Allowing staff to work remotely without a policy in place can lead to misunderstanding on what is expected from them, which in turn generates disconnect and confusion on both sides. Here are some general guidelines that can help you establish some formal ground rules:

Staff Eligibility

Decide which roles can be performed successfully away from the office. You will find that some positions will be more suited to telecommuting than others. Define when an employee becomes eligible for telecommuting privileges. This might be the moment they sign their employment contract, at the end of their probation period, or after a successful performance review that confirms that they have established themselves as trustworthy – every employer will have different preferences.

Performance

Decide in advance how a remote employee's performance will be assessed. If it makes sense for the position, you should set some productivity goals.

Employee Availability

Communication is the key to successful remote working. Therefore, it is very important to set expectations about the availability and responsiveness of telecommuters from the start. Do your team members need to be available during traditional office hours, or are they free to schedule their workday however they want so long as their work is done? Do you expect everybody to answer emails and messages straight away, or are you happy for them to do it in their own time? Will remote meetings be scheduled in advance, or should your employees be available for unscheduled calls? Whatever your choices, make sure to communicate them in advance so the rest of the team can plan their workdays accordingly.

¹⁵ e.g. a study by [Skillcast](#) has revealed that 68% of respondents want to continue working from home even when the lockdown laws have been abolished. Furthermore, 70% of employees across all company sizes, regions, industry sectors ages and genders said that they can be as productive WFH as in the office.

Technology, Equipment & Security

When you set up a remote working arrangement, your remote employees need to be able to do their work away from the office without incurring any expense, aside (perhaps) from sourcing good internet connectivity and a suitable workspace. This means that you need to provide (and pay for) all the equipment they need. It is also a good idea to educate them on basic cybersecurity best practices, especially if they are planning on working from a public space, and to set rules on what company equipment should not be used for.

Protecting Confidentiality

Telecommuters need to keep in mind some basic guidelines to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information. For example, confidential conversations with customers and colleagues cannot be conducted from a place where they can be overheard.

Suspension of Privileges

Working from Home should be considered as a “privilege”. Therefore, it is very important to communicate what the consequences are for breaking these ground rules, according to the severity of the infraction. Minor infractions like an occasional dip in productivity could be addressed by more frequent performance assessments with the line manager, while major ones such as continuous, unjustified lack of responsiveness could result in the suspension of all remote working privileges.

Security

The following are some points you need to consider when designing your remote working strategy.

Network Security: VPN vs. Remote Desk Access

One of the decisions that has to be taken when having a remote workforce is whether to use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) or a Remote Desk Access System.

The fundamental difference between the two is:

1. With a VPN, each laptop or PC is connected to the other and users work off their own device (but are able to transfer files to and from their devices to others on the network).
2. A Remote Access System (RAS) is where users connect to a central server and all processing and data management are managed on that server, no file exchanges can take place unless specifically authorised.

Further advantages of an RAS are that files are not transferred between the user's and the office's devices. Therefore:

1. You do not lose control over your files.
2. The user only sees an image of the file as it is being managed on the server or PC in the office. This makes using very large files much easier and avoids bandwidth bottleneck problems.

See [The Exporters Almanac Remote Monitoring & Management Systems](#).

Endpoint Security

When storing company data on personal devices, it is vital to use a strong and reputable anti-virus program for threat detection, and schedule frequent scans to remain virus-free. Furthermore, as mentioned above, using an RAS means that your data is kept within your company network and you maintain the benefits from the security measures your organisation already has in place.

See: [The ExportersAlmanac Anti-Virus & Malware Services](#).

Physical Security

If you are working in a public space, line of sight should be considered. Who can see your screen from the seat you've chosen? If you are working on or with confidential things, find a seat with limited access to your screen. Make sure you take all devices with you when you use the bathroom and when you get up for another coffee, too. Do not leave any company hardware in your car and make sure you always lock doors. Keep work data on work devices.

Download a password manager so that you and your staff can use longer, more secure passwords without needing to remember them. Do use multi-factor authentication; two or more pieces of evidence to grant access to a computer. Most phones and laptops have built-in encryption options - ensuring that all your devices have this enabled can prevent any data being leaked or access should the device be lost or stolen.

See: [The ExportersAlmanac Password Managers](#).

Essential Tools

You must ensure that you have the right IT, infrastructure, security and communications systems in place – not only in the office but also in the home environments of your staff.

Hardware

You should provide your staff with computers and mobile phones which **you** can configure. You can only protect your network, if you control precisely which devices can access your network; which means keeping work devices completely separate from those being used for personal use.

Team Communication

There are a lot of other ways to promote collaboration and communication within your team outside of remote meetings. Team communication tools enable the sharing of editable documents to make content creation seamless. If you want to talk with team members without using audio-visual features, many apps provide a chat to exchange feedback in real time.

See: [The ExportersAlmanac Team Collaboration Platforms](#).

Project Management

There are lots of different project management software tools that allow for planning and organization online. Collaborate using file sharing, coordinate individual tasks and deadlines with a visual board, and get a complete overview of what everyone is working on.

See: [The ExportersAlmanac Project Management Software](#).

Dealing with Zoom Fatigue

Notwithstanding the above, the overuse of video conferencing over the past year has resulted in “Zoom Fatigue”. Zoom drains your energy¹⁶, because it flattens all of your social interactions – personal or professional – into the same, unnatural grid of disembodied faces. The four chief factors include (1) constant, close-up, interrogation-like eye contact from the other participants that does not go away, even if you are not the one speaking; (2) constantly looking at your own face, (3) having to sit still for an extended period; and (4) not being able to easily and accurately pick up on cues like body language.

The team at Stanford suggest practical tips that can help, like making “audio only” meetings the default for your organisation, which can help eliminate the main Zoom fatigue triggers outlined in the study. They also suggest using an external webcam and keyboard to allow greater flexibility in your seating arrangement; meaning you won’t be staring mugshot-style at the screen for the entire call.

It should also be noted that Zoom and its competitors will roll out new features that minimise the ways the apps drain our energy. For example, features that blurs your background – possibly eliminating the stress of having colleagues see your messy kitchen or judge your personal items. Some providers are working on tools that will record meetings so people can watch them asynchronously.

You should also take into account that there are four main ways of communicating and balance their usage accordingly:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Face-to-Face | Makes it easier for participants to perceive the subtleties of interaction, such as people's movements and the inflection of their voices |
| 2. Video | The next best thing but not when used nine-to-five, or for every meeting. |
| 3. Phone Calls (audio only) | Perfectly acceptable alternative to video and less draining than video sessions. |
| 4. Text (email, chat and SMS) | Best used when not requiring an immediate, interactive response. |

¹⁶ A new study from Stanford University in California, published last month in the [Journal Technology, Mind and Behaviour](#).

Legal Considerations

This section has been very kindly contributed by [LawBite](#). If you have any questions regarding the points raised here, please contact [LawBite](#) directly.

LawBite can provide the advice you need to control legal risks, to help you manage your employment, supply and sales relationships. They can help you with your changing business accommodation needs, if not immediately, then whenever they come up for renewal.

LawBite has the experience and legal professionals necessary to ensure that remote working is a success, not an unnecessary trial.

Covid- 19 - working from home in 2020 and beyond

With the new era of working from home, there are many questions currently being asked by business owners and employees alike. Most notably they want to know what their legal rights are. The common questions asked are:

- what are the implications for employers? (Liabilities, HR responsibilities, can they monitor work levels? etc.)
- what are the implications for employees?
- what needs to be done: (a) in the workplace (b) with relation to suppliers and clients - for the physical transfer of goods?

Also, we will be sharing information on understanding the EU's Digital Services Act and how this will apply to anyone offering services into the EU to become a global standard.

Working Remotely – Surveillance

For those employers who are considering surveillance as an approach, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), sets out [good practice](#) when employers are considering implementing a monitoring regime. The key is to abide by the data 'holy trinity' of transparency, proportionality, and legality, employers should:

- Complete a data protection impact assessment setting out the purposes of the monitoring and justification for it, the adverse impact on data subjects, and any mitigation.
- Inform employees of the monitoring that is being undertaken and the reasons why.
- Ensure that there is a legal basis for processing and that consent is elicited where necessary and do not process special category personal information without a reasonable justification.
- Limit the number of people who have access to the software and ensure they are properly trained in confidentiality and data security.
- Avoid using covert monitoring except in the most extreme circumstances (e.g. where criminal activity or similar is suspected).

At the end of the day, an employer must consider the longer term effects of essentially telling your employees they're being monitored:

- Will the initial impact be motivational; or the very opposite?

- Knowing that they are being monitored, will employees become increasingly cautious and lose confidence in their own abilities or in the faith their line managers have in them?
- Data protection law requires consent before meetings (of any number of people) can be recorded. If phone and video conference calls are routinely recorded as part of employee monitoring will any employee feel enabled to object to the recording of their voice and appearance and withdraw from a meeting?
- And once lockdown ends, does your employer continue to monitor you when working remotely?
- What are the long term effects of such policies on the motivation of employees and any relationship of trust which might have previously existed between a business and its staff?

Working Remotely – The Legal Element

What are the effects if any/all of this has on each business's legal arrangements?

Are your terms of sale written for business to business sales? Do they envisage direct selling? Do they work for distance selling, i.e.:

- Do they cover consumer rights if it becomes necessary?
- What is your returns policy? Does this comply with the CMA 2015?
- What do these say about personal data?
- Does working on a distributed basis affect technological or procedural data controls?

Other considerations:

- Do your agreements with resellers limit your ability to sell direct to end users who would otherwise be their customers?
- Do your software licences permit the use of software over VPN's?
- Do your employment contracts permit surveillance to take place?
- Has your business conducted the data protection impact assessments necessary to implement the changes required and remain compliant with the GDPR?
- Do your office space leases (or commercial agreements) contain Force Majeure clauses which could help you control risk and costs, or might they end up costing you?
- How reliable is your business interruption insurance?

What are the legal implications for employers?

There are several implications for employers when their employees start to work from home, having spent their previous working time in the office/employer's premises. Some of these implications and questions asked are:

Do I have to let my employees work from home?

Official government guidance at the time of this note is that office workers who can work "effectively" from home should do so. Public sector employees working on essential

services, for example education settings, should go to work where necessary, and anyone else who cannot work from home should go to their place of work.

What does the employment contract say for place of work?

The first thing to look at is the employee's contract of employment/terms and conditions. Does this allow you, as the employer, to ask the employee to work from home?

What happens if the contract is silent on working from home?

You should seek to amend the contract of employment to cover working from home, with the employee's consent. You should also make sure that your policies and procedures cover homeworking and amend them if they do not. Policies and procedures (usually in a document such as a Staff Handbook) are normally expressed to be non-contractual. If that is the case for you then you can usually alter those terms without the employee's consent as long as the terms haven't become contractual (by way of an implied term) as a result of custom and practice.

What are the issues I need to consider?

The main things to cover in the employment contract when an employee works from home during the coronavirus pandemic are:

1. equipment and insurance;
2. health and safety issues;
3. data protection and confidentiality;
4. expenses.

Equipment and Insurance

Think about what equipment an employee is going to need if working from home to carry out their role (in a safe way). That might be as simple as a mobile telephone, or they might need a laptop/computer; printer/copier etc. Think too whether they might need any company stationery to carry out their role, such as letter headed paper; pens; envelopes and stamps etc. If you do provide any equipment then you should make sure that the contract provides that you have control over the employee's use of the equipment; that either you or they are responsible for insuring it and claims against them by a third party; that it is used for business purposes only and no one else is allowed to use it.

Health and Safety

During the coronavirus pandemic, you will be unlikely to require that employees allow you to enter their home in order to inspect your equipment, or to carry out the normal health and safety checks that you might normally do. However, guidance from ACAS in their [Working from home advice](#) suggests that you should be checking that the employee feels they can carry out the work at home safely; that they are aware of the normal breaks that they should be taking under the Working Time Regulations 1998, and have a duty to take them; that they do not feel alone when working from home (with managers/other colleagues having regular contact with them whether that is by video meetings or telephone or otherwise) and that you make reasonable adjustments for those employees who have a disability.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Make sure the employee is responsible for ensuring your confidential information is secure (such as installing encryption software and passwords on the employee's laptop and making sure that paper files are locked away when not in use or are being kept confidential and away from the sight of others when they are being used), and that they are complying with your policies such as Data Protection Policy and IT and communications policy. If any training is needed so that they comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, make sure they have it.

Expenses

Where an employee is working from home, they may have to report this and may be able to claim tax relief, and so you should guide them to helpful sites and information such as the <https://www.gov.uk/> website (for example, 'claim tax relief for your job expenses').

What other issues should I be thinking about?

You should also consider issues such as the following:

- The training you give to managers who might never have had to manage their staff whilst working remotely. There are plenty of free courses offering this, and you could start with the ACAS website – book training on how to manage homeworkers;
- Are your employees allowed to work from home or does their mortgage provided or landlord prevent it in some way;
- If working from home is the norm for employees, do you have a right to enter their home to inspect equipment etc;
- If your employee has to look after their children (perhaps because of a further lockdown or period of self-isolation), how can you manage things so that the employee is able to do both. Be mindful of how stressful it will be for the employee, and talk with them so that you can have a flexible way of working (for example working different hours when the children are in bed/napping; different or less working days; reducing the scope of their work and being flexible about deadlines if that is possible);
- Make sure that your employees know what is expected of them now that they are working from home, including: when they will be available to work; how they will keep in touch; ensure their work-life balance is managed properly; how you will be measuring their performance (if that differs) and they know who they can talk to if they need to or if their circumstances change;
- Whether your IT systems are able to cope with the sudden change to working from home and the IT support your employees might need – do you need to amend your IT support and how do you implement those changes;
- What monitoring can you do and how do you do that now that you cannot see the employee;
- If you have employees who are off on maternity/sick/parental etc leave, make sure you keep them in the loop and receive the necessary permissions to alter their employment contracts if necessary, for when they return to work (at home).

What are the implications for employees?

The implications for employees who have been asked to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic are:

➤ Do I have to work from home?

For some employees there might be reasons why working from home is impossible, and employees should discuss this with their employer. Generally speaking, if you can carry out your job from home then you can probably be required to work from home, or agree to take a period of unpaid leave (or maybe SSP if you are sick).

➤ My contract doesn't say anything about working from home.

If that is the case, then you should agree with your employer what is expected of you when working from home, including the following:

- Will my hours and days of work be the same or do I need to amend these for some reason (i.e. childcare; others in the same household are working from home);
- How will you keep in touch with your managers/colleagues;
- What equipment do you need to carry out your role; is the employer supplying that and who will insure it;
- What are the health and safety risks for you working from home and is your employer complying with them (for example, ensuring you are having rest breaks under the [Working Time Regulations 1998](#), and using equipment safely);
- Can you work from home or does your mortgage or landlord prevent this, and what can you do if that is the case;
- If you have a disability under the Equality Act 2010, what additional reasonable adjustments could be made to assist you with working from home;
- How will you keep the employer's confidential information confidential and away from others in the household, and what does the Data Protection Policy say about you working from home and how do you comply with it;
- How will your performance be measured now, particularly if you normally receive a performance related bonus or commission;
- Does the employer have a right to enter your home to inspect its equipment and, if so, are they complying with the current rules and regulations surrounding face coverings and social distancing;
- Who do you turn to if you are feeling stressed, depressed or are suffering with anxiety; and what happens if the situation changes for you at home;
- How will you manage work breaks and the work/life balance whilst working from home;

- If there is a further period of lockdown or you have to self-isolate, what do you do and how might it affect your pay;
- What expenses can you claim; how and can you claim tax relief (see <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees>).

Above all, the best thing for you to do is to talk frankly with your employer, explain your concerns and work with them – this is a new situation for them as well.

Supply of Goods and Services

The impact of the covid pandemic has affected the supply of goods and services both in the UK and overseas.

As workforces have been reduced due to illness and requirements to isolate, businesses have found it more difficult to source certain parts and key ingredients, to transport goods produced and, in some circumstances, to pay for goods once received.

From a legal perspective this has meant that parties have been put in positions where they are in breach of contract where it was not previously envisaged. At times, this has resulted in disputes or termination of contracts but at others the parties have worked together to try and find a solution to the new situation they have found themselves in.

Whether you are buying or selling goods or services it would be wise to review your contract terms in particular:

- what is covered by force majeure and what are the procedural requirements for the clause to be brought into play;
- Obligations under the contract, e.g. minimum order requirements – can you/the other party keep complying?
- Limitation of liability in the event of a breach and rights to terminate.

As well as considering the contract terms, it is worthwhile keeping good communications with the other contract party to avoid any surprises and to try and manage any issues pragmatically. Where any variations to contracts are agreed they should be recorded in writing and in accordance with any contractual requirements for changes.

Finally, businesses should be mindful of the increased risk of fraud – IT systems are being used remotely, more online banking is being carried out and new suppliers are often needed in short timescales which bogus suppliers are taking advantage of. As early as April this year, a multi-million pound fraud involving bogus suppliers of face masks was reported by Interpol and sadly similar cases continue to be seen.

Business Interruption Insurance

Many businesses carry business interruption insurance and have tried to claim under their policies due to the impact of the covid pandemic. Insurers in the UK have refused on the grounds that there has been no physical damage to property as a result of the covid outbreak or because business closures have resulted from national lockdown measures rather than an outbreak of the virus at or near the insured's premises.

The stance of insurers is being challenged in a test case brought by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) on a range of sample wording used by insurers who have agreed to

participate in the case. The High Court found in favour of the FCA on the majority of issues but the ruling is likely to be appealed. Both businesses and insurers are eagerly awaiting the outcome with a potential flood of claims if the High Court ruling is upheld.

Any business that believes it may have a claim should notify its insurers (if it hasn't done so already) to preserve the chances of bringing a claim.

While there is uncertainty about policies in place at the time the pandemic struck, it is likely that insurance policies will have specific exclusions in relation to issues arising from pandemics going forward. Businesses need to be mindful of this when negotiating and entering into contracts and try to limit their exposure in different ways.

The road not yet travelled (EU Digital Services Act)

The legal framework for digital services in Europe has been unchanged since the adoption of the [e-Commerce Directive](#) in the year 2000. What this means is that services which support e-commerce across the EU are operating to a regulatory framework which preceded the birth of smartphones. Smartphones and tablets, in particular since 2007 and the launch of the first iPhone have grown the universe for e-commerce exponentially. – Expect changes to come from both the EU Commission and the UK Government.

Chapter Summary:

Not all positions can be covered remotely, however, there are clear benefits to both employees and employers in accommodating remote working, where possible.

Nonetheless, there are a series of considerations that should be covered to ensure that any remote working solution is optimum for all concerned; namely:

- Implement a Telecommuting Policy
- You will need an appropriate review of security when designing your remote working strategy.
- There essential tools (hardware and software) that you should provide your staff to work safely and effectively away from the office.
- An excess use of video conferencing will result in Zoom Fatigue. Do consider the suggestions as to how this can be reduced to a minimum.
- Do your staff need extra training in managing staff remotely?

Then there are the legal considerations:

- If you are thinking of implementing a staff monitoring regime, you should review the code of practice set out by the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).
- Do you need to review your terms of sale?
- Are there any licensing issues relating to the use of software over VPNs?
- Have you carried out a data protection impact assessment?
- Should your employment contract be amended to accommodate working from home?
- Do your insurance policies cover all aspects of your employees working from home?
- Are there any Health & Safety issues which you need to address with members of staff working from home?
- You should nominate someone to be responsible in your organisation for monitoring changes to the legal environment governing eCommerce and remote working.

Market Profiles and Opportunities

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overall view of the size of the following markets and the level to which the Kompass Directory covers these markets:

1. The UK Market.
2. International Markets (and why you should consider exporting).

The following chapters then cover:

- Website Optimisation:** How you can optimise your website to make it work for you.
- Digital Advertising:** How you can advertise to those companies searching for your products and services.
- Digital Marketing:** How you can proactively reach out to companies who you believe should be interested in your products and services.
- Increase Sales:** Sets out online sales opportunities and builds on the previous four chapters to explain how you can increase your sales.

The UK Market

Selling to large companies (defined loosely as those employing over 250 employees) can represent a long, arduous, complex and expensive process – although once you have “broken into”, can represent significant contracts.

Micro companies (defined as those with less than 10 employees) can be characterised as expensive to reach and then service for relatively small returns.

SMEs (defined as those with between 10 and 250 employees) can still be difficult to reach but represent a rich seam of potential sales – especially as they can make decisions much quicker than large companies and their decision making processes are certainly much more transparent.

In 2020 the breakdown¹⁷ according to size of UK companies was as follows:

Size by Number Employees	No. 000s	Kompass 000s	% Coverage
2-9 employees	596	415	70%
10-19 employee	191	98	51%
20-49 employees	119	71	60%
50-99 employees	38	24	63%
100 – 249 employees	20	15	75%
250+ employees	8.5	7.6	89%
Total	973	631	

Table 16- Breakdown of UK Companies by number of employees and Kompass Coverage

¹⁷ House of Commons Library – [Briefing Paper 06152, 22 January, 2021](#) Figures shown are rounded for illustrative purposes.

UK Micro & SMEs

Micro and SMEs are undoubtedly the backbone of the British economy representing¹⁸:

- 99.3% of total businesses.
- 60% of employment.
- 50% of private sector turnover.

Businesses by Industry Sector in the UK

The previous table gives some absolute figures for the total numbers of companies in the UK. The next stage in having a view of the economy is to understand the numbers of private sector companies in the main industry sectors as set out in the following table:

Sector	Number of businesses (000s)	Employment ¹⁹	Turnover ²⁰
Agriculture, mining and utilities	194	3%	6%
Manufacturing	276	10%	15%
Construction	1,037	8%	9%
Total Services	4,360	79%	71%
Of which:			
Retail	547	18%	34%
Transportation	360	6%	5%
Accommodation and food	202	9%	3%
ICT	370	5%	7%
Financial and Insurance	91	4%	-
Real estate activities	113	2%	2%
Professional and scientific	868	10%	9%
Administrative and support service	512	11%	7%
Education	307	2%	1%
Health and social work	361	7%	2%
Arts and recreation	290	3%	2%
Other service activities	340	3%	1%
Total	5,868		

Table 17 - UK Industry Sector Breakdown – in 2019²¹

How Digitalised is the UK market?

The degree of digitalisation shows how open the UK market is to eCommerce initiatives and the scope for the provision of digitalisation services.

As a well-developed eCommerce market, the UK has experienced almost twenty years' development of eCommerce; domestically and worldwide²². Indeed, eCommerce is more strongly established in the UK than in most other European countries and is now likely to experience a significant boost as companies adapt to the "new normal"²³.

¹⁸ [The Federation of Small Business](#).

¹⁹ % of UK working population.

²⁰ % of UK turnover

²¹ [BIS](#): Business Population Estimates Notes: Data relates to the start of 2019 – and includes companies with 1 or less employees.

²² Most market analyses show the UK as the biggest eCommerce market in Europe – and usually one of the top 5 economies in the world - for both B2C and B2B business.

²³ In addition, the experience of Millennials in the B2C market is now impacting expectations in the B2B sector.

The industry sectors which show the greatest level of “digitalisation” of turnover are:

Industry Sector	% share of the sector
Transport and Storage	39%
Manufacturing	32%
Wholesale	20.2%
Information and communication sector	19.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	14.5%
Retail	14.3%
Construction	4.1%

Table 18 - Digitalisation - % Share of UK Industry Sector²⁴

These figures are open to all sorts of questions and interpretations. However, they are a reasonable indication as to which industry sectors are the most advanced in the adoption of eCommerce – and also indicate just how much is still to be achieved²⁵!

International Markets

According to the [World Bank](#), international trade was 62.27% of world GDP in 2019; according to [MacroTrends](#) this was 64.29% for the UK.

By ear 2019²⁶, B2B eCommerce sales reached \$12.2 trillion²⁷. More than 6x that of the global B2C market.

Global Numbers of SMEs

If you are targeting SMEs with 10-250 employees, then in the European Union alone there are an estimated 1.47 million enterprises small firms with between 10 and 49 employees plus approximately 236 thousand were medium-sized firms that had 50 to 249 employers. Globally, according to the World Bank, there are approximately 35-45 million formal non-agricultural SMEs globally (World Bank).

Why you should consider exporting

➤ Risk Reduction

In addition to generating extra sales, as already pointed out, exports reduce your business risk – if one market goes down there is the good chance that your other markets will at least remain stable if not actually increase.

➤ Balancing Production Schedules

If your domestic product is seasonal, you can sell it to countries with coinciding seasons or, better yet, whose seasons start when yours ends.

If you have idle capacity for any reason, this can be re-directed to supporting your exports.

²⁴ Mintel: [UK B2B E-Commerce Market Report](#).

²⁵ Especially when you consider that very large companies have been developing their eCommerce capabilities much faster and wider than SMEs.

²⁶ Analyst firm [Frost & Sullivan](#).

²⁷ [Statista](#).

➤ **Improving Economies of Scale**

With increased export production and sales, you can achieve economies of scale and spread costs over a larger volume of revenue. You reduce average unit costs and increase overall profitability and competitiveness.

➤ **Extending Product Life Cycles**

Exports extend product life cycles. As technology advances and tastes change, many products become obsolete or lose their appeal, particularly in highly industrialised markets. But these products may still be valued elsewhere. Over half the world's economies are less developed. They may not need or can't afford your latest model. They may even prefer less costly, earlier versions or used or reconditioned products. Pursue exports in markets that still value goods no longer in demand in the domestic market.

➤ **Gain New Knowledge and Experience.**

Going international can yield valuable ideas and information about new technologies, new marketing techniques and foreign competitors. The gains can help a company's domestic as well as foreign businesses.

Choose your Target Countries

Even though it is possible to use techniques and services described in this Guide to sell globally without focusing on any specific country:

1. There may be countries which you wish to exclude from any export considerations.
2. It can be desirable to target specific countries where you believe you have particular opportunities with tailored messages.
3. You may notice a number of visitors from a specific country and want to further research the opportunities in that country.
4. Should you be contacted by a sale's lead from a particular country, you may need to check the situation regarding tariffs²⁸ and sanctions.

In this section of the chapter, we describe the information that is available that help you quickly and easily deal with these issues.

(If you are just interested in browsing through country profiles to see if there are any which could interest you, then check out the [ExportersAlmanac - Country Profiles.](#))

Identifying potential overseas markets

The following services from the International Trade Centre (ITC)²⁹ may help you identify those countries which offer the greatest potential for your company's products and services:

- ITCs [Trade Map](#) – Discover which countries are importing products similar to your company's.

²⁸ **N.B.** Although exporters do not directly pay import tariffs, Importers will add them to your price in their calculations – are you still price competitive?

²⁹ The International Trade Centre is owned by the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation – and uses the data available to these 2 organisations to provide the information services indicated here.

- ITC's [Trade Competitiveness Map](#) - How do products from the UK rank against overseas competition?
- ITC's [Export Potential Map](#) - Are your products considered to have greater export potential?

Excluding countries from consideration

You may also exclude countries from consideration due to:

- Tariffs and/or Non-tariff barriers.
- Sanctions and blacklists.
- Transport costs making your products non-price competitive.

Tariffs and Non-Tariff barriers

These can be checked at:

1. The UK Government's [Trade Tariff Look Up](#) service allows you to:
 - Fill in declarations and other paperwork.
 - Check if there's duty or VAT to pay.
 - Find out about duty reliefs.
2. ITC International Information Services:
 - **ITC's [Market Access Map](#)** - Review barriers to trade with the countries you are considering.
 - **ITC's [Lega Carta](#)** - Offers a global picture of the multilateral rules that may impact your products when exported to particular countries.
 - **ITC's [Rules of Origin Facilitator](#)** - A global resource on tariffs, trade agreements and rules of origin designed with SMEs in mind. The tool enables you in a few clicks to find out import duties in foreign markets applicable to your product, available duty savings, detailed rules of origin, and certification procedures.

Sanctions and blacklists

Referring to the UK Government's [Sanctions List](#) will help you ensure that none of your targets (countries and companies) are subject to UK sanctions.

Transport costs

There are online resources for calculating transport costs – see [The Exporters Almanac - Freight Forwarders](#) for a list of British freight forwarders as well as a number of price comparison services.

Alternatively, you may like to check out [Kompass' personalised country Market Ranking Reports](#) which cover more than 150 countries. There are three types of Market Ranking Report available, depending on the number of markets to be analysed: 5, 10 or 20 countries. Each report takes 7 – 15 days to produce and this process follows four straightforward steps:

1. **Customer Request** - Company profile, product or service and export needs are defined.
2. **Data Collection** – From up-to-date, global and nationally recognised industry specific data sources.
3. **Strategic Analysis** – By expert data teams using our powerful export specialised tools.
4. **Customised Reports** – Easy-to-read pdf and ppt format ranking export markets with the most potential.

Your Export Plan

By following the steps set out in this Guide, you can develop your export plan:

1. As an extension to your domestic digital advertising and marketing campaigns.
2. At a far lower cost than you may have imagined.
3. That has a wider, effective market reach than you may have considered possible.
4. That will result in positive leads\sales in a relatively short time.

External Assistance

If you feel that you need assistance with formulating your export plan, there a number of organisations which can provide you with extra support in the UK and abroad see: [ExportersAlmanac – Support for British Exporters.](#))

Kompass Directory Coverage

OK – so there are a lot of potential buyers out there. Who are they and how can I reach them cost-effectively?

You can access the vast majority of potential buyers through the Kompass Directory:

Enterprise Type	Employees	UK	Europe	Global
Micro	2-9 Employees	415,448	14,925,204	26,370,762
Small	10-49 Employees	169,218	1,888,254	4,305,278
Medium	50-249 Employees	39,170	470,445	1,064,051
Large	250+ Employees	7,639	461.251	645,920
	Totals	631,475	17,745,154	32,517,712

Table 19 - Kompass Directory Breakdown by Enterprise Type and Area³⁰

For further breakdowns by Industry Sector and Country Coverage see: Appendix Two – Kompass Directory Coverage by Industry Sector and .

See the videos:

- [Are you thinking of buying business data?](#)
- [Find new prospects with Kompass EasyBusiness.](#)
- [What's new on Kompass EasyBusiness?](#)

³⁰ The numbers in Kompass are in constant flux – these numbers are valid as at 26th March, 2021 and are subject to change.

Accessing and Using the Kompass Directory

Search the Kompass directory³¹ for companies that match your target markets (using either the Free Web Search - or EasyList - or the Kompass EasyBusiness database – See: Appendix Three – Accessing the Kompass Directory).

Then use the Kompass contact information you have collated to populate your sales and marketing campaign (there are tools you can use to automate the importing of data into your CRM – see: [CRM apps and connectors](#)).

Chapter Summary:

The UK Market: Although one of the most developed, digitalised markets, the UK still has significant potential to develop further – with over 250,000 SMEs to target.

International Markets: In the EU alone, there are over 1.7 million SMEs to target (plus 35-45 million globally). The global B2B eCommerce market is estimated to have reached \$12.2 trillion during 2019 – 6x the value of B2C eCommerce.

The Advantages of Exporting: Balance production schedules. Improved economies of scale. Extended product life cycles. Gain new knowledge and experience. Reduce risk. (What’s not to like?)

Access the Kompass Directory: The Kompass Directory contains the commercial profile and contact details of the vast majority of your prospects. (More than 250,000 SMEs in the UK alone and over 33 million companies worldwide.)

These extremely large markets can be accessed using the tools and techniques set out in this Guide.

³¹ If you haven’t done so already, you should also [register](#) your company’s profile with Kompass – this will increase your advertising “reach” to other UK (and international companies).

Website Optimisation

Website Optimisation consists of four main activities:

- a. **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)** – to make sure that your website attracts the maximum number of relevant visitors – from home and abroad.
- b. **Improving your website** - to maximise the user experience.
- c. **Assessing your eCommerce platform requirements** – to maximise the sales support function of your website.
- d. **Website Traffic Analysis and Response** - Having attracted visitors to your site, how do you respond to maximise your sales potential?

Once you have website optimisation under control, you can then move on to developing and implementing your Digital Marketing strategy.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

At its simplest, this means ensuring that your website is found when someone searches on Google (or other search engines such as Bing, Yahoo etc.) for your company, your services or products.

This is a simple two-step process:

1. Ensure that the structure of your website follows the guidelines set out by the search engines.
2. Decide on the Key Words that best fit your company's services and products. These should be terms and words that companies will most likely use when looking for suppliers of services and products.

We do not make any specific recommendation as to which services you should use to improve your SEO, but simply suggest:

1. You review tools available to assist your SEO activities. See: The ExportersAlmanac's:
 - [Commercial Online Support Tools](#)
 - [Free Online Support Tools & Guides](#)
 - [Social Media](#) – Lists the major English Language social media channels.
 - [Website Auditing & Monitoring.](#)
2. You should speak to your webmaster to review your site on a regular basis to see what can be improved.
3. You can improve your chances of being the first to appear in searches by key word by paying the relevant search engine for digital advertising.

N.B. It is essential to not only drive targeted traffic with leads to your website but then to also feed these leads into your Digital Marketing database.

SEO for Exports

There is another major consideration when deciding on your SEO programme:

- Are you interested only in the UK market?
- Or are you interested in exporting?

If you are interested in exporting, then consider that 90% of Europeans visit websites in their own language, even if they speak some English, and 75% of people prefer to buy in their own language. In fact, 75 to 85% of people “occasionally” or “never” use another language to search for or buy products.

To address this, we recommend that you consider using ExhOL’s services. ExhOL is a global SEO platform that localises content for international markets and so promotes your products or services across the world. ExhOL uses the latest hybrid translation techniques to make your content available online via micro-sites in 20 languages - covering 110 countries and 84% of world trade.

The ExhOL platform is the fruit of Armagard’s experience of growing export sales by 3,000% in just eight years – winning the company the national award of The Chamber of Commerce for Exporter of the Year and the Queen’s Award for Enterprise in International Trade. (See: Appendix Five – ExhOL Case Study: How Armagard Increased Export Sales from 6% to 74%).

The ExhOL Platform

ExhOL provides B2B companies with a fast track route into international markets. It does it in a way that’s cost-effective, low risk and easy to use:

- ExhOL provides you with an unlimited number of virtual exhibition pages, which promote your products in 20 languages. Your pages appear highly in international search results, so they’re easily found by a global customer base of B2B buyers, resellers and distributors.
- These microsites sit on the ExhOL platform with links back to your branded site.
- The platform routinely achieves a 68% first-page ranking rate for its exhibitors’ pages, so you can be confident of increasing the global visibility of your brand and boosting international sales leads.
- Your microsites have additional SEO benefits for your branded sites, too. Backlinks from your ExhOL pages can help the ranking of your own site. Users of the platform consistently see a jump in traffic to their branded sites due to prospects finding them for the first time on ExhOL.
- Your microsite pages convert prospects into leads by encouraging them to contact you for more information or a quote. These sales enquiries go directly to your email inbox.
- You can also write and translate articles on the platform, allowing you to engage visitors with longer content that positions your brand as an industry expert.

Armagard’s success provides a blueprint for others to follow, and the company’s vision for ExhOL is that it will support UK SMEs to double their exports.

For further details about ExhOL’s services and how you can use the platform, See: [B2BCentral - Website Optimisation](#).

For more details on how the ExhOL service provides website analytics see below.

Improving your Website

The more attractive, interesting and useful your website, the more likely you are to keep the interest of your visitors and convert and then keep them as clients. Therefore, you should review and consider:

- Text Content - Only you can decide what content you should be publishing.
- The Design³².
- Video presentations connected to your site can improve the user experience and be a very cost effective way of providing: (a) product presentation and (b) user manuals.

These services require tailoring to your specific needs and budget. Therefore, we do not make any specific recommendation as to which service you should use, but simply point out:

- You should speak to your webmaster to review your site on a regular basis to see if what can be improved;
- If you do decide you need any outside assistance, then there are many freelancers and specialist companies which can be found using Google search.

Assessing your eCommerce Platform Requirements

There is no “one size fits all” or “best of breed solution here” (or at least not yet). Indeed, one of the first steps you need to take is to assess which element of the sales process you can incorporate online. The best solution for your company will depend upon a variety of factors, namely:

- The type (and complexity) of goods and services you sell.
- Whether a sale can be fully negotiated and concluded via a website.
- Whether payments are to be made via your website.
- Sales volumes.

User experience is becoming a key differentiator. Poor, slow and cumbersome online journeys will quickly send your buyers away to those sites with easier, seamless services supported by convenient offline options.

Nonetheless, whatever your specific requirements, your eCommerce platform should:

1. Enhance the customer experience³³.
2. Facilitate sales.
3. Reduce the workload on your sales and admin staff.

³² You should also consider optimising your site for mobile use: over 53% of internet traffic comes from mobile devices. [BroadbandSearch](#) – 2020.

³³ Bear in mind that nearly all the best features of B2C eCommerce have applications in the B2B world. By carefully identifying and integrating targeted B2C features that your customers are already familiar with, you can dramatically enhance customer experiences and achieve bottom line gains.

Choosing an eCommerce Platform

There are many eCommerce Platforms to choose from (see: [The ExportersAlmanac - eCommerce Platforms](#)). If you are thinking of implementing one for the first time or of changing your current platform, do check these out. Many are focused on B2C eCommerce so do make sure that the platform proposed meets your requirements; in particular:

➤ **Functionality**

An eCommerce solution that delivers the site structure, functionality, and end-to-end fluidity needed to create truly enjoyable, consumer-like buying experiences – and integrates easily into your back office systems.

➤ **Scalability**

Scalability is a key issue in B2B eCommerce. Make sure you build your eCommerce platform not just for current capacity but in a way that allows for future growth (which, hopefully, will be significant).

Features that make your eCommerce Platform work for you

Not all of the following may be relevant for your business, but they are all worth considering:

➤ **Personalised Recommendations**

Personalisation features (such as customised product recommendations and best-seller lists) save time for buyers and give B2B brands the opportunity to segment customers in ways that take into account their associations and existing contracts in a more seamless way.

➤ **Powerful Search Capabilities**

Extensive product catalogues make robust search capabilities an eCommerce essential. B2B eCommerce platforms must provide the same level of convenience as retail operations, offering customers the ability to locate items according to product specifications, price, and availability.

➤ **Easy Buyer Experience**

Product catalogues are often bursting with a seemingly endless number of items sorted by precise product specifications. In these cases, buyers should have a seamless experience when managing large volumes of information that might assist with the purchase decision.

➤ **Buyer and Seller Analytics**

In B2B commerce, order tracking, invoicing, and account management tend to be complicated. With an eCommerce platform, B2B companies can easily address those problems. Customers gain visibility of: order history, inventory, and billing deadlines, as well as the ability to easily reorder. At the same time, suppliers can tap into rich analytics that paint a clearer picture of website traffic, buyer behaviour, and ordering patterns.

➤ **Ability to Nurture Leads Throughout the Buyer Journey**

It is important that B2B businesses possess the ability to nurture online relationships with buyers throughout the sales process. This might include:

- a. Sharing materials that help customers make more informed decisions
- b. Communicating more frequently with a prospect to deliver the right content or recommendations at the right time.

Doing this also allows B2B companies to qualify a prospect's level of interest and then follow up with a salesperson.

Therefore, to succeed well into the future, your eCommerce platform must be flexible and scalable, and you must be able to control the content, functionality, and look-and-feel of your online store. The benefits of doing so include:

- The ability to differentiate your company as a simple, user-friendly solution for B2B procurement.
- The opportunity to lower sales, marketing, and customer service costs through better self-service options.
- The ability to generate higher website traffic, conversions, and (most importantly) revenue through better cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.

Website Traffic Analysis and Response

Having attracted visitors to your site, how do you respond to maximise your sales potential?

The key is to be able to:

1. Capture the Data.
2. Analyse the Data.
3. Respond.

[Google Analytics](#) gives you the free tools you need to analyse data for your business in one place, so you can make smarter decisions.

This is a good starting place. However, for more detailed (and in some cases, complementary) analytics, there are a number of other tools available which will analyse traffic to and from your site. Some will then help you use this information to feed your Digital Marketing campaigns; see: [The ExportersAlmanac's](#):

- [Commercial Online Support Tools](#)
- [Free Online Support Tools & Guides](#)

However, if you are considering using external services, we would recommend that you consider using the services of:

1. Spotler UK (See [Spotler's Automated Marketing Tools & Services](#); and
2. ExhOL.

ExhOL

If you have decided to use ExhOL's platform (see above), then you also benefit from powerful analytics tools, which allow you to:

1. Discover How Visitors Find You

ExhOL shows you how a person landed on your content and their movements around your pages, articles and documents.

You can see:

- The countries from which your visitors and enquiries originate.
- Which products are popular in certain countries.
- Where your product pages rank on search engines.

Use these comprehensive marketing reports to identify your most-profitable markets, languages and keywords.

When you've identified an ideal market, you might decide to commission further research in that language, or you could invite a mother-tongue speaker to review your ExhOL pages to enhance the local appeal.

2. Respond to Leads Quickly

Your virtual exhibition pages encourage prospects to contact you for more information or a quote. These sales enquiries go directly to your email inbox, so it's easy for you to respond straight away. ExhOL allows you to access your current and historical enquiries at any time via your marketing reports.

For more information, see: The ExhOL Platform above.

Chapter Summary:

SEO: You must ensure that your website has been optimised to attract the maximum number of relevant visitors. – This includes **profiting from Exhol's services** to promote your services to the non-English speaking world.

Visitor Experience: The better the experience, the more likely the visitor will convert into a hot lead – and then to a sale.

eCommerce platform? Could your site benefit from incorporating an eCommerce platform to assist the sales process?

Website Traffic Analysis and response: Are you capturing and fully benefiting from the data from visitors to your website? If not, then you are missing out on a wealth of valuable data. Once captured and analysed, are you feeding this information into your digital marketing campaign? If not, you should consider subscribing to both **Spotler's Automated Marketing Suite** and **ExhOL's services**.

Digital Advertising

There is a wealth of zero to low-cost opportunities to advertise your products and services online to generate sales leads – both at home and abroad. (This chapter focuses purely on the opportunities for advertising online. There are of course traditional advertising channels which still may well be appropriate for your company. In these cases, you should simply ensure that you have a harmonised message for all the channels you use.)

In order for your potential clients to find your company, you will need to ensure that you are present **and** suitably profiled online.

In this chapter there are a number of options for your consideration:

1. Relevant Industry and Business Directories registration

There various online industry and business directories which companies use to find potential partners. By definition, if you are not registered, you will not be considered. Make sure that you are registered with the ones relevant to you.

2. How to advertise on: Google, LinkedIn and YouTube.

These represent the three biggest B2B advertising channels – offering detailed analytics of online activities.

3. Digital advertising agencies.

You may decide that you need outside help to plan and implement your digital advertising campaign. They can also help with placing ads with sites which generate large volumes of relevant traffic (e.g. Kompas, the BBC, online newspapers etc.). In these cases, visitors to those sites will be shown adverts for your services or products.)

Relevant Industry and Business Directory Registrations

There are many Industry and Business Directories where you can register your company. These directories all offer a free registration service. You should register with all of those that are relevant to your company.

The Kompas Directory

The Kompas Directory is the world's best quality company database covering 70 countries and over 33 million companies. Used by corporate marketing and sales departments worldwide to find new partners (with over 7.5 million visitors per month to the global site and 750,000 to the UK site), the Kompas Directory offers an unequalled resource.

You can do this in three different ways;

1. [Register your company](#) for free on Kompas. (See the video: "[Why you should add your company to Kompas](#)".)
2. Upgrade your free company profile via Booster (UK only market) or Booster International (UK and international markets). (See videos: [How to attract new business leads to your company profile on Kompas](#) and [How to drive more traffic to your company profile on Kompas](#).)
3. Advertise on Kompas using [Kompas Display Advertising](#).

For more details – and pricing - see: [B2BCentral - The Kompass Directory](#).

Other Online Directories

The internet has spawned many online business directories and most, if not all, traditional print directories have migrated online. The following lists of such directories on The ExportersAlamanac may contain some relevant ones for your company:

➤ [General Business Directories](#).

and

➤ [Industry Specific Directories](#).

Exporting is Great

If you are interested in exporting, then the Department for International Trade (DIT) offers you the possibility of [registering your company profile](#) with the government's "Exporting is Great" program; - and it's free!

This service:

- Lets buyers find you.
Give companies looking to buy from your industry an easy way to find you.
- Showcases your company.
Highlight your company's products and services to give buyers insight into what you do.
- Pulls in the right leads.
Attract more business by connecting with the right international buyers.

How to advertise on: Google, LinkedIn and YouTube

All search engines and social media channels offer premium advertising services. In the first instance, the question you have to ask yourself is "which search engines and social media are relevant for my B2B services\products?"

In the B2B sphere it is suggested that the 3 most relevant channels (at least to begin with) are:

1. Google.
2. LinkedIn.
3. YouTube.

Advertising is usually charged by these services on the basis of one of the following:

- CPC or PPC, where you only pay for an ad if someone clicks on it.
- CPM, where you pay based on how many times your ad was shown (not clicked).
- CPE, where you pay when a user completes a predefined engagement (like watching your video ad).
- CPS, where you run Message Ads campaigns, you pay for each message that is successfully delivered.

Google

Grow your business with [Google Ads](#)³⁴. Get in front of customers when they're searching for businesses like yours on Google Search and Maps. Only pay for results, like clicks to your website or calls to your business.

You can [get started](#) in just five steps:

- Step 1** Tell Google your goal (choose: calls to get customers on the phone, store visits or take action on your website).
- Step 2** Decide where to advertise (Go global, countries, global or local).
- Step 3** Create your message e.g. what's best about your business in 3 short sentences and/or add a compelling banner.
- Step 4** Set your budget cap (There's no minimum spend and no commitment. Google will recommend a budget along with estimated results.)
- Step 5** Go live.

In addition, Google will provide reports, insights, and ongoing tips, so you can track your progress and make your ads even more successful.

To increase the probability of the success of your Google Ads campaign, you should avoid the following (common) mistakes:

✗ Poor keyword Research

The cornerstone of any Google Ads campaign starts with keyword research to ensure you target the right users who fit your target audience. This could take the form of product-related terms, service-related terms, and competitor terms. Irrelevant keywords contribute to wastage spend and hinders ROI potential.

✗ Not Using Negative Keywords

Negative keywords give you the ability to exclude search terms across your campaigns. These keywords need to be highlighted beforehand in order to tell the search engine what you "don't" want to rank for. This can make your campaign more targeted since your ads won't show up to irrelevant users.

✗ Don't Mix Search & Display

This is a big 'no-no'. Both mediums are great ways to drive leads and sales. However, they need to be used in isolation and require completely different approaches.

✗ Poorly Written Ads

Advertising copy plays an important role in articulating your offering to the target audience. It's imperative to ensure your advert includes the main features and benefits of your offering to stand out on Google.

³⁴ Bing, Yahoo and other search engines offer similar services – but have less traffic – and therefore their fees should be lower.

✓ Setup Conversion Tracking

Conversion tracking enables advertisers to measure specific actions on their website. These actions are typically transactions, website form submissions, and phone calls. In setting up these events.

LinkedIn

There are currently over 675 million active professionals on LinkedIn. You can target them by: job title, function, industry, country, professional or personal interests. [LinkedIn Business Solutions](#) can help you build brand awareness, generate leads and drive website traffic.

However, please note, LinkedIn does not provide you with a channel to spam its members. LinkedIn would take a very dim view of any such attempt. It would also be extremely counter-productive – anyone receiving spam from within LinkedIn is likely to form a very negative view of both the individual and the company sending such messages. Therefore, any messages you send out should be carefully crafted and targeted so that they cannot be considered spam.

Nonetheless, LinkedIn offers an unparalleled channel for you to reach your market in an extremely cost-effective and focused manner. There are six steps to getting started:

1. Create your Campaign Manager Account.

This is LinkedIn's all-in-one advertising platform. You can set up ad accounts, run campaigns, and control your budget.

2. Determine your objective.

Whether you're focused on lead generation or brand awareness, selecting your objective is the first step to help LinkedIn streamline and customise your campaign.

3. Select your targeting criteria.

Selecting your audience works the same way regardless of which ad type you choose.

4. Choose your LinkedIn ad format.

You can use:

➤ [Sponsored Content](#).

Sponsored content appears directly in the LinkedIn feed of professions you want to reach, and comes in three different formats: single image ads, video ads, and carousel ads.

You can also Use [Direct Sponsored Content](#) to test variations of your messaging.

➤ **Message Ads.**

Message Ads lets you reach your prospects on LinkedIn Messaging.

➤ **Dynamic Ads.**

Dynamic Ads use LinkedIn profile data - like photo, company name, and job title - to personalise ads. Select a Dynamic Ad format to personalise your message for each member in your target audience.

➤ **Text Ads.**

Text Ads are simple but compelling pay-per-click (PPC) or cost-per-impression (CPM) ads.

5. Set your budget and schedule.

There are three options:

- CPS is used when you run Message Ads campaigns. You pay for each message that is successfully delivered.
- CPC is often used for action-oriented campaigns like lead generation or event registration.
- A CPM model is typically a better fit when brand awareness is the goal.

You will enter a suggested bid, daily budget, start date, end date, and total budget. Regardless of the end date you choose, you can cancel your campaign at any time.

6. Measure and optimise your campaign.

Once a campaign has been started you can [monitor your campaign performance](#). And track the performance of your ads with [conversion tracking](#). You can then adjust your settings to maximise results.

For more information see:

- How to advertise on LinkedIn: [Get Started in 5 Simple Steps](#).
- [LinkedIn - Maximise Your Budget](#).
- [LinkedIn - Ad-Bidding Tips](#).
- [How to prepare for your first LinkedIn campaign](#).
- [Create your first campaign](#).
- [How to set the right bids for your ads](#).

YouTube

YouTube is undoubtedly the most famous video sharing platform in the world. More than 424,000 videos are watched every second on YouTube³⁵. Furthermore, the ever-growing user base has propelled YouTube to the status of the second most visited website after Google in 2020.

You can use YouTube for 2 prime reasons:

1. Publishing specific product information and service videos for existing clients. These should not only save your company in pre and post sales servicing but generally help your sales activity. (Customers consider these videos as prime value added services.)
2. Promotional videos for your products and services. These are designed to generate sales leads.

N.B. If you decide that YouTube is a valid channel for your products and services, then if you do not use a professional agency, we recommend that you invest in some good recording

³⁵ [InternetLiveStats](#) – 17th March, 2021.

equipment. Record your videos in HD and use a high quality microphone. This will help make your video look and feel professional.

Phase One - Roadmap

If you are thinking of using YouTube, then you should create a roadmap. The first three steps you should take are

Step 1: Determine why you need a YouTube channel in the first place. Decide on what your channel should be about and how the viewers are going to benefit from it.

Step 2: Prepare a content plan: the type of videos and how often they will be published.³⁶

Step 3: What is your target in terms of subscribers and traffic conversion?

Step 4: Prepare your video optimisation strategy (see below).

Step 5: Brand your YouTube channel. It encourages visitors to take you seriously. It helps you increase brand awareness and spend more time with your audience.

Step 6: Use your company logo for your channel. On top of the banner image, you also can include links to your website and social media.

Step 7: Promote your videos via other media e.g.

- LinkedIn.
- [Scoop.it](#).
- [SlideShare](#).
- Your own website.
- Your printed sales and marketing collateral.

Step 8: Bear mobile users in mind – and whether the video works without audio; 85% of YouTube videos are watched without sound!

Phase Two – Preparation.

Once you have set out your roadmap and decided on the video content, you should prepare the video.

Step 1 Video duration.

By default, when you create a YouTube account, the maximum upload length is restricted to just 15 minutes. However, the average video size on YouTube is less than 5 minutes. Moreover, the first 15 seconds of your video are critical for grabbing attention.

³⁶ In this case, you should also consider how your YouTube channel complements any webinar hub that you develop. See Webinars\Group Sessions\Single Workshops.

Step 2 ***Different formats/scenarios.***

Make sure to mix things up a bit by introducing new types of video formats or scenarios that keeps the users engaged. – Add an end-screen e.g. with calls-to-action to visit other videos or direct viewers to your website.

Step 3 ***Learn from your favourite channels.***

Besides being source of inspiration for your own videos, it's also worth remembering that YouTube is an incredible resource for self-starting learners. There are hundreds of YouTube channels that will explain to you how to be a successful marketer.

Step 4: ***Research your competition.***

Browse your competitors' YouTube channels and take note of which videos got the most and least views. Watch these videos get a sense of what kinds of content your audience likes to watch (and what they don't) and use that to inform your own content strategy.

Read competing video descriptions to see what keywords they're using in their YouTube search optimisation. Use similar ones to boost your ranking in YouTube's search pages and recommended video feeds.

Step 5: ***Add hashtags.***³⁷

You can add up to 15 hashtags to your video description – and make your content more searchable on YouTube.

Step 6: ***Translate your videos into different languages.***

Expand your reach by adding subtitles to your YouTube videos.

Phase Three – Optimise your YouTube ranking.

Your video ranking is important as it determines the position of your videos when a keyword is typed into the search box³⁸. The ranks are calculated by the YouTube algorithm, but you can increase your ranking by considering the following:

Category: YouTube has some predefined categories and the videos that you upload must be put in the right one to get maximum reach.

Description: This is where you can play a lot with keywords, both short and long tail. Be very descriptive about your video. The description must be succinct and informative³⁹. It can also have links to your landing page. Explain to the viewer why they should watch the video – what's in it for them?

³⁷ **Hashtags** are clickable words or phrases that have a hash (#-pound sign) before it. They are used to identify a specific topic. By clicking on a **hashtag**, you can discover related **YouTube** videos with that tag.

³⁸ **Use a rank tracker:** e.g. from [SE Ranking](#) or [Tubebuddy](#) which track everything about your videos and presents them in a neatly organised dashboards.

³⁹ It can be up to a maximum of 5,000 characters.

- Keywords** Find the right keywords – standard SEO stuff, right?
- Subtitles:** Subtitles do not carry much weight in terms of SEO or ranking, but they are a much-appreciated addition by the audience.
- Tags:** Tags are words or phrases that are used to help YouTube better understand the video. Make sure the tags that you are giving are related to the video that they represent.
- Thumbnail:** The first thing that the viewer is going to see when they are browsing through a list of videos is the thumbnail. Make sure that it is attractive and stands out! After your video is finished uploading, you can choose a thumbnail from the three options YouTube automatically generates, or upload your own.
- Title:** The next element that gets the most attention from both the user and the YouTube algorithm is the title. Ensure that the main keyword you are targeting is included in the title. Keep the title short – Best if less than 60 characters. This allows viewers see the whole title at a glance. Use clear and descriptive titles.

Phase Four – Monitor, Analyse, Adapt.

YouTube is not “fire and forget”. There are tools which allow you to monitor and analyse your traffic. You can then adapt accordingly to maximise the effectiveness of your YouTube channel.

Step One: Analyse your YouTube videos traffic sources and track the effectiveness of your videos.

Sign in to [YouTube Studio](#), then go to Channel Analytics. While the number of views, likes, and dislikes are great indicators in determining the popularity of the videos, there are many more factors at play.

Step Two Ask your audience for Feedback.

All your videos must be created with the audience in mind. However, sometimes what you may think would work might not fit well with the audience. Hence, it is imperative that you understand their likes and dislikes.

“No-Cost” Advertising

There is the consideration that if you implement a successful YouTube video promotion strategy, you can generate leads *without* any ad investments.

In order to achieve this, it is imperative that you optimise your video titles (as described above) to bring in as many valid viewers and sales leads as possible.

YouTube Ads

With YouTube ads, you can reach potential customers and have them take action when they watch or search for videos on YouTube – and you only pay when they show interest.

On average, businesses pay an average YouTube advertising cost of \$0.10 to \$0.30 per view or action, with an average \$10 daily budget. That means every time someone views your ad or engages with your ad e.g. by clicking on a call-to-action, you pay c. \$0.10 to \$0.30.

Video campaigns run on YouTube and across the web through Google Ads. By targeting your video campaigns on YouTube and [Google video partners](#), you can advertise to people at moments that matter. With a wide variety of targeting methods available to you, such as demographic groups, interests, placements, and remarketing lists, you can reach specific or niche audiences based on who they are, what they're interested in, and what content they're viewing.

There are seven steps to [advertising on YouTube](#):

- Step 1: Upload Your Video Advertisement to YouTube.
- Step 2: Create a New Campaign in Google Ads.
- Step 3: Configure Your Campaign.
- Step 4: Select the People You Want to Reach.
- Step 5: Select Where You Want Your Ads to Show.
- Step 6: Select Your Marketing Video.
- Step 7: Configure Your YouTube Ads Video Ad.

Digital Advertising Agencies

Depending upon the in-house skills that you have (and your advertising budget), you may consider commissioning outside help. You may find two sub-categories of [The ExportersAlmanac - Advertising & Marketing](#) – Digital Marketing Agencies and Online Advertising Agencies.

(N.B. Once you have designed your Digital Advertising campaign, you should then make sure that this is integrated with your Digital Marketing program.)

Chapter Summary:

Industry directories, search engines and social media: You have a number of opportunities to advertise online - free of charge as well as for relatively modest sums. The pay-for services all offer control over what you spend and provide detailed results to fuel your digital marketing campaigns.

The D.I.T.'s Exporting is Great program represents an opportunity to advertise to overseas buyers – and it is free of charge.

Digital advertising agencies: Can advise you and then manage your whole digital advertising campaign.

Digital Marketing

Although we provide this section dedicated to digital marketing, it is vital that your digital marketing program and collateral are in complete harmony with your “physical” marketing program. Everything should have the same “look and feel”.

By using the tools and channels described here, you can make the most of the following to proactively contact and positively interact with current, past and potential clients:

- The contacts your sales and marketing teams have collated.
- The contact information generated from your site.

These tools and communication channels are:

1. Email.
2. Push Messaging.
3. SMS Marketing.
4. Kopiki.
5. LinkedIn.
6. Spotler’s Suite of Digital Marketing Tools.
7. Kompass Digital Marketing Campaigns.
8. Virtual Events.
9. Visual Configuration.

Combined,⁴⁰ they can become even more powerful capable of generating significant increases in sales. This is not to say, however, that you will need all of these to benefit from digital marketing. Your requirements will depend upon:

- The size of your sales and marketing teams.
- Your internal expertise in digital marketing.
- Your target market(s).
- Your sales and marketing budget⁴¹.

You can easily just start with a digital marketing campaign just using:

- Email (but **not** spam).
- LinkedIn.
- Spotler’s Lead Generation Freemium.

You can then add more automation and analytical tools as your digital marketing requirements develop.

⁴⁰ In conjunction and aligned with your Website Optimisation and Digital Advertising programs.

⁴¹ However, a focused Digital Marketing campaign should result in a very healthy ROI.

Email Campaigns

Email campaigns can be valid for a host of reasons and represent an extremely cost-effective⁴² means for reaching out to your client base.

Spamming⁴³ on the other hand is not only rarely effective but can also result in:

1. Legal proceedings with you and your company facing significant sanctions.
2. Your emails being blacklisted so that although they will be sent – they don't arrive.
3. General, adverse publicity.

For further information and guidance see the recommendations made by the: [Advertising Standards Authority](#), [Information Commissioner's Office](#) and the [Data & Marketing Association \(DMA\)](#), as well as [Ofcom](#) and [The Data & Marketing Commission](#) which oversees and enforces the DMA Code.

So, do not spam!

This is not to say you cannot use email as a perfectly valid marketing tool. It is possible to buy qualified mailing lists (see: [The ExportersAlmanac - Advertising & Marketing](#) - Email Lists) as well as creating your own from the Kompass Directory together with your own contact database.

If you do have permission to send out emails to your actual and potential clients – and suppliers. Then there are a number of tools which can facilitate the management of these emails; see: [The ExportersAlmanac - Communications](#) – Newsletter Mailing Services.

When you use email messaging, you will of course have to consider:

1. What specific message do you want to communicate?
2. How often do you want to communicate? (If you send out too many emails, you will find fairly soon that people will unsubscribe from your service. Not often enough and they forget who you are.)

Email Marketing Basics

➤ **User a “Friendly from” name.**

The 'from' or sender name is the inbox field that tells the customer who's sent them a message. If the sender is not clear or recognizable, your subscriber may dismiss it as spam. To avoid this and build trust, ensure your name is consistent and on brand.

➤ **Try stand out subject lines.**

Make sure the subject line reflects the email's contents and ensure it is engaging enough to motivate the subscriber to open it. Your email is competing against countless others in the inbox. As a result, your subject line needs to stand out from the crowd.

⁴² The results reported by marketers speak for themselves: the average ROI for every pound spent on email marketing is £42 ([DMA](#), 2019).

⁴³ The term is applied to email and similar abuses in other media: instant messaging spam, mobile phone messaging spam etc. where messages are sent to people who have not explicitly authorised you to send them messages.

➤ **Make use of pre-header text space.**

The pre-header is a short summary that follows the subject line within the inbox display, indicating the email's contents. With over 50% of emails now opened on smartphones, it is important to use the pre-header text as a tease to boost opens.

Developing an Email Campaign Program

The base outlines of an email campaign program could consist of the following.

➤ **Welcome Program**

A welcome program is the most important automation to implement; not only is it thoughtful to thank a subscriber for signing up, it is a prime opportunity to better introduce your brand and collect valuable customer data, such as click-through behaviour and preferences. Customers expect to receive a 'thank you' for signing up at the very least.

➤ **Transactional Emails**

Transactional emails are triggered off the back of a customer-initiated action, such as a purchase, but you will find that many brand examples are generic and uninspiring. A standard transactional email can disrupt the brand experience customers have had thus far. This can be easily remedied if you feed your transactional data into your email marketing automation platform to create a more personalised message.

➤ **Post-Purchase Updates**

A post-purchase program engages with the customer at a different stage of the lifecycle compared to the welcome program, however they both share similar principles. Intended to build further credibility, a post-purchase email makes the customer feel excited about the product they have just bought and brings them even closer to your brand.

➤ **Cart Abandonment**

Various factors can cause abandoned carts - from unexpected shipping costs to difficult site navigation. An effective abandoned cart program focuses on minimizing that number by addressing the reasons why your customer might have stopped before buying.

➤ **Abandoned Browse**

Customers who browse your website and then leave are not necessarily lost forever; they can be tempted back. With web-tracking behaviour tools, you can set up an effective abandoned browse program that sends customers relevant content based on their browse history.

➤ **Product Replenishment Programs**

Marketing automation is a super-effective way of increasing repeat sales and recurring revenue, particularly if your products have a short lifespan and need to be replenished.

➤ **Recommendation and Upsell Programs**

Personalizing your content around an individual customer is a proven revenue-driving technique. With a marketing automation platform that seamlessly syncs your ecommerce data, it is quick and easy to leverage your customers' online behaviour, combine their preferences, and push smart and predictive product recommendations.

➤ **Lost Customers**

It is inevitable that some customers will stray from your brand over time. However, with the right marketing tech in place, you'll be able to re-target customers and reignite their interest before they become 'lost'.

➤ **Special Occasion Programs**

Emails triggered by dates that are meaningful to the customer - such as birthdays or anniversaries - are simple quick-wins that generate that all-important excitement factor. Delivering content that is date sensitive is not just relevant to the customer, but it also taps into their emotions and has a higher likelihood of engagement.

➤ **Time Sensitive Promotions**

Limited-time offers are one of the most useful marketing tools to drive sales.

Subscribing to Spotler's Email Marketing platform (See: Appendix Eleven – Spotler's Automated Marketing Suite & Services) gives you a particularly flexible and powerful email marketing tool that can be integrated with your CRM and lead generation programs. Or, you can check out platforms listed in The ExportersAlmanac [Marketing Automation Platforms](#).

Push Messaging

Push messaging software is simple to insert into your website – and will ask visitors to your site whether they want to receive messages from you. By clicking on the “accept” option, they will then receive messages that you push out through pop-ups on their screen. These messages can include links to provide more details related to the message you send out. Therefore, the length of the message necessarily needs to be short.

Like mailing lists, you have to provide an easy option for users to unsubscribe.

There are a number of push messaging service providers. To review these, see: [The ExportersAlmanac - Communications](#) – Push Messaging Services.

N.B. If you choose to subscribe to **Spotler's Automated Marketing Tools**, this provides a highly effective, flexible push messaging service which is fully integrated with email marketing tools.

SMS Marketing

SMS marketing is the practice of sending business communications or promotional messages via text messages. It differs from text spam mainly because it requires people to opt in to the service. So rather than being averse to promotional SMS, recipients expect the texts and tend to welcome them.

Email is widely accepted as the best digital marketing medium. However, email lacks the immediacy that SMS is perfect for. The following reasons illustrate how SMS Marketing complements email marketing:

➤ **SMS is faster.**

Text messages are received almost instantly. Customers typically have their phones at arm's reach at all times, read those messages just as quickly. In fact, 90% of text messages are opened within the first 3 minutes of receiving them⁴⁴.

➤ **SMS boast unbeatable open rates.**

While an email campaign with a 15% to 25% open rate is generally considered successful, SMS campaigns typically enjoy open rates as high as 98%⁴⁵.

➤ **SMS has extremely high engagement rates.**

SMS marketing has engagement rates that are six to eight times higher⁴⁶ than email. Additionally, customers are ten times more likely⁴⁷ to redeem coupons delivered via SMS than any other medium.

Implementing a Successful SMS Campaign

➤ **Get explicit permission.**

Send text messages only to the customers who have opted in (It's the law. They should also have the option of opting out later.)

➤ **Use a capable SMS Platform**

Using an SMS platform is really the only way to use this marketing platform efficiently. When selecting software to use for your company, don't make your decision based on price alone - compare the value that each platform offers.

See The ExportersAlmanac [SMS & MMS Marketing Services](#) for a list of SMS platforms.

➤ **Limit your SMS campaigns**

The limited character count already requires you to keep your messages short and direct. But this does not mean you can send them often. Text promotions are most valuable when they are received infrequently. Generally speaking, you should not send more than 4 to 5 text messages a month.

➤ **Always aim to provide value**

Remember that providing value does not always have to be grand. It is not always about giving away free stuff or offering discounts (although they help a lot!). Customers just want to feel you have their needs in mind instead of just yours.

⁴⁴ [VentureBeat](#)

⁴⁵ [The Daily Egg](#).

⁴⁶ [RetailDive](#)

⁴⁷ [techjury](#)

➤ **Keep your message relevant**

Part of providing value to your customers is making sure that every message they receive is relevant to their specific needs and preferences. This is where targeting and personalisation come in. Use the data you have to segment your subscribers into groups of similar profiles. Most SMS platforms have precise targeting and personalisation features that make this crucial task much more manageable.

Omnichannel Marketing Platforms

SMS marketing can be used in a number of creative ways and will differ between varying business contexts. However, SMS marketing is most valuable when integrated with your email campaign (see above). If you decide to run both SMS and email marketing campaign you should consider using on Omnichannel Marketing Platforms which provide a single platform for managing multiple channels; see [The ExportersAlmanac](#) for a list of platforms.

Newsclipping Services

One way to keep your fingers on the pulse of the market is to subscribe to an online Newsclipping service (for a list of providers see: [The ExportersAlmanac Newsclipping Services](#)).

The advantages of these services are you can:

- Instantly see what media outlets think of your products, services, and overall brand.
- Receive alerts about your business and industry.
- Track social media and online mentions of your business.

Pricing varies from the free service from [Google News Alert](#) to “apply for quotes”.

If you do decide to use a Newsclipping service, do make sure that it tracks all the forms of media and content that interest you.

Kopiki’s Marketplace Platform

Kopiki is a service which matches buyers with suppliers; cost effectively and efficiently.

How it works:

- The buyer specifies the item they are looking for out of Kopiki's database of 10,000.
- They then open a marketplace where buyers and suppliers interact anonymously.
- Once a Marketplace is open, new suppliers are invited to join.
- If the Marketplace is right for you, then you can join.
- You can start building a relationship with the buyer.
- When ready the buyer will select suppliers, they wish to contact.
- Kopiki does not get involved in the transaction they just introduce buyers and suppliers.

Pricing\Packages:

After a free trial period, for £99+ VAT per month you get unlimited access to all the Marketplaces opened by all buyers.

See the video: [Kopiki B2B Marketplaces](#).

To register as a supplier just [click here](#).

LinkedIn

(For an explanation of advertising options on LinkedIn, See: above.)

Marketing via LinkedIn is different to advertising on LinkedIn in one key aspect – marketing is primarily conducted at a personal level. LinkedIn members are individuals and it is individuals (on behalf of their companies) who will reach out to those members⁴⁸.

The following is not intended by any means to be an exhaustive guide in becoming an expert in LinkedIn marketing. To download LinkedIn's, own more detailed guides see:

- [The Definitive Guide for Marketing on LinkedIn.](#)
- [The Sophisticated Marketer's Crash Course in Metrics & Analytics.](#)
- [The Sophisticated Marketer's Guide to Thought Leadership.](#)

In outline, the three Key Phases and steps in developing and implementing a LinkedIn marketing campaign are as follows:

Phase One - Preparation

Step 1 Create a company profile

A company profile helps you separate individual backgrounds from your business by creating a page that includes information about what your company does, how long you've been doing it, and how interested parties can contact you.

First, optimise your company page for searching. Whether your audience is searching on LinkedIn or off, a well-optimised company page can help you gain visibility among the people searching for what your company offers.

Make sure to upload a high-resolution company logo and a cover image that captures your brand and do fill out the "About us" section to provide visitors with more information. Be sure also to incorporate keywords into the company profile information, clearly representing who you are and what you do.

Step 2 Involve Members of the company's sales and marketing teams

Ensure that their LinkedIn profiles are also optimised.

Their profiles should also include a personal; telling people who they are and less of "what" they are.

Step 3 Define target profiles

Define the profiles of those executives you would like to reach (country, company profile, department, title etc.) – and compile a list of the individuals you find on LinkedIn (using the search facilities).

⁴⁸ According to research from LinkedIn, content shared by individual employees has two times more engagement than content shared by a company. LinkedIn: 7 B2B Marketing Trends for 2017.

Phase Two – Go live!

Step 1 Promote your LinkedIn company profile outside of LinkedIn

1. Link your LinkedIn company page from your website, blog, business cards, directory registrations, email signatures and other marketing materials.
2. Add a “Follow” button to your website. This allows your website visitors to follow your LinkedIn company page with a single click. See: Microsoft’s [Follow Company Plugin Generator](#).

Step 2 Increase your company “reach”

Members of your sales and marketing teams should now reach out to the following asking to connect to them:

1. Any contacts they have imported from their personal contacts.
2. Those individuals⁴⁹ that you identified when carrying out your profile targeting exercise above asking to connect to them. (If you can find connections in common, then it is better to ask the existing contact to make an introduction.)

In asking to connect to them, you should consider very carefully what message you send – it will have to be interesting to convince the recipient to agree. What’s in it for them?

Phase Three – Become “Active”

Step One - Participate with LinkedIn groups

Your sales and marketing staff may already be members of several groups on LinkedIn, but they need to leverage that membership by participating in discussions. (As an added incentive, this raises their own profile as well as that of your company.)

Step Two - Share relevant content

When you publish updates from your company page they also appear on your public page, allowing your content to be indexed by Google. The more frequently you share content, the higher your company page will appear in search results.

Step Three – Publish white papers and industry relevant commentary

Try not to only publish information about your products. The more often you can stimulate industry discussion and establish yourself as a thought leader, the better.

Step Four - Create a LinkedIn group

Create a company-branded group for your clients and/or colleagues to facilitate discussion about your industry. A collaboration-based group, created and managed by your company, can be an excellent way to get your company name recognised.

⁴⁹ But no more than 100 per day, otherwise you will have problems with LinkedIn.

Phase Four – Analyse your results and adapt

It is important to track and analyse the results of your LinkedIn marketing campaign – and adapt, refine and improve accordingly.

Phase Five – Upgrade your access to LinkedIn?

The activities described above can be undertaken (in the main) by using the free access to LinkedIn. However, there are two services you may like to consider – depending upon your requirements. More information on these two services can be found on [LinkedIn](#).

LinkedIn Premium Business

Research and evaluate business opportunities with exclusive access to unique and timely data about companies that interest you e.g. growth and functional trends.

LinkedIn Sales Navigator

Designed for sales professionals, LinkedIn Sales Navigator helps you focus on the right people and companies, stay up-to-date on what's happening with your accounts, and build trust with your prospects and customers.

Spotler's Automated Marketing Tools & Services

Watch the [introduction video](#) to find out more about GatorLeads.

Spotler - The AI Powered Marketing Automation Platform: Complete B2B inbound and outbound marketing software suite. Ensures your marketing and sales teams get more leads from website traffic, convert more visitors into Marketing-Qualified Leads (MQLs) and run complete marketing campaigns. The CommuniGator suite integrates easily with CRM systems.

Marketing automation technology is critical in the customer journey mapping process. Without it, it becomes virtually impossible to create a complete, consistent, and personalized customer journey.

For a more detailed explanation of the Program Suite & Services see: Appendix Eleven – Spotler's Automated Marketing Suite & Services. However, the key features are as follows:

- 1. Marketing Automation** - Grow you leads, nurture your prospects, attribute marketing channel success and prove ROI.
 - Automatically re-market to companies on your website.
 - Drive targeted traffic to key landing pages and get higher conversions.
 - Convert more visitors into qualified leads.
 - Drive more website engagement with PopUps.
 - Gain more reach and leads from Social Media.
 - Let AI predict your CTR and suggest improvements.
- 2. Lead Generation** - See who is on your website and turn your website traffic in to Leads.
 - Get more leads from PPC campaigns and increase the ROI.
 - Track companies and individuals on your website.
 - Sales Alerts – Never miss another lead.

- Allow Sales to send tracked & personalised emails from Outlook.
 - Prioritise leads based on their engagement score.
3. **Email Marketing** - Inbound or outbound – Engage your audience with email marketing.
- Utilise data providers and send emails to purchased data.
 - Check emails against current spam and improve your email reputation.
 - Easily build emails using a Drag'n'Drop Editor.
 - Send hyper personalised email using dynamic content.
 - Take advantage of A/B testing and bot detection to increase your CTRs.

See the video: [The Advanced Event Tool Solution](#) (1 hour 19 minutes).

There are also a wide range of services offered to support your digital marketing campaign.

Kompass Digital Marketing Campaigns

Kompass offers the following tools and services to facilitate your Digital Marketing:

- **EasyBusiness** - Access the Kompass databases to discover potential Buyers (Data Capture & Analysis).
- **ByPath** - Analyse Big Data found online to help you find new prospects (Providing both Driver and Data Capture & Analysis functions).

The data you generate from EasyBusiness and ByPath can then be imported into your CRM system. Kompass [CRM apps and connectors](#) are compatible with a range of different CRM platforms, such as: [Salesforce](#), [Microsoft Dynamics](#), [Hubspot](#), [Zoho](#), [Sugar CRM](#) and [Pipedrive](#):⁵⁰

- User friendly. Ready-to-use. Plug and play.
- Direct business lead import into your CRM.
- Unlimited company searches.
- Quality up-to-date B2B company and contact data.

See the video: [Are you thinking of buying business data?](#)

For further details and pricing See: [B2BCentral - Digital Marketing](#).

Kompass Plus Spotler UK's Gator Suite - Overview

The following diagram illustrates how Digital Marketing can be maximised by combining the power of the digital services from Kompass and Spotler's Gator suite:

⁵⁰ See [The ExportersAlmanac](#) for a more detailed list of CRMs.

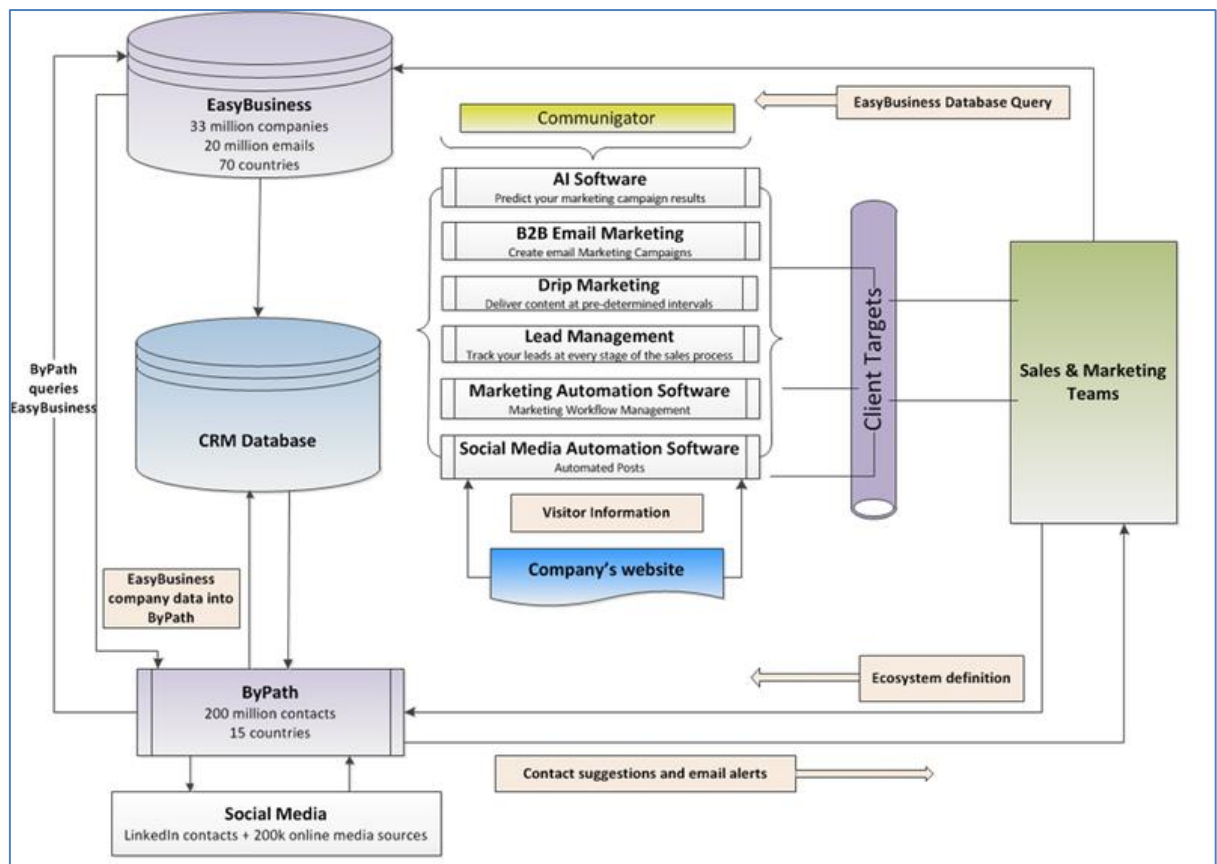


Figure 1 - Kompass + Communigator Suite - The Overview

Although the above may look complex, fundamentally it isn't. For a more detailed description of the various modules and how they interconnect, and for pricing, [click here](#).

Live Commerce

Use live video streaming to demonstrate products and interact with shoppers in real time to encourage purchases – which are typically delivered through mobile apps.

For a list of Live Video Streaming Tools, see [The ExportersAlmanac Live Video Streaming Tools](#).

Product Information Management (PIM)

PIM refers, as the name implies, to the system that manages product data. It covers methods and procedures for collecting, maintaining and processing product data as well as for distributing information to different output channels or media. – This therefore a key element in managing your marketing support.

A Product Information Management (**PIM**) solution provides a single place to collect, manage, and enrich your product information, create a product catalogue, and distribute it to your sales and eCommerce channels.

PIM software is information management software that stores and manages a business's product information across multiple channels from a unified dashboard. PIM tools let you upload, edit, and distribute SKU-level data across all of your ecommerce channels.

Examples of the data stored and synchronized through PIM software include:

- Channel-specific information (Amazon, Shopify, etc.).
- Core product data (Product name, title, description).
- Multi-language content.
- Product attributes (SKU, cost, pricing).
- Product listing copy, assets, and media.
- Product specifications (e.g., dimensions, warranty and packaging info, etc.)
- Product-related metrics.
- Supplier information.

Store-specific information (POS registers, product catalogues).

Examples of PIM software can be found on [The Exporters Almanac Product Information Management Platforms](#).

Visual Configuration

Visual configuration tools enable sales representatives and end customers to see a 2D or 3D visual representation of the product they want to order with the options and features they have selected – without having to visit a physical showroom. Costing up to 20% of revenue, direct sales is an expensive method for selling products. Enabling self service digital commerce using virtual configuration will significantly improve margins and possibly shorten the sales cycle.

For a list of Visual Configuration Tools, see [The Exporters Almanac Visual Configuration Tools](#).

Chapter Summary:

Your digital marketing and physical campaigns: Must be in complete harmony.

Email campaigns: Provided you do not spam, email campaigns represent the most cost-effective means of communication with large audiences.

Push messaging: Enable you to push targeted messages out to users' screens.

SMS campaigns: Provide a complementary service to your email campaigns, being faster and more immediate with even higher open and engagement rates.

Newsclipping Services: These online services allow you to keep your fingers on the market's pulse.

Kopiki's marketplace platform: Allows you to register as a supplier and be invited to bid for specific contracts.

LinkedIn: Follow the step-by-step guide how to reach out to your LinkedIn target audience.

Spotler's Automated Marketing Suite: A powerful suite of tools combining everything you need to benefit from integrating information about visitors to your site and a range of communication tools: email, newsletters, SMS, and PopUps. (It also has specific modules to support your virtual events.) Their services can also help you implement your Digital Marketing Campaign.

Kompass Digital Marketing: A combination of Kompass' EasyBusiness and ByPath helps you find new prospects to prime your sales and marketing campaigns.

Live Commerce: Use live video streaming to demonstrate products and interact with shoppers in real time.

Product Information Management: The system that manages product data. It covers methods and procedures for collecting, maintaining and processing product data as well as for distributing information to different output channels or media.

Visual Configuration: Allows you to offer 2D or 3D visual representation of products – without buyers having to visit a physical show room. They can significantly improve margins and shorten sales cycles.

Combining the Kompass and Spotler services gives you a phenomenally powerful set of marketing tools.

Virtual Events

We will all have experienced the increased use of video conferencing and webinars during the lockdown – and realised just how cost effective and easy they are. Fewer will have experienced multiple, simultaneous workshop events or a virtual trade\industry exhibition. These are destined to become a greater feature of business life. Indeed, from many points of view they are better than the physical versions.

From this overview, you will see that much of the preparation for a virtual event is similar to preparing for a physical event. You will also see that there are a number of options as to how you present and host a virtual event. The best solution for you will depend upon your requirements as an event organiser. To help you organise your thoughts in this direction and prepare a check list of requirements, see: Appendix Nine - Virtual Events – Preparation and Assessment.

(The following is a brief overview of Virtual Events. If you would like a more detailed Guide to Virtual Events [send us an email](#) for a free Guide.)

Virtual events (some are hybrid⁵¹) range from:

1. Single discussion\topic webinars; to
2. Multiple, simultaneous workshops; to
3. Full blown trade fairs and industry exhibitions.

They are being used for:

1. Product Launches.
2. Recruitment.
3. Sales Kickoff Meetings.
4. Tradeshow.
5. Training.
6. User Conferences.

Their main characteristics are described in more detail below. However, they all build on the same concepts of:

- Mirroring, and, where possible, improving on comparable physical events.
- Generating measurable results.
- Delivering value.
- Driving action.

Whether you organise or simply attend these events, they will require you to think carefully how you can benefit from the features they offer – and there are **lots** of benefits they can bring:

- They are cheaper to hold.
- They are cheaper to attend.
- They mirror most of the characteristics of a physical event.
- They make a major contribution to reducing your carbon footprint⁵².

⁵¹ A hybrid event is simply one that takes place both physically and online. An example of where this would be appropriate is where significant numbers of people wish to attend the event - but for whatever reason, cannot – and only a few, active partners actually attend.

⁵² According to [Hopin](#), events are significant contributors to CO₂ emissions, pollution, and wasted food and water. The average conference attendee produces over 170 kgs of CO₂ per day. At a tradeshow 41% of rubbish will go directly to landfill. Plus there are the issues of travelling to and from the event.

- Elements can be pre-recorded – reducing the risks of “problems on the day”.
- The session analytics can be extremely detailed and delivered in near-real time – providing unrivalled marketing information.
- They offer secure connections that are fully GDPR compliant.
- They provide areas for round table discussions and webinars with the ability for delegates to ask questions and exchange text messages; both privately and publicly.
- Customised registration and payment pages.
- Customised email confirmation and reminders.
- Open APIs to integrate with 3rd party software (such as CRMs).
- Surveys\polls.
- Video, chat, social media, web page, skype\zoom links.
- 24/7 availability.

Webinars\Group Sessions\Single Workshops

A webinar is simply a group meeting conducted over the Internet. They are particularly effective when having pre-sales discussions with groups⁵³ of potential clients and/or managing user groups:

1. You can share screens.
2. You can bring in members of your company to cover specific topics.
3. You can see your counterparties – which helps you establish personal contact.
4. They are easy and relatively quick to set up.

From thought-leadership panel discussions to weekly live demos, webinars are an effective way to move prospects from product awareness to closed deals.

If you use webinars, you should then consider developing a webinar hub\YouTube channel with:

- On-demand recordings of all webinars.
- Calendar with past and future webinars.
- Supplemented where appropriate with straightforward video presentations.

There are a number of platforms that can be used for small Group Sessions (see: The [ExportersAlmanac Team Collaboration Programs](#) as well as [Larger Meetings and Webinars](#) for multiple, simultaneous workshops.

Trade Missions, Trade Fairs and Industry Exhibitions

These are platforms which mirror the visual experience of attending a trade mission, a trade fair or industry exhibition – complete with entrance hall and company stands. If you have not experienced one of these, then check out this short demo video from [Virtual Tradeshow Hosting](#).

In addition to the benefits listed above, virtual trade fairs and industry exhibition typically offer these additional features:

- Welcome\Entrance Hall.
- Exhibition Hall with personalised exhibitor stands.
- The option of having a Welcome Entrance Hall.

⁵³ If it is a situation where just a few people are involved from two or more companies, then a simple video conferencing call is probably the better solution.

- The options to create virtual, customised stands.
- The ability to book private appointments with delegates at their stands.
- A meeting area where you can meet other delegates for private or public chats.
- Simultaneous translations\interpreters.
- Prize give-aways.
- They can be temporary or permanent. - Some examples of existing, permanent Virtual Exhibitions can be seen at [The ExportersAlmanac – eCommerce – Advertising & Marketing](#) Virtual Events.⁵⁴

Should you want to organise a trade fair or exhibition, there are a number of platforms you can choose from – many of these are listed in [The ExportersAlmanac - eCommerce – Communications](#) - Virtual Conference & Exhibition Platforms. – In this context, please note that choosing a virtual event platform on its own is not enough. To manage these efficiently, you should integrate this with your website, CRM and automated marketing systems.

Pre-Event Preparation

No matter which type of event you are organising, you will have to prepare for it.

Event Promotion - Timings

According to research from [GoToMeeting](#), you should start promoting your webinar at least four weeks in advance and keep promoting up to the day itself. In practice, we would suggest that you need at least three months' preparation and for bigger events anything from 6 – 12 months.

Promotional Material

Prepare all of the following *before* the event:

- Promotional material and collateral to be used pre- and post- event.
- All follow-up emails.
- Define the Calls to Action (CTAs) you want delegates\attendees to take.
- Provide these CTAs that sales reps can use in their communications pre and post event.

Post Event Actions

1. The first follow-up email should be sent to attendees within 24 hours of the event and include links to any webinar recording and slides.
2. Analyse and distribute event data. As a minimum be sure to track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that align with your overall event goals for example:
 - Leads who registered.
 - Leads who attended.
 - Leads who registered but did not attend.
 - Leads who never registered.
 - New Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs) from post-event lead scores.

⁵⁴ Even if you are just wondering what a virtual exhibition looks like, check out one or two of these.

3. You can also add:

- Event poll responses.
- Survey responses.
- Questions asked during the event.

4. Collect suggestions covering:

- Requests for new event topics.
- Feedback about events to date (interest levels, quality of presentation etc.)

Revenue Generation Possibilities

If the event is one which needs to generate revenue, the main sources of potential revenue are similar to those for physical events:

1. Entrance tickets.
2. Exhibition fees (for company stands).
3. Sponsorships and advertising.

According to [InEvent](#), the ROI for events average 24% - 34%; stands are typically charged out at \$500+ with sponsorships with B2B companies spending \$20,000 on average sponsoring an event (although these do range from about \$200 to much, much more depending upon the event and the sponsorship packages offered).

A word or two of caution. Given the clear benefits and their relatively low cost, it is reasonable to expect an explosion of virtual events. At that point, there is the challenge of attention overload. For your events to be successful – they must be significantly interesting and useful – otherwise they will simply get lost in the digital fog.

Chapter Summary:

Virtual Events offer most of the features of a physical event and a number of significant improvements (cheaper, easier to attend, more flexibility, better event statistics) – and therefore are destined to become an increasingly important facet of digital marketing. You must understand how to use and benefit from them.

Expect even established physical events to become hybrid in the future – the virtual event supporting the physical.

(For a more detailed Guide to Virtual Events, simply [send us an email](#) for your free copy.)

Increase Sales

Right, so you have:

1. Identified your sales prospects.
2. Optimised your website.
3. Launched your digital advertising campaign.
4. Launched your digital marketing campaign.

What else should you do to increase sales? Check out the following:

- **Digital Marketplaces and Business Networks:** They exist and you should check them out to see if they are appropriate for your products and services.
- **Response Preparation:** Prepare standard responses for your sales enquiries (in English and foreign languages).
- **Prepare for the next steps in a successful export program:** Once your export sales in a particular country what should you do to prepare to build on these?
- **Qualify your sales leads:** Carry out credit checks and for EU buyers check their VAT and EORI numbers.

Digital Marketplaces and Business Networks

As we have said elsewhere, unlike B2C commerce which is incredibly well serviced by the likes of: [Amazon](#), [eBay](#), [SAP Ariba](#) and [AliBaba](#)⁵⁵, B2B platforms have to resolve a number of complex problems.

In fact, there are a few online genuine B2B marketplaces where deals can be negotiated and closed. In the main these are specialised niche markets where industry specifications and terms & conditions are standardised. More often, they provide buyer\supplier “matching” services – which are nonetheless extremely valuable e.g. as provided by [Kopiki](#)'s Marketplace Platform (which also allows you to open up your own marketplace by issuing your own RFPs).

The ExportersAlmanac provides lists of:

- [General, Global B2B Business Networks and B2B Market Places.](#)
- [Industry Specific Business Networks & Online Markets.](#)

However, before signing up for any of these, you should check⁵⁶:

- Which electronic marketplaces are suitable for your company.
- The costs of joining and trading.
- The risks of using each marketplace – especially with regards to receiving for payment for your goods or services.

⁵⁵ These platforms do offer some scope for B2B commerce – particularly SAP Ariba which is purely B2B.

⁵⁶ If none of these are relevant\appropriate for your company, don't despair. You can still use the internet to increase your sales using the other tools and channels outlined in this Guide.

Procurement Platforms

Many organisations (both private and public sector) advertise projects which are open to bidding or RFP (Request for Proposal). These may well represent opportunities for your company. However, as a word of caution, qualifying for and preparing responses can be a considerable drain on resources – with no guarantee of success. The smaller your company the more you should look at private tenders (Kopiki) and/or public tenders close to you home. Another approach can be to see who wins these contracts and propose your products and services to them as a sub-contractor.

There are effectively specialised digital market places where a buyers (in the global public and private sectors) request bids for contracts. Registering with the following can result in sales leads being sent to you directly:

1. Kopiki - for private sector contracts;
2. UK National and Regional Government Tenders;
3. EU Government Tenders;
4. Global Procurement Opportunities.

You should note that in order to qualify for bidding for many international contracts there are standard questionnaires which ask whether you have policies in place covering:

- The use of child labour.
- The use of slave labour.
- Anti-bribery and corruption rules.

If you do not have policies in place that show your company takes these issues seriously, you can download templates from:

- Workable – [Child Labour Policy](#).
- VinciWorks - [Free Sample Template for Modern Slavery Act Statement](#).
- VinciWorks – [Anti-bribery and corruption policy](#).

N.B. You should ensure that all your suppliers also have similar policies in place *and that they follow these policies*. Please make these conditions of your supplier onboarding process.

Kopiki

Kopiki is a service which matches buyers with suppliers; cost effectively and efficiently. Kopiki's key value proposition for suppliers is providing highly qualified opportunities. Suppliers can build a relationship and make offers leading to buyer selection and a high chance of business being transacted. This happens in an anonymous interactive marketplace.

How it works:

- The buyer specifies the item they are looking for out of Kopiki's database of 10,000+.
- They then open a Marketplace where buyers and suppliers interact anonymously.
- Once a Marketplace is open, new suppliers are invited to join.
- If the Marketplace is right for you, then you can join.
- You can start building a relationship with the buyer.
- When ready, the buyer will select the suppliers they wish to contact.

- Kopiki does not get involved in the transaction, they just introduce buyers and suppliers.

See the video: [Kopiki B2B Marketplaces](#).

For more details and pricing [click here](#).

See also: Appendix Eight – Kopiki – Case Study of a Successful Marketplace.

UK Government Procurement Opportunities

1. National Government

[Contracts Finder](#) lets you search for information about contracts worth over £10,000 with the UK government and its agencies.

You can use Contracts Finder to:

- Search for contract opportunities in different sectors.
- Find out what's coming up in the future.
- Look up details of previous tenders and contracts.

You can create an account to get email updates and save your searches. You can still search and apply for contracts without an account.

2. Scottish Government

[Public Contracts Scotland](#) lets you search for opportunities with public sector bodies in Scotland.

3. Northern Ireland Government

[eSourcing NI](#) and [eTendersNI](#) list opportunities with public sector bodies in Northern Ireland.

4. Welsh Government

[Sell2Wales](#) publishes opportunities with public sector bodies in Wales.

EU Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)

[SEDIA](#) is the entry point for participants and experts in funding programmes and tenders managed by the European Commission and other EU bodies.

Global Procurement Opportunities.

The opportunities do not end just in the UK or even in the EU, there opportunities to bid for contracts throughout the world. See: [The ExportersAlmanac - Procurement Opportunities](#) for list of procurement information services as well as specific opportunities in specific countries or via multinational organisations (e.g. The World Bank or the United Nations).

Not Sure I want to Export - Exporting is Difficult and High Risk

If you have never exported before, looking at exporting text books and listening to conventional advice, it is not unreasonable to think that trying to export is simply too difficult and risky. In fact, eCommerce can open up a global market for your products and services⁵⁷.

Common misconceptions are (in no particular order):

- I'm too small to export.
- I can't compete overseas.
- You should decide on one new, export market.
- Fiendish documentation.
- Language difficulties abound.
- Difficult to arrange shipping.
- Tariff and Non-tariff barriers too problematic to be overcome.
- Tax Considerations.
- Payment difficulties and currency risks.
- My Intellectual Property is at risk.
- I might break a law I didn't know about.

Well, some of the above concerns may well have been largely valid in the past. However, the good news is that B2B eCommerce resolves all of these. In fact, you will see that exporting actually reduces your risk. So, taking these concerns in turn:

It's better to concentrate on the domestic market.

That may appear understandable, given the seemingly large UK market, but it's a very short sighted view. The UK market, large as it is, accounts for just a small fraction of the world market. In effect, non-exporters with exportable products are saying "I'm not interested in the additional sales that exports could bring." Yet, if a new sales order came to you, say from Yorkshire instead of Germany, would you also say "No, I'm too busy?" Not likely. The "too busy" retort masks the same fears about exporting reflected in the other excuses.

If you are one of the 90.2% of UK SMEs selling only to the UK market, in effect, you are forfeiting a huge potential to increase your sales and profits. One might well ask, "What are you thinking?"

If you sell only to the UK market, your sales volumes depend upon the health of the UK economy. If you develop export markets, however, should the UK market falter for any reason there is the possibility that these can take up slack you experience. By serving a wider portfolio of markets, you actually reduce your risk profile.

There is no doubt that many more of UK non-exporters have the potential to export, especially those with already strong domestic track records and nationwide distribution. If you have survived and succeeded in the UK, one of the world's most competitive marketplaces - you could likely compete anywhere - now is the time to try.

⁵⁷ However, it is certainly true that it is not enough to simply publish a web page and hope for the best.

I'm too small to export.

False! In the UK over 98%⁵⁸ of the exporting firms are SMEs. Many have fewer than 50 employees with annual sales in the £1-10 million range. It is true that large firms typically account for far more total exports by value, but SMEs dominate the exporting population in the UK and most other countries.

Traditionally, it was absolutely true that you had to dedicate significant time, effort and investment. This is now no longer the case. However, this does **not** mean that you do not need to dedicate careful thought to developing your export plan.

Be mindful, however, that when you open yourself to the world, not all responses will reflect serious interest. Some may be scammers or fishers for free samples and proprietary information. Use due-diligence to try to separate “wheat from chaff.” (See: Qualify your Sales Leads.)

I can't compete overseas.

The world is large, with varied needs and interests. If your product is bought domestically, it might well be wanted and affordable somewhere else in the world. What makes your product sell in the home market can help it sell abroad. Price is important, but it is not the only selling point. Other competitive factors are needed: utility, quality, service, credit, consumer taste - these may override price differences.

You should focus on just one, new export market.

Traditionally, companies have been advised to choose a specific country and then conduct a focused export campaign in that country. This means risking success on one market – and entering a market using traditional means requires a not inconsiderable investment of time and money. It may even be necessary to exhibit at trade fairs – when costs can easily run into tens of thousands of pounds.

eCommerce allows you to promote your products and services to the world⁵⁹ – and see who comes to you. (See: Website Traffic Analysis and Response.) You can do all of this without leaving your office.

Fiendish documentation.

It is true that exports require extra documentation and that you may have to adapt your packaging and labelling. However, your freight forwarder and/or customs agents can advise you what is required.

Language difficulties abound.

You must certainly allow for language differences; especially on your website and in your product\service collateral. If you require interpreters for negotiations, these can also be easily and cost-effectively arranged – using online video conferencing. However, solutions can be easily, quickly and cheaply realised.

⁵⁸ Office for National Statistics – UK Exporters: 232,000 SMEs – 3,500 Large Businesses

⁵⁹ But do draw up a list of countries that you cannot or do not want to serve (see Choose your Target Countries.

Difficult to arrange shipping.

Tosh! There are online broking services where you can ask for competing bids for your business. (See the Chapter on Logistics.)

Tariff and non-tariff barriers too problematic to be overcome.

You should certainly be aware of them. In the main, they are relatively minor issues. However, these are not problems that you have to solve by yourself. (Again, see the Chapter on Logistics.)

Tax considerations.

There are indeed tax considerations when exporting; but they are not onerous. The main one to take into account is that you will have different responsibilities for VAT depending on whether you sell to other European Union countries or export your goods outside of the EU. (See the Chapters on Logistics and Trading with the EU (Brexit))

Payment difficulties and currency risks.

You should certainly cover payment and currency risks. However, they are risks that have been faced and resolved by countless companies; so, there are no reasons why you cannot face and resolve the same issues. (See: the chapter Reduce Risk.)

My Intellectual Property (IP) is at risk.

One of the commercial risks you have to cover – whether you are engaged in just domestic trade or overseas trade – is the danger of your IP being stolen. The issues you should consider are covered in the chapter Reduce Risk Intellectual Property (IP).

I might break a law I didn't know about.

While trade laws do vary by country, most are straightforward and non-threatening. For advice and help with contracts etc., consult a lawyer specialising in international trade (See: the Sections on Foreign Legal Liabilities and Risks). For recent UK legislation, you can check the [Official Home of UK Legislation](#).

Successful Export Campaign – Next Steps

In this Guide we concentrate on eCommerce and how you can begin exporting without leaving your office. eCommerce is incredibly powerful in opening up new markets, but once you have your “foot in the door” in order to exploit your opportunities to the maximum, you may then indeed want to establish a direct presence in a country. Only by visiting and then establishing yourself in an export market can you demonstrate your commitment to that market – and fully learn the requirements of that market.

In this case, we would suggest that you consider (at least initially) appointing an agent or distributor. They know the market and have contacts with the end-users. As your representatives in the market, they develop and send you sales orders, arrange for payment, prepare required import documents, and clear the delivered goods through customs. Many are equipped to stock, install and service the goods.

You can search for possible candidates through Chambers of Commerce (see: [The Exporters Almanac Overseas Support](#)) and/or using the [Kompass Directory](#).

If you do decide to go down this road, please take special care to appoint suitable overseas agents and distributors. Some may already represent your competitors, or be so busy they cannot do justice for your products. They may lack the qualifications and/or capabilities claimed, such as the ability to stock, install and service your goods.

Having found one or more candidates, you may find it helpful to consider the points listed in Appendix Six - Agent/Distributor Qualifications Checklist.

A final caveat: Before signing any agreement, you should take legal advice See: [B2BCentral – Foreign Legal Advice](#).

Sales Queries - Response Preparation

It will also be helpful to prepare in advance of receiving any sales enquiries (both domestic and international), a portfolio of standard response emails and attachments – with a clear follow-up process - for fast response to foreign requests for information:

- **Reply quickly or not at all.** Delay implies lack of interest or insensitivity to the prospect's needs. If the query comes from a country which is on your “black list”, just send out a standard “thanks but no thanks” response. Politeness costs nothing and you never know – in the future the situation may change and they represent a hot prospect.
- **Answer all questions.** The enquirer may ask many questions. If one of your standard emails\attachment answers the questions, send that. If not, revise the email\attachment to answer the questions.
- **Use a business-like tone.** Impersonal form responses don't make a good impression; ensure that the responder's: name, title, and phone number are embedded in the email signature. Add customised touches to appear more directly responsive.
- **Reply in the language specified.** Most inquiries are in English. Some are in the enquirer's language but invite a reply in English (but even then, replying in their language makes a very good impression.)

Qualify your Sales Leads

There are checks that you should carry out on both hot sales leads as well as your current clients (if a client's credit rating deteriorates, you may have to consider whether or how much you will still sell to them on open account):

- Credit reports – especially if you take any credit or other commercial risk on current or potential buyers.
- Check EU buyers' VAT and EORI numbers.

Graydon Credit Reports

Graydon Credit Reports provide all the information you need to correctly estimate the risk of non-payment⁶⁰ and to identify growth opportunities. See: Appendix Ten – Graydon Credit Reports.

EU Buyer Checks

For EU based buyers, once you have identified them you should also check their [VAT](#) and [EORI](#) numbers – which you will need for commercial and customs documentation.

⁶⁰ One third of all invoices are paid late or not at all which has a direct impact on your profit margin.

Chapter Summary:

To further your chances of increasing sales:

Review digital marketplaces and business networks: They may represent additional sales channels and procurement platforms are actually advertising for bids for contracts.

Exporting is difficult and high risk? This Guide sets out how you can make exporting easy. Export markets spread the risk of a single (domestic) market – if one market contracts there is the possibility that one or other of the export markets can compensate. Exporting is a standard *risk reduction strategy* – and it is an option open to most companies.

Response Preparation: Prepare a portfolio of standard emails and a clear follow-up process.

Successful export campaign? – Next steps: Considerations to take into account should your export campaign be successful.

Sales Queries – Response Preparation: Prepare standard responses in English and foreign languages to facilitate prompt responses.

Qualify your sales leads: Take out credit references on potential buyers. For EU leads you should also check their VAT and EORI numbers.

Competitor Analysis

(Analyse your competitors and improve your marketing position!)

Your competitors are likely to be both domestic and foreign. There are many resources available which enable you to analyse the competition (and maybe find some competitors you didn't know you had*). Once you have carried out your analyses, you can then determine how to optimise your strengths and redress any weaknesses.

We have divided this process into four main steps:

1. Domestic Company Profiles.

Find the names and details of your competitors, then check their trading profile and credit status.

2. Country Analysis.

See where your overseas competitors are based⁶¹.

3. Foreign Competitor Profiles.

Find the names and details of your competitors, then check their trading profile and credit status.

4. Online Competition.

Check the quality of your competitors' (both domestic and international) websites.

Domestic Company Profiles

In the same way as you can search for potential clients, you can search for competitors by using:

1. Kompass (See: Appendix Three – Accessing the Kompass Directory).
2. Graydon to check their financial status (See: Appendix Ten – Graydon Credit Reports).

Country Analysis

Where are your competitors based? These two ITC services will indicate which countries are providing your international competition:

- ITC's Trade Map - Identify those countries which are home to your competitors.
- ITC's Export Potential Map - Identify those countries which are providers of potential competition.

Once you have your country list, move to the next section Company Profiles to find the names and details of actual and potential competitors.

⁶¹ You will see we indicate a number of resources from the ITC. The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the only development agency that is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Established in 1964, the International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations.

ITC's Trade Map

[Trade Map](#) provides - in the form of tables, graphs and maps - indicators on export performance, international demand, alternative markets and competitive markets, as well as a directory of importing and exporting companies. Trade Map covers 220 countries and territories and 5,300 products of the [Harmonized System](#). The monthly, quarterly and yearly trade flows are available from the most aggregated level to the tariff line level.

N.B. Users located in the UK have [restricted access](#) to Trade Map. Click [here](#) for free registration - which gives a wider access to Trade Map or to access the full versions of the tools click [here](#) to subscribe. (\$900 p.a. for an Institutional License allowing all employees of the institution to create their own account based on the institution's email extension (domain).

ITC's Export Potential Map

The [Export Potential Map](#) is a **free** tool that turns economic analysis into practical trade information.

Searching by Product or Country, Export Potential Map showcases results from the [ITC export potential and diversification assessment methodology](#) that identifies:

1. Products, markets and suppliers with (untapped) export potential.
2. Opportunities for export diversification.

Having now identified which countries are offering (actual and/or potential) competition, you can then move on to the next stage of identifying specific actual and potential competitors in those countries.

Foreign Competitor Profiles

Finding the company profiles of your foreign competitors is exactly the same process as for domestic competitors – you simply add the relevant countries of interest as an added filter. (See: Appendix Three – Accessing the Kompass Directory.)

Online Competition

Media Presence

It may be worth considering using a [Newsclipping Service](#) to check out what is being said in the media about your competition and yourselves.

Website Positioning

Know the web addresses of your competitors? There are a number of tools that you can use to analyse the websites of your competitors - some are free, most require a subscription (in which case they usually offer a free trial period).

The insights these tools provide can help you to improve your own website and digital marketing campaign. In doing so, be sure to:

- **Analyse your actual competitors.**
There's no use in trying to punch above your weight and take on major companies who have made major investments in their website and website support services.

- **Focus on metrics first.**
Take a data-driven approach to analysis first. Try to pick out as many metrics before trying to break down the “why” of their marketing.
- **Turn analysis into action.**
Make sure the data you uncover translates into some sort of action.

See the tools available at:

- [The ExportersAlmanac - Free Online Support Tools & Guides](#) - Competitor Analysis
- [The ExportersAlmanac - Commercial Online Support Tools](#) - Competitor Analysis

Final Steps

Having identified and profiled your competitors, assess your own market position and determine what, if anything, you should do to strengthen your market profile and collateral.

Chapter Summary:

Domestic Competitors: Use the Kompass directory to find the profiles of your British competitors.

Country Analysis: Use the ITC tools to find where your overseas competitors are based.

Foreign Competitors: Use the results of your country analysis to search the Kompass directory for the profiles of your foreign competitors.

Media Presence: Use a Newsclipping service to check out your competitor’s positioning compared to yours.

Online competition: Once you have the names and web addresses of your competitors check their websites to assess them as competitors in the world of eCommerce.

Having identified and profiled your competitors, assess your own market position and determine what, if anything, you should do to strengthen your market profile and collateral.

Find New Suppliers

Reduce your Costs and Supply Chain risk! Recent events have demonstrated the dangers of depending upon single suppliers and/or suppliers from a single country and indeed from the EU itself. The Supply Chain challenge for the future is how to diversify.

In this chapter we set out how you can search for new suppliers without leaving your desk. These are the same techniques as described in the chapter Increase Sales, only this time you are looking for suppliers rather than buyers – this process should also include taking out credit references.

N.B. In addition to the referencing checks that we recommend you carry out, you should also review potential suppliers' compliance policies regarding: child labour, slave labour as well as bribery and corruption (See: Procurement Platforms). If there any problems with your suppliers' policies, these can represent, if not a legal liability, then certainly significant reputational risk⁶².

Domestic Suppliers.

Access and search the Kompass Directory – 600,000+ UK companies! (See: Appendix Three – Accessing the Kompass Directory.) You can also try [Applegate](#) to compare quotes for business purchases.

Issue RFPs.

You can use Kopiki to discover new suppliers in the UK and abroad. Kopiki's key value proposition for buyers is the ability to reduce costs by finding the right supplier and most powerfully comparing your existing and new suppliers to benchmark for best value. This happens in an anonymous interactive marketplace. For more information and to register as a potential buyer, [click here](#).

International Markets.

[Shortlist international markets](#) for potential suppliers, using:

- ITC's [Export Potential Map](#) – To find the countries with the greatest potential.
- ITC's [Trade Map](#) – To identify those countries which export specific goods.
- Your own policy considerations - Limits on: distance, language, time zone etc.? (Browse [The ExportersAlmanac's - Country Profiles](#) to find and/or reject countries of interest.)
- [HMRC's Look Up Service](#) - To check what import tariffs may be applicable. High tariffs would indicate a major barrier to import opportunities.

International Suppliers

Access and search the Kompass Directory – 33 million companies worldwide! (See: Appendix Three – Accessing the Kompass Directory.)

⁶² See [CommonDreams](#): 'We Blew It': Nike Admits to Mistakes over Child Labor''

Chapter Summary:

It's easy to search for new, potential suppliers. Diversifying your supply chain should be a major consideration in your risk reduction and management strategy.

Domestic suppliers: Search the Kompass directory.

Issue RFPs: Use the Kopiki service to issue your own RFPs.

International markets: Use the ITC services to determine which countries could provide potential suppliers.

International suppliers: With the list of countries of potential suppliers, use the Kompass directory to find profiles of suitable companies.

Trading with the EU (Brexit)

The UK has now (finally) left the EU and the transition period ended on the 31st December, 2020. Trade is now continuing between the UK and the EU under the terms of [The Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#). However, there are a number of sections of this Agreement which have been granted grace periods before being fully enforced. It should also be said that negotiations continue on a number of issues not covered by the Agreement. Therefore, the trading situation between the EU and the UK should be considered as “dynamic”.

Although the Agreement provides for Free Trade between the UK and the EU, this does not mean there are no trade barriers.

- The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement secured preferential tariff and quota-free trade. However, both UK and EU traders must follow ‘rules of origin’. Any products not respecting these rules may well be subject to tariffs.
- There are significant documentary and checking requirements (see below). These are resulting in higher shipment costs as well as shipment delays.
- The changes in the VAT regime have resulted in significant barriers to trade; especially for:
 - Trades of small volumes and values.
 - Trades involve more than one EU country.
- Trade between Northern Ireland and the Great Britain is now governed by [The Northern Ireland Protocol](#), which requires extra documentation and checks on trade between the two.

It is not possible to cover all the changes agreed and how they affect traders in this Guide. Although, a number of points for your consideration are set out below, we recommend that you take professional advice⁶³ before taking any action.

The situation has certainly created a number of challenges for trading with the EU. It is not as straightforward as was previously the case. (If it is any consolation, once you have resolved these challenges, then you should be much better prepared for trading with the rest of the world – so allowing you to cast your net much wider.)

Documentary Considerations

Commercial Invoices

A commercial invoice has always been required for shipments that travel outside the EU and is used as a customs declaration from the person or business that is exporting the item(s). Shipments to EU countries also now require a full commercial invoice. There is specific information that is required in the document (such as the HS code) so get up to speed on creating commercial invoices now! Full details from the UK Government are [available here](#).

Commodity & Product Codes

You now have to match all your goods to commodity codes or faced blocked clearance and the wrong tax payments.

⁶³ TradeTech Solutions is **not** qualified to offer this advice. In any case, the situation can be considered to be “dynamic” and points raised in this Guide may well have different solutions in the future.

The relevant commodity codes are made up with a range of digits that identify a particular product. They specify the type of product, materials used and the production method as follows:

- HS Code digits: It starts with the global standard – Harmonised System, or HS code, – which is a minimum of six digits.
- EU additional digits: The EU has added up to a further 8 – making potentially 14. These extra EU numbers include: 2 digits CN heading (Combined Nomenclature); 2 digits TARIC (Integrated Tariff of the European Communities) Subheading. 10 digits is the most common. But it is possible to add 4 more under the additional TARIC code.

Goods sent abroad (not just to the EU but also to anywhere else) require a valid commodity or HS code to identify the duties payable and other shipping information. Not having a code, or using the incorrect code, can cause delays and even result in fines and/or confiscation and destruction of the shipment. These codes are [available via HMRC](#).

For further details and for a full range of international codes, see also: The ExportersAlmanac: [Bank, Corporate, Industry & Product Codes](#).

Customs Procedure Codes

Those businesses making their own customs declaration for either exports or imports will also require [Customs Procedure Codes \(CPC\)](#) to classify the nature of the goods movement e.g. when the items may be a temporarily imported before returning to the UK. Incorrect coding could result in incorrect duties being levied.

Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) numbers

If you are trading with, or thinking of trading with, the EU, you will need a [GB EORI](#) and an EU EORI⁶⁴ number for:

- Customs declarations to move your goods into UK/EU.
- Correspondence and rulings from UK/EU customs.

Furthermore, if you are a regular trader of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland then in addition to a ‘normal’ EORI you will require an [XI EORI registration](#).

Import Licences

Certain goods require the importer to obtain a licence or certificate from various UK government departments. This includes animals, plants, agricultural products, medicines, chemicals and weapons.

National Export System

Regular traders with EU countries wishing to manage their own customs declarations will need to register for the [National Export System](#) to facilitate online declarations. An alternative is to use a recognised freight carrier or forwarder.

⁶⁴ If you need help in applying for an EU EORI number, [Avalara can help you](#).

VAT Considerations

The Brexit EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes a Protocol on cooperation and combating VAT, customs and excise fraud, plus mutual assistance between the EU and UK on recovering tax claims. This creates a framework between the UK and EU27 member states to assist each other in compliance with VAT legislation and protecting VAT revenues and recovering tax and duties on each other's behalf.

If UK Sellers want to keep selling to customers in any EU state from stocks in the UK, they must VAT register in each target country immediately. Failure to do so will trigger immediate liabilities to fines. The EU customs authorities will also challenge you as to why you are not supplying them with an EU VAT number when you are importing goods. An alternative is to move a proportion of UK-held stocks to somewhere in the EU and sell on a distance selling-basis from there. Furthermore, UK businesses with an EU VAT registration will also need a Fiscal Rep in up to 19 of the EU 27 countries⁶⁵. These requirements have resulted in smaller traders no longer exporting to the EU.

EU sellers using their local VAT numbers to sell to UK customers, now have to apply for a UK VAT registration number immediately or risk incurring UK fines and penalties. This – and the additional shipping costs – has resulted in some EU sellers now refusing to sell to UK customers.

B2C Considerations

Some of the biggest immediate impacts are being felt in UK companies selling to EU consumers via online marketplaces. Most major marketplaces will block sellers to the UK or EU if their goods are not first cleared through customs and VAT checks. For example, if you are selling into the EU via Amazon you must take immediate action to ensure that you are blocked on Amazon's Fulfilment By Amazon (FBA) program. This will require you to ship the goods to an Amazon EU fulfilment centre (in either: France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic) pay EU import VAT (and any applicable tariffs) and complete the export and import declarations **before sales can be made**.

You should note that VAT requirements also apply to B2C EU sales of electronic services.

B2B Considerations

The outline requirements relating to documentation and VAT for UK EU trade in goods are listed above. If you trade in services, you should check out the UK government's guidance on [selling services to the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein](#).

Customer Considerations

To avoid upsetting customers, you may have to rethink the delivery terms e.g. DAP or DDP (see Pricing and Payment Terms below). These clarify who is responsible for customs clearance and paying any extra shipping costs, tariffs and import VAT (and that it is clear to both parties how much this **before** any sales are agreed).

⁶⁵ Fiscal representatives for processing VAT or GST are not required for EU countries alone but also Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Japan, South Africa, Australia and South Korea. – More can be expected to be added to that list.

Delivery expectations should also be set to take into account any delays that may occur due to the requirements for extra documentation and customs checks.

EU Trading Laws

Although the UK has left the EU, companies wanting to trade with the EU will still have to ensure that their products and services are traded in compliance with EU law; which is also true for any trade with any other country in the world.

In terms of eCommerce the latest developments within the EU are:

➤ [The Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act](#)

The Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act encompass a single set of new rules applicable across the whole EU. They will create a safer and more open digital space, with European values at its centre.

The DSA and DMA have two main goals:

1. to create a safer digital space in which the fundamental rights of all users of digital services are protected.
2. to establish a level playing field to foster innovation, growth, and competitiveness, both in the European Single Market and globally.

➤ [eCommerce Directive](#)

The e-Commerce Directive is the foundational legal framework for online services in the Internal Market. The purpose of the Directive is to remove obstacles to cross-border online services in the EU and provide legal certainty to business and citizens.

The Directive sets out basic requirements on mandatory consumer information, steps to follow in online contracting and rules on commercial communications (e.g. online advertisements and unsolicited commercial communications).

➤ [.eu domains](#)

As advised by the [UK Government](#) and the latest [.eu domain name notice](#) from the European Commission:

You are not able to register or renew .eu domain names if:

- Your organisation, business or undertaking is established in the UK but not in the EU/European Economic Area (EEA) or
- You live outside of the EU/EEA and are not an EU/EEA citizen.

You can only register or hold .eu domain names if you are:

- an EU/EEA citizen, independently of where you live.
- not an EU/EEA citizen but resident in the EU/EEA.
- an organisation, business or undertaking that is established in the EU/EEA.

You may still satisfy the eligibility criteria if you have your registered office, central administration, or principal place of business within the EU/EEA, are established within the EU/EEA, or are a natural person resident in the EU/EEA.

Professional Advice

As stated above, this Guide does not provide professional advice. Should you require such advice, then we suggest that you contact, as appropriate:

- **Your Accountant.**
- **Your Freight Forwarder** (They can complete declarations at UK and EU customs).
- **Your Fast Parcel Operator** (They transport parcels and freight internationally within a specific timeframe. This may include customs clearance. A number have been approved by HMRC to move goods under simplified memorandum of understanding.)
- **Your Customs Agent or Broker.** (They ensure goods clear through customs, and may act as a direct or indirect representative. This may include lodging import/export customs declarations to Customs (HMRC in the UK) and facilitating the payment of import duties, VAT, excise duty etc. on behalf of importers and exporters.
- [Avalara's Brexit Hub](#) (in addition to providing advice, Avalara can help with getting fiscal representation in any EU country – as well as any EORI numbers you may need.)
- [Sage's Brexit Hub](#) (You can read Sage's free guide to Brexit, or watch their webinar which outlines some of the key changes and what actions you may need to take.
- [The ExportersAlmanac - Brexit](#) (for a comprehensive list of Brexit related resources).

Suggested Check List

Although this Guide does not provide professional advice, it is possible, to provide a checklist to help you prepare questions you may have for the experts.

1. Do you need extra VAT registrations to continue selling?
2. Do you need to appoint multiple EU Fiscal Representatives?
3. Can you avoid the import VAT trap?
4. Are you in the clear on VAT & goods clearance for Amazon FBA sales?
5. Do you need a new VAT registration to continue selling digital services?
6. Have you got UK and EU EORI numbers to clear goods?
7. Have you got the right commercial terms for your customer?
8. Are you ready to complete customs declarations?
9. How do you pick the right commodity code?
10. Are you sure you will pay the right import tariffs? Whilst most goods should be zero-rated, you will face a hefty tax bill if you do not follow the 'rules of origin' requirements; and your customer will have their deliveries held up.
11. Do you use a .eu domain? Are you eligible to renew this? If not, what are your plans?

Chapter Summary:

Although the UK has left the EU and the transition period has ended, there are still remaining grace periods for some regulations. Furthermore, there are still issues which are subject to ongoing negotiations. Therefore, the trading environment should be considered to be “dynamic”.

Although the Agreement allows for free trade between the UK and the EU, there are a number of trade barriers:

- Increased requirements for documents and certificates.
- Extra EORI & VAT registration requirements.
- New VAT payment requirements.
- Products containing a high margin of elements sourced from outside the UK may be subject to tariffs.
- Companies providing digital services will still have to comply with EU Regulations.
- UK companies can no longer use .eu domains.

It also has to be said that trade with Great Britain\Northern Ireland is also suffering as a result of the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

As a result of these trade barriers, shipments are now experiencing delays and increased costs.

These all may require companies to change their terms of trade with the EU.

Logistics, Tariffs and Supply Chain Management

(The previous chapter deals specifically with trade with the EU and the EEA. This chapter covers international trade in general.)

This chapter indicates online services you can use which:

1. Help you find the best transport deals.
2. Address some of the key tariff and tax considerations.
3. Address documentary issues regarding the formalities of international trade.
4. Cover issues relating to export packaging and labelling.
5. Help you find the best insurance deals.
6. Assist in the management of your supply chain.

Transport

Freight Forwarders

Transporting your products is clearly a requirement for both domestic and export deliveries – and for many products the cost of delivery is a key price element.

The sooner the goods arrive, the sooner you get paid, so speed is essential. However, faster transport may cost more. The procedures, routes and rates vary with the transport mode -- truck, rail, air or sea. Use international freight forwarders to ship exports. They can:

- Compare the costs, lead times, and transit times for each transport option; select the best option; and make the booking.
- Prepare the required documentation.
- Handle the packing, marking and labelling.
- Transport the goods from the factory to the foreign destination.
- Obtain cargo insurance.
- Arrange to clear the goods through customs on arrival.

Their fees can then be factored into the final price. See: [The ExportersAlmanac - Freight Forwarders](#) for a list of British freight forwarders as well as a number of price comparison services.

Authorised Economic Operators (AEOs)

If you are engaged in international trade, an additional consideration is whether your freight forwarder is an AEO. AEOs can provide quicker and easier passage through customs in the UK and abroad. AEO accreditation is designed to simplify customs duty and tax compliance, safeguard security and support supply chain risk management. Border processes are more efficient and faster for approved businesses and their clients as they are recognised as low risk and are therefore less likely to be delayed due to examinations.

For more information see: TradeTech's [AEODirectory](#) – where you can also search the database to check whether your freight forwarder has AEO Accreditation and [The ExportersAlmanac Logistics](#) for Authorised Economic Operator related Information.

Tariffs and Tax Considerations

Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers.

Tariffs

You certainly need to understand whether tariffs are applicable and how they will affect your pricing. Tariffs are payable by the importer. Therefore, whether your company will be liable for these payments depends upon whether you are the exporter or the importer. Whether tariffs are applicable and at what rate can be easily checked using online tools available via this Guide e.g. The UK Government's [Trade Tariff Look Up](#).

Non-tariff barriers

Governments use a variety of techniques other than import duties to control imports, some to limit them quantitatively (e.g. quotas); to preserve scarce foreign exchange (exchange controls); to control who can import (permitting); or to comply with health, safety or technical standards. Non-tariff barriers consist of:

1. Extra documentation requirements.
2. Embargoes.
3. Exchange controls (limiting the transfer of foreign currency out of a country).
4. Quotas.
5. Sanctions.

You should research these potential non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in each target country. Again, between British Government and commercial services indicated in this Guide, these can all be checked (in any case, points 2 – 5 rarely apply to trade between the UK and the major, Western economies).

Tax and Tax Reporting Considerations

If you sell to other countries in the EU, you must keep records and submit details of these sales on your VAT return. If you have a high level of sales to EU countries, you must complete an [Intrastat Supplementary declaration](#).

If you sell to countries outside the EU, you must keep documents that count as proof of export. These must identify:

- The exporter.
- The customer.
- The goods and their value.
- The export destination.
- The mode of transport and the route.

In both cases, most goods you export will be zero-rated for VAT. You should check with [HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\)](#).

International Trade: Documentary Formalities

Customs Clearance

If you are importing or exporting you may need assistance with customs clearance. As indicated in [The ExportersAlmanac – Logistics](#) - Customs Brokers can provide all the information and services you need to cover your import\export customs clearance requirements – so you don't have to worry about this.

Export\Import Documentation

As a first step, if exporting, your buyer should be able to tell you what their requirements are. However, you can also check⁶⁶ the relevant requirements with:

- Your freight forwarder.
- Your customs broker.
- [The ExportersAlmanac - UK Logistics Services](#).
- [The ExportersAlmanac - Reference Resources for UK Exporters](#).

International Trade: Product Codes and Packaging & Labelling

Product Codes

As also indicated in the Chapter Trading with the EU (Brexit), Commodity and Product Codes are important elements for completing import and export documentation. They determine if any tariffs or quotas will apply to the trade. Any mistakes in these codes can result in: delays, fines or the incorrect imposition of tariffs. Therefore, it is absolutely critical to identify goods with the correct code. These codes are [available via HMRC](#) – or your freight forwarder or customs broker.

For further details and for a full range of international codes, see also: The ExportersAlmanac: [Bank, Corporate, Industry & Product Codes](#).

Export Shipping Packaging and Marking

Export packages need to be properly marked and labelled to meet shipping regulations, ensure proper handling, conceal the identity of the contents, and help receivers identify shipments. The buyer usually specifies export marks that should appear on the cargo, e.g.:

- Mark containers legibly to prevent misunderstandings and delays in shipping.
- Stencil lettering onto packages in waterproof ink.
- Markings should appear on three faces of the package -- on the top and on the two ends or the two sides.
- Old markings must be completely removed.

⁶⁶ If the goods are incorrectly packaged or labelled or not supported by the correct documentation, then there is the risk that goods will be impounded by the importing country's customs authorities; and that is not in anyone's interests.

Product Packaging and Labelling

Any goods exported will be subject to the labelling and packaging regulations of the importing country. Therefore, these must be agreed with the importer before concluding any contract and exporting the goods concerned.

General Considerations

Exported goods face greater physical risks in transit than domestic shipments. They are more vulnerable to breakage, theft, and damage. At some ports, goods may still be loaded or unloaded in a net or by a sling, conveyor, chute, or other method, putting added strain on the package. In the hold, goods might be stacked atop each other or bump sharply against other goods in transit. Overseas, handling facilities may not be up to domestic standards, so the cargo might be dragged, pushed, rolled, or dropped. Moisture from condensation is also a danger, even if the ship's hold is equipped with air conditioning and a dehumidifier. The cargo also might be unloaded in the rain. Some foreign ports do not have covered storage facilities.

To minimise problems:

- Use strong, reinforced boxes or crates to pack the goods. Seal and fill with lightweight, moisture-resistant material. Distribute the weight evenly to brace the container.
- To deter theft, use strapping, seals, or shrink wrapping where possible.
- Don't list the contents or show brand names on the outside of the packages.
- For sea shipments, containerise your cargo whenever possible.
- For air shipments, you can use lighter weight packing, but still take precautions.

See also: [The ExportersAlmanac Packaging & Labelling](#).

Shipping Insurance

Are you getting the best deal on your shipping insurance? If you are not sure, then check out the options available via [B2BCentral](#).

As a Seller (Exporter)

You are responsible arranging and paying for the shipping insurance, if you are selling on either CIF, DAP or DDP terms. (The cargo insurance policy should protect against "general average" liability.) Otherwise, the buyer (importer) is responsible.

As a Buyer (Importer)

You are responsible arranging and paying for the shipping insurance, if you are buying on: ex-works, FOB or C&F terms. (Again, the cargo insurance policy should protect against "general average" liability.) Otherwise, the seller (exporter) is responsible.

Supply Chain Management Platforms

There are a number of platforms which help you manage your supply chain (see: [The ExportersAlmanac - Supply Chain Solutions](#)). Depending on your circumstances they can help to significantly reduce the costs of managing your supply chain – and make it much more efficient.

Chapter Summary:

Freight Forwarders: They can solve most – if not all - of the issues relating to organising the shipment of your exports.

Tariffs and Tax Considerations: There are some – but they are not onerous.

International Trade: Documentary Formalities: Suggestions as to how you can cover the documentation you will need for international trade.

Packaging and Labelling: Check what is needed; don't guess, it's too risky.

Shipping Insurance: If you are responsible for transport insurance i.e. selling on C.I.F. terms, check out B2BCentral to see if you're getting the best deal.

Supply Chain Management: There are a number of useful platforms out there – but those using blockchain are going to have a major impact. Much more on this in the next edition.

Financial Services

One of the biggest limits on expanding SME business is the difficulty and cost of accessing financial services. If this is a problem that you are facing, it is important to find the right solution for your business, fast.

In this chapter, we show you how you can access the following services today:

1. Debt collection.
2. Find the funding you need.
3. Foreign exchange and international payment services.
4. Insurance - trade, cargo and general business policies.
5. Online payment services.

Debt Collection

Your buyer hasn't paid? You didn't take out credit insurance? It's bad news but not necessarily the end of the road. It is possible to sell your "bad debt" to a Debt Collection agency.

If this is a problem you are facing, [B2BCentral](#) provides access to the service you need.

Funding

There are many sources of funds available to businesses, but it is often difficult to know what is available, from whom and at what cost. Therefore, we present two sources of funding for you to [check out](#):

Ebury

Ebury offers an exceedingly attractive proposition:

- Unsecured finance lines No guarantees required!
- Total flexibility No cost, no commitment credit lines – use them only when you need them.

If you have invoices available for discounting and/or you need to finance your purchases, then Ebury offers attractive invoice financing solutions.

No matter whether you are a buyer or a supplier, one of the best ways to finance your trade is to generate finance against invoices. There are three basic structures:

1. **For Suppliers:** Receivables Finance: Ebury pays you a proportion of the invoice when you issue it (e.g. 90%). When payment is received on the due date you then receive the balance (10%) less the interest charge.
2. **For Buyers:** Payables Finance: Ebury pays invoices for goods as you receive them (allowing you to negotiate a better price for cash payment) and then grants you a period to repay the amount advanced giving you the time you need to sell the goods.

Other Benefits:

- Off-balance sheet financing.
- Unsecured (no title over goods, no all-assets debentures, no collateral required).
- No personal guarantees.
- Free to set up.
- Free to have in place (no regular fees, admin fees etc.).

Furthermore, if you are an importer or exporter these solutions can reduce exchange rate uncertainties.

If you would like more information and to make a no commitment application, [click here](#).

If your profile⁶⁷ and/or requirements do not match the above, then try Fund Finder.

Fund Finder

Every business is different. That's why Funder Finder has access to a range of funding types to suit every need. They offer a free and easy way to research and find finance for your business. The Funder Finder engine uses straightforward information to match you with an impressive selection of funders within minutes, offering access to a broad range of funding products from across the UK.

- **Funding Types include:**

Asset Finance, Business Loans, Commercial Property Finance and Other Types of Funding.

- **Situational content to support you through your journey, such as:**

The Big Idea, Starting Up, Growing Fast, Surviving a Recession, Building for the Future, Exit Strategy.

1. Free and simple to use.
2. Over 140 funding choices.
3. Funds of £500 to £50 million available.

For more information and to search for business funding (it takes just a few minutes) [click here](#).

Foreign Exchange and International Payment Services

If you have foreign exchange (FX) denominated contracts – either issuing them or having to pay them – getting the best possible exchange rates and speed of payment gives a direct benefit to your bottom line (and cash flow). Even if you think that your FX provider is giving you the best deal, why not check this out with Ebury?

Ebury gets to know your business, trade flows and risk appetite to find cost-effective FX and risk management solutions:

- Convert money across currencies - transactions in more than 130 currencies (including "exotics").

⁶⁷ **Ideal Client Profiles:** Companies with a turnover of over £1 million and Shareholder Funds of over £100,000 - Companies with good FX exposure are also more likely to be approved and get cheaper lines.

- Manage your FX risk (Large 0% deposit credit lines - For forward contracts, banks and brokers typically take a deposit to counteract the large amount of counterparty risk they are exposed to. Due to Ebury's strong balance sheet, Ebury can offer you a reduced or 0% deposit facility).
- Efficient distribution - Ebury is dedicated to ensuring that your funds are transferred in the most efficient way possible.
- Spot transactions, forward contracts, NDFs, market orders and hedging for multiple currency exposures are all covered.
- Finance your payables and receivables.
- See your currency balances and statements.
- View your account details for global collections (24/7 Account Access).

For examples of how Ebury has helped companies with their foreign exchange requirements see: Appendix Seven – Ebury Business Cases.

To sign up with Ebury in three steps (with no step costs and no commitments), [click here](#).

Insurance

Insurance is an important and necessary element in protecting your company. To help you manage these costs, we would suggest that you take a few minutes to get some competitive quotes for:

1. Trade Credit Insurance – covering any credit you may extend.
2. Cargo Insurance – covering any goods you have in transit.
3. UK General Business Insurance – for any other business insurance requirements you may have.

Just check out the offers at [B2BCentral](#).

Online Payment Services

N.B. If you do offer an online payment service, then it is even more important that you secure your site using a Secure Socket Layer (SSL) to ensure that all data is encrypted and protected.

If your company offers online sales, then you require the services of an online payment provider to process those payments. There are a number of points to consider before deciding which payment provider to commission; e.g.

- Are sales B2C and/or B2B?
- Is the customer expected to use debit/credit cards exclusively or are bank to bank transfers required?
- What volumes of payments do you expect (in terms of numbers of transactions and overall transaction values)?
- Are payments to be made via mobile devices?

Accepting Credit and Debit Cards Online

Enabling customers to pay with their credit or debit card on your website is the most basic way you can accept online payments – often enhanced by also accepting payments via PayPal.

If you decide to offer this feature, you will have to decide whether to have your own dedicated merchant account or use an intermediary aggregated account. Choosing one method over the other will mean different business processes and funding times.

- With a dedicated merchant account, transaction proceeds, less processing fees, are deposited directly into your bank account.
- With an aggregated account, the transaction proceeds go to the service provider and are then deposited to your bank account according to the service provider's T&Cs.
- To obtain a dedicated credit card processing merchant account, your business will have to go through a comprehensive credit evaluation.
- To obtain an aggregated account requires a lot less information and analysis and so can be much quicker and easier to set-up.
- Depending on the number of cards you wish to accept, you may need a number of separate accounts for processing a wide range of cards.

Accepting Mobile Payments

These payment services allow merchants to accept credit card payments directly through their mobile devices, making it possible for devices such as the iPhone, the iPad and Android smartphones to act as a mobile point of sale (POS) checkout system.

eInvoicing

Electronic invoicing or, click-to-pay invoicing, involves sending your customers an invoice by email with an online payment option to pay with a few clicks instead.

Escrow Payments

This is where funds are held in escrow and paid out to the beneficiary once agreed documentation has been presented. This gives the supplier the comfort of knowing that funds are available for payment and the buyer knows that payment will only be made only when the contract has been fulfilled.

Online Payment Gateways

By adding a simple online payment form, customers can pay your business directly on your website. Returning customers can even create accounts to save their payment information for fast and easy repeat payments.

Scheduled Recurring Billing

Via Direct Debits or Standing Orders. Again, you can add these options to your website.

Pricing Models

The pricing that you can expect will depend upon a number of factors but you should be looking out for:

- Set-up fees?
- Monthly subscription charges?
- Transaction charges (and are they different for different cards)?
- Are there separate Gateway Fees – in addition to transaction fees?

- When a transaction is refunded, are there extra fees? Is any of the initial transaction fee repaid? You should build these costs into your customer return policy.
- Minimum contract periods and cancellations fees?

You should then balance these against the following:

Processing Time:	How much time is needed to process payments to receive them into your account?
Country Availability:	Can you receive payments in your country?
Currency Support:	How many currencies are covered? What exchange rates are charged to receive FX payments into your own currency? Can you hold foreign currency balances?
Payment Methods:	Does it support your preferred payment methods?
Transfer Limits:	Are there any limits as to how much money you can receive at once?
Technical Support:	If your payments hit a snag, will the processor be there to support you until you are back up and running? Make sure to ask if they have live customer support.

For a list of Payment Service Providers check out [The ExportersAlmanac ePayment Solutions](#).

Chapter Summary:

Debt collection: If you have unpaid invoices, sell them to a Debt Collection Agency.

Ebury: Provides flexible invoice discounting lines (no guarantees required) and cost effective foreign exchange and risk management solutions.

Fund Finder: Funds from £500 to £50 million from over 140 funding choices for a range of purposes.

Insurance: Find the best deals for: Trade Credit, Cargo and UK General Business insurance.

Online Payment Services: There a wide range of services and service providers supporting your online payments' requirements.

Reduce Risk

All commerce entails risk. The entire world includes scam artists, fishers for samples and proprietary information, etc. A number of the issues we cover below apply equally to the offline as well as the online world. eCommerce opens up many new opportunities but you must ensure that you are fully protected against whatever might come through the ether. The key is to manage and reduce these risks. In this chapter we cover:

1. Bribery and Corruption.
2. Country Risk.
3. Credit Referencing.
4. Cyber Security.
5. Foreign Exchange.
6. Foreign Legal Liabilities and Risks.
7. Identity and eSignatures.
8. Insurance.
9. Intellectual Property (IP).
10. Pricing and Payment Terms.

N.B. You also run risks when relying on a single supplier or just a few buyers. If either of these is the case, you should look to check the options in the chapters Digital Marketing, Increase Sales and Find New Suppliers.

Bribery and Corruption

It is illegal⁶⁸ to offer, promise, give, request, agree, receive or accept bribes - an anti-bribery policy can help protect your business. You should have an anti-bribery policy if there is a risk that someone who works for you or on your behalf might be exposed to bribery.

Your anti-bribery policy should be appropriate to the level of risk your business faces. Your policy should include:

- Your approach to reducing and controlling the risks of bribery.
- Rules about accepting gifts, hospitality or donations.
- Guidance on how to conduct your business, e.g. negotiating contracts.
- Rules on avoiding or stopping conflicts of interest.

See: [UK Government Anti-bribery policy](#).

Take elementary precautions to learn about potential business partners. Graft and corruption are common in many countries. The line between what's customary and tolerable, and what's excessive or illegal, is not always clear. If necessary, seek advice from a lawyer or a country specialist in a trade assistance organisation.

⁶⁸ The UK Bribery Act ("the Act"), which entered into force on 1 July 2011, has consolidated the existing law, and has introduced a new offence of failure to prevent bribery. The Act is very widely drafted, and has an ambitious territorial application, which extends far beyond the shores of the United Kingdom.

Country Risk

When selling to another country, you run the risk relative to that country (“Political Risk”). Political upheavals can cause dramatic changes, including shifts in economic policy, nationalisation, expropriations, loss of personal rights, and physical danger. Political strife can prompt foreign reactions in the form of economic sanctions, boycotts, and embargoes. It is therefore important for you to compile lists of countries with which you are prepared to trade and those you are not.

1. Is it subject to sanctions?
2. How difficult is it to do business there? Is there a high degree of corruption?
3. Will importers be able to access the foreign exchange to pay you⁶⁹?
4. Is the political situation such that sanctions are or could become a problem?

To help answer these questions, see:

- [The ExportersAlmanac - Country Profiles](#) - Trade Profile.
- The UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office [Overseas Business Risk Assessment](#). This service provides geopolitical and economic analysis on overseas markets to new and expanding exporters. The guides also provide information on potential risks including human rights issues, bribery and corruption, terrorism, criminal activity and intellectual property.

Credit Referencing

One third of all invoices are paid late or not at all which has a direct impact on your profit margin. Before committing to any sale, you should verify that the buyer is trustworthy. Gather impressions from your correspondence, particularly from responses to your questions. As suggested elsewhere in this Guide, if you are being asked to extend credit to any buyer you should get a credit reference and rating before granting any credit. The cost of the report is a small price to pay for peace of mind.

For more information and to access the service See: [B2BCentral](#).

Cyber Security

Cyber security is not just having anti-virus protection and a firewall. Make sure you are fully protected. We suggest that you read the [National Cyber Security Centre](#)'s definition of Cyber security to see what you need.

As a minimum:

- You should understand the issues involved.
- You must have adequate anti-virus\malware programs installed and, if you transact online, your website should have an https:// address.
- If you are dealing in any way online, it is very likely that you should be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.
- Finally, you should also discuss cyber security with your in-house or website service providers.

⁶⁹ If this is your main concern, it is possible to take out Country Risk insurance – see [B2BCentral Country Risk](#) and [B2BCentral Insurance](#).

Anti-Virus\Malware Programs

Various solution providers can be found at: [The ExportersAlmanac - Cyber Security Services](#).

Data Protection

The [ICO](#) is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

You must make sure that you comply with relevant recommendations and regulations. In particular you must conform to The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR). The ICO has recently published their new [data sharing code of practice](#), which provides clear guidance for organisations and businesses on how to share data lawfully. They have also produced new tools, such as a data sharing checklist and templates, to help you further.

Secure Certificates

Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and Transport Layer Security (TLS) are used to secure credit card transactions, data transfer and logins. SSL was a first of its kind of cryptographic protocol. TLS on the other hand, was a recent upgraded version of SSL⁷⁰.

If you look at SSL versus TLS certificate, both perform the same task of encrypting data exchange. TLS was an update and secure version of SSL. Nevertheless, SSL certificates that are abundantly available on the Internet serve the same purpose of securing your website. In fact, they both offer websites the same HTTPS address bar that have come to be recognized as the hallmark symbol of online security.

If you use your website for any communication or data exchange with your website visitors, it is highly recommended that you secure your site with an SSL/TLS Certificate.

Once your SSL/TLS Certificate is installed on your web server, you see a closed padlock at the beginning of the address in the browser – and the address begins [https://](#) rather than just [http://](#) where the “s” stands for secure.

SSL/TLS Certificates need to be issued from a trusted Certificate Authority – you can find a list of SSL/TLS Certificate Service Providers on [The ExportersAlmanac – Secure Certificate Providers](#).

Foreign Exchange

Foreign exchange in these volatile times can represent a significant risk. However, you can fix forward rates so that you are sure in sterling terms what you will paying and/or receiving. Ebury also ensures that you have the best rates available in the market. See: Foreign Exchange and International Payment Services.

For practical examples of how Ebury has helped companies manage their foreign exchange risks see: Appendix Seven – Ebury Business Cases.

⁷⁰ See the [NCSC article](#) “Using TLS to protect data” and [GlobalSign's](#) “SSL vs TLS – What’s the Difference?”

Foreign Legal Liabilities and Risks

Every country has its own business laws and regulations, and you are presumed to know them. Many may be similar to UK laws or follow international standards. Some vary widely by country, affecting import procedures, agent/distributor agreements, treatment of intellectual property, rights to own businesses or land, tax liability, currency trading, health and technical standards, and even what is allowable to eat, drink or wear. Take the time to do market research and seek legal advice as needed. See: [B2BCentral's Legal Advice & Documentation](#) and [B2BCentral's Export Markets](#) for the resources that can help you to cover these issues.

Identity and eSignatures

Just like in the physical world, you need to be sure who you are dealing with and that legal documents have been validly signed.

Confirming Identities

There are two considerations here:

1. The identity of the company.
2. The identity of the individual representing the company.

Whether in the digital or physical world, you should carry out the same level of due diligence regarding both sets of identity.

We have suggested using Graydon with regard to credit standing – but you can start with:

1. (Free) searches at [Companies House](#) for the details of UK companies.
2. The equivalent of Companies House for companies based in other countries. These are listed under “Company Register” in the Commercial Contacts Profile of the relevant Country in the [ExportersAlmanac](#).

Once you have confirmed the details of the company – and possibly also checked their entry in Kompass for further details – you can cross-check the identity of the person with whom you are dealing (are they a director)? (listed on the website?). Can they be reached via the company's switchboard? Do they have a company email address?

The UK government provides [a secure way](#) for individuals to prove who they are online. It makes it safe, quick and easy to access government services like filing your tax or checking the information on your driving licence.

eSignatures

eSignatures are now recognised under English Law⁷¹. In fact, from a number of points of view, they are preferable to signatures written by hand. This greatly facilitates B2B eCommerce allowing for the electronic exchange of signed commercial documents.

⁷¹ As an EU member-country, England, Wales and Northern Ireland have legally recognised eSignatures since 2002, with the Electronic Signatures Regulations, established after the passing of the EU Directive in 1999. This has now been superseded by the eIDAS (electronic identification and trust services) Regulation of 2016, which in turn for the UK has been superseded by [The Electronic Identification and Trust Services for Electronic Transactions \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#). Legal advice must be taken if electronic signatures issued by UK qualified trust service providers are used to sign documents in EU member states.

N.B. An eSignature is not simply a scanned image of a handwritten signature pasted into a document. There are a number of companies that provide eSignature services – some of these are listed under [The ExportersAlmanac - eSignature Solutions](#).

Electronic signatures provide three quantifiable benefits:

1. **Speed of Signing**
Electronic agreements can be signed at a fraction of the time of paper-based agreements, especially when signatories are not in the same physical location.
2. **Sustainability**
Signing electronically also results in reduced paper usage and the environmental impact of physically transporting agreements between locations.
3. **Greater Security**
With proper identity verification methods and audited IT infrastructure, an electronic signature is much more secure than paper-based signings.

Considerations for Choosing your eSignature Solution

1. How many electronic signatures do you expect to do?
2. What are your use cases? B2C, B2B, C2C, B2E (employee)?
3. How sure do you need to be on the identity of those signing? Under the EU [eIDAS](#) regulation, there are three levels of assurance as to the degree of confidence in the claimed identity of a signatory. These levels are: Low, Substantial, and High. The UK equivalent can be found at the [ICO site](#).
4. Do you have any business system workflow you need to integrate with?
5. How future-proof do you need your signed agreements to be?
6. Can you trust your provider?
7. Can you trust the timing of the signatures? If need, use a Qualified Trust Service Provider, who can guarantee the time, in the same way it guarantees the identity of the signer. Technically, this is called a time-stamp, which is added to the document in a similar way as a signature, and the QTSP is the entity which guarantees that the time-stamp is correct and can be trusted.
8. Do you envisage signing multiple documents with one signature?
9. Do you need multiple people to sign single documents?
10. Do you want to forward agreements for signing?

How should your eSignatures be delivered?

- **Email Delivery**
Many signing solutions rely on email-based delivery of an agreement without requiring any additional form of identity verification.
- **Scribble on a screen**
This, in many cases, is the typical replacement for paper-based signatures and is familiar for the users. Unfortunately, this gives no assurance of the signer's identity.
- **SMS OTP**
SMS OTP is the process of sending a random code to a mobile number, and this code is input to show that it has been received. This proves that the user signing has access to the device, but does not provide verified identification.

- **Signing with a third-party Electronic ID**
Some countries, particularly in the Nordics and Benelux regions, have access to third-party electronic identities (such as [BankID](#)), as provided by their governments or banks. These eIDs can be used to sign electronic agreements and are typically.
- **Signing with identity documents**
Some signing solutions leverage ID document scanning (such as passport or driver's license) or NFC reading of the document as a way to verify the signer's identity.

Document Security & Future Proofing Agreements

When generating digital signatures, digital certificates are involved. A digital certificate has an expiry time, after which it is no longer valid. It may also be revoked at any time, and the certificate authority maintains lists of these revoked certificates.

Digital signatures are based on mathematical algorithms, which can be attacked by advances in mathematics, software and hardware. The algorithms used for digital signatures 10 years ago, are no longer secure, and it is simple to forge a document which looks like it was signed 10 years ago.

The above challenges are addressed by adding long-term-validation information into the document. This is done by a Qualified Trust Service Provider, which collects all the evidence and embeds this into the signed document. (See [tScheme](#) Members for UK TSPs or [The EU Commission site](#) for EU TSPs.)

Insurance

Insurance is an important and necessary element in protecting your company. As described in the chapter covering Financial Services - Insurance - to help you manage these costs, we would suggest that you take a few minutes to get some [competitive quotes](#) to cover:

1. Cargo Insurance.
2. Trade Credit Insurance.
3. UK General Business Insurance.

Intellectual Property (IP)

For a business, one of its most valuable assets is something quite intangible. IP is the value generated by your creativity. It can include trademarks, copyrights, design rights and patents. Just because you cannot see or touch it, it doesn't mean it has no value. IP can create income for you, help you grow, and add value when you come to sell or exit your business. Intellectual Property needs to be identified, nurtured and protected in order to safeguard your future.

There are two main categories of IP:

1. Your confidential information – which is valuable but cannot be registered.
2. IP that you can register. The [Intellectual Property Office](#) is the official UK government body responsible for IP rights including: Copyrights, Design Rights, Patents and Trade Marks.

N.B. These intangible assets need to be protected to the same level irrespective of whether you are involved in just domestic trade or international trade.

Your Confidential Information⁷²

Although you cannot protect your company's confidential information by depositing it in a central registry, this does not mean that you cannot protect it.

The steps you can and should take are as follows:

1. Establish a confidentiality policy and make this clear and available to all your employees.
2. As an integral part of this policy, your confidential information may be encrypted and held in a secure place on your intranet.

Often, however, it is necessary to share your confidential information with an actual or potential partner. In this case we would suggest that you consider completing the following consecutive steps, by agreeing:

1. **A Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).** – These can be either “mutual” where both parties share confidentiality – or one way, where just one party shares confidential information. In an NDA you will set out and define the confidential you are sharing and what should happen to it if negotiations collapse – including penalties should a party breach confidentiality.
2. **A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).** – Although not usually a full contract, MoUs are useful in defining what you have agreed and where you hope to arrive. MoUs will usually incorporate the terms of the NDA.
3. **A Letter of Intent (LoI).** – The final step before signing a full commercial contract (usually “tighter” than an MoU). LoIs will also usually incorporate the terms of the NDA.

The more complex and the higher value the negotiations, the more these documentary steps are advisable. (As a minimum, you should always start with an NDA.)

Templates for these documents can be accessed from [Simply-Docs](#).

What are Copyrights?

Copyright is the legal right of a creator of a particular piece of work to prevent other people from reproducing or making use of that work. The law of copyright exists to make sure that if you're a creator, you can create value from your work by retaining control over its exploitation. Copyright can apply to a wide range of creations, such as:

- 'How to' guides.
- Articles.
- Artwork.
- Audio.
- Compilations.
- Databases.
- Designs.
- Documents.
- Films.

⁷² Confidential information may be defined as the trade secrets and other confidential information of the Company which is not generally known to the public, and which (a) is generated or collected by or utilised in the operations of the company and relates to the actual or anticipated business or research or development of the company or the company customers.

- Games.
- Methodologies.
- Photos.
- Software.
- Surveys.

You should:

1. Work out which copyrights you own or could own.
2. Determine which ones can be registered – and then register them.
3. Avoid infringing other peoples' copyright.

What are Design Rights?

Design Rights protect the texture, contours, shape, materials and decoration of a design. They can apply to a wide range of products including packaging, graphics, logos and the 'look and feel' of products.

Design rights are an underused element of intellectual property rights because many people don't know about them. There are two types of design rights: registered design rights and unregistered design rights. You should:

- Identify which Designs you own or could own
- Work out whether these designs can be 'Registered'.
- If you can register them, you should if you have not done so already.
- Consider commercialising those Design Rights
- Make sure that you are not infringing other peoples' designs

What are Patents?

A patent is a form of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, selling and importing an invention for a limited period of years, in exchange for publishing an enabling public disclosure of the invention. Typically, however, a patent application must include one or more claims that define the invention. A patent may include many claims, each of which defines a specific property right. These claims must meet relevant patentability requirements, such as novelty, usefulness, and non-obviousness.

What are Trademarks?

A trademark is a mark that a business uses to differentiate its goods or services from those of all other business. It's a badge of (trade) origin that tells the consumer 'this is my product' or 'these are my services'. When you have a trademark registered, nobody can use that mark in your business sector without your agreement, and so it's a very valuable way of protecting your brand.

Trademark protection is a complex area of law and seeking trademark legal advice as early as possible in your journey is vital. This not only helps to ensure that you have the right to register your marks but also that you are registering them in the right way and in the appropriate territories.

However, you may feel that you need the support of fully regulated, qualified and insured intellectual property lawyers. LawBite provides quick, affordable and easy to understand legal consultation. A quick four-step process:

1. Make a [no commitment enquiry](#).
2. Have a free 15-minute consultation with an expert lawyer.
3. Get a quote.
4. Make a decision.

LawBite’s expert lawyers will offer a fixed price intellectual property advice and help you with all aspects of IP protection including:

- Transactional and contentious IP legal advice.
- Working out what IP you own, when/how the IP was created and by whom.
- Registering and protecting that IP, so other people can’t use or steal it.
- Advising on whether the launch of a new brand is viable and the name is cleared/free to use.
- Making sure you are not at risk of infringing anyone else’s IP.
- Helping to protect and maximise the value of confidential information, know-how and trade secrets.
- Helping you commercialise the value of that IP, including via licensing and assignment.
- Negotiating instances of domain name disputes and cybersquatting.
- Advising on the status of IP rights pre and post the Brexit transitional period.
- Advising on IP in the context of corporate transactions.

IP matters are often time-sensitive and LawBite’s lawyers are able to respond quickly and cost-effectively offering fixed quotes at £145 per hour plus VAT. Discounted rates are available for LawBite subscribers – their [Pricing Plans](#) start at £19.50/month.

Send LawBite your enquiry [using the form on the right](#) and a member of their team will get back to you within 2 working hours.

Pricing and Payment Terms

How you determine the terms and conditions of your pricing and payment profiles impact on your commercial risk.

To assist your considerations, we have prepared the following introduction:

Pricing:

The pricing of a contract will reflect the costs and responsibilities of the contracting parties. The more responsibilities, the more costs you have to cover and fix in the contract.

Export pricing usually starts with the domestic price (e.g., cost of goods, plus profit). Discounts for overseas representation may then be factored in. From that price, Incoterms determine additional costs.

The main options are what the export price covers are⁷³:

C&F	Cost & Freight (to a named overseas port e.g. Singapore). This includes all FOB costs, plus all transportation costs to the foreign port. The buyer pays the cargo insurance, import duties and taxes to clear customs.
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⁷³ For further information regarding international pricing and payment terms see [The ExportersAlmanac Logistics IncoTerms](#).

CIF	Cost, Insurance & Freight (to a named overseas port e.g. New York). This includes all C&F costs, plus all cargo insurance. The buyer pays only the import duties and taxes to clear customs.
DAP	Delivery At Place. The seller is responsible for the delivery of the goods to the named destination at the buyer. The costs of carrying out all the necessary import formalities are expressly excluded. These costs – including all import duties, taxes incurred when importing to the country of destination - are borne by the buyer.
DDP⁷⁴	Delivery Duty Paid (to a named place of destination e.g. DDP Sydney). This includes all CIF costs, plus any applicable import duties, taxes and other costs to clear the goods through customs.
Ex-Works	The buyer has to organise (and pay for) transport from the factory, insurance and any applicable import taxes and tariffs.
FAS	Free Alongside Ship (at a named port of export e.g. Liverpool). This includes the EX-Works price, plus your costs to transport, unload, and deliver the goods alongside the departing vessel or aircraft.
FOB	Free on Board (at a named port of export e.g. Felixstowe). This includes the FAS cost, plus the cost to load the goods onto the carrier. The buyer pays for cargo insurance, transportation to the destination, and any applicable import duties and taxes.

Payment Terms

The payment terms agreed in a commercial contract will reflect the risks run by both supplier and buyer.

There are four primary payment terms:

1. Advance Payment\Cash.
2. Letters of Credit.
3. Documentary Collections.
4. Open Account.

To review these and decide which is best for your circumstances, see: [The Exporters Almanac - Payment Methods](#).⁷⁵

You should note, however, that in exporting, advance payment is rare. Foreign buyers generally will only pay fully up front for smaller shipments. Although they might agree to a partial down payment if it is the only way to get the goods, they will usually insist on payment upon delivery, or preferably sometime after delivery. Therefore, you are likely to push for a Letter of Credit or Documentary Collection.

Warning: There are fraudsters about. Be careful about moving from Advance Payments and/or Letters of Credit to an open account system. If you do feel that you have to accept an

⁷⁴ We would suggest that for exports you should stop at CIF.

⁷⁵ As a variation on a theme for options 2, 3 and 4 you can also consider the discounting of your invoices with Ebury (see the chapter Find Funding Ebury).

open account agreement, then you should seriously consider taking out trade credit insurance.

Foreign Exchange Considerations

If your buyer or supplier is domiciled outside of the UK, then one of you will have to factor in the foreign exchange exposure. One of you will be receiving or paying in foreign currency – and this represents a risk – which can be covered at a cost which in turn should be factored into the price. (See above.)

Chapter Summary:

There are a number of risks you have to consider – many of which apply to your offline activities as well as to eCommerce. However, you can manage and cover these.

Anti-bribery, child labour and slavery policies: You must have these in place both for your own business and any suppliers.

Country risk: Decide which countries you are prepared to trade with – with and without country risk insurance - and those that you are not.

Credit references: Take these out on any company where you will be taking a commercial risk.

Cyber security: Understand what measures you need to protect your business and conform to the requirements of the GDPR.

Foreign Exchange: Cover any exposure you may have.

Foreign legal liabilities and risks: Where appropriate, take local legal advice.

Identity and eSignatures: Confirm the identity of your counterparties (both corporate and personal) and be prepared accept eSignatures on legal documentation.

Insurance: Make sure you have adequate insurance – at the best price.

Intellectual Property: Make sure that you have taken all the necessary steps to protect your IP.

Pricing and Payment Terms: Negotiate the best pricing and payment terms to reduce your risk exposure.

Back-Office Support

Get the best Back-Office Support available - and improve efficiency, reduce admin and save money!

Make sure you've got the best deals possible from:

- Accountancy and Tax Advisory Services.
- Administration Support Systems (Accounting, CRMs, Helpdesks, HR, etc.)
- Communications.
- Company Management.
- Legal Advice and Documentation.
- Staff Training.
- Translation Services.

N.B. If you do not have the technical expertise in-house to assess and/or integrate these systems then you should look to either hire this expertise and/or use the services of a systems integration company.

Software Buying Tips

Ten standard questions to ask a software supplier are:

1. Does its functionality meet my needs?
2. How flexible is it?
3. How scalable is it?
4. How can I access it?
5. How easy is the system to use?
6. Is the system easily integrated into other software systems I use?
7. Is the system secure and reliable?
8. What support does the vendor provide?
9. How do current customers use the system?
10. What is your pricing structure?

When looking to buy back-office software support, do not just choose the software that you need now, think about your growth and the features you will need in the future. Think about the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) i.e. what other resources and costs will be required on top of the software licence fee? Understand ALL the costs associated with the software solution.

1. Do they have unlimited users or do they charge per seat?
2. What is their support like? Do they offer free 24/7 support?
3. Do you have to pay for additional features like marketing automation, customer service, event management, landing page builder?
4. Are there limits to the number of emails you can send?
5. If you need to use the API for integration, what are those costs?
6. Is training provided?
7. What kind of onboarding packages do they have? What are the costs and what do you get?
8. Where possible, select software that your entire team can use. All of your data should be in one easy-to-use, safe place. Every department needs and uses data. Get each person setup with their own logins and passwords for collaboration, transparency, and accountability.

9. Do try before you buy: The ability to demo and try out any platform you are researching is an important piece of the puzzle. Demoing a platform allows you to get a good idea of how the platform works and how it can fit into your business. First start with a guided demo, and then setup a trial account to see how user-friendly and customisable the system is.

Pricing Structures

Prices are typically based on:

- Number of features.
- Number of users (often whether they use all the features or not).

Issues that can Arise with “Per-User” Pricing

Employees share multiple logins, in which case you lose accountability and weaken overall business management.

Administration Support Systems

One of the keys to creating a great B2B eCommerce experience is ensuring that you build a seamless IT environment that improves company (and customer) efficiency.

We would recommend that you review your IT environment and consider whether it is operating optimally. – The more integrated it is (***all paper processes should be replaced***) not only will your administration be more efficient; it will also facilitate “smart” and home working.

The more that you can integrate the following components into an integrated platform the better (links are indicated to relevant service providers listed in The ExportersAlmanac and B2BCentral):

- [Accounts](#).
- [Customer Relationship Management](#) (which in turn should be integrated with your advertising and marketing programs; see: Digital Advertising and Digital Marketing).
- [Helpdesk\Customer Support Ticketing](#).
- [HR & Calendaring](#).
- [eInvoicing](#) (all your invoicing should be electronic – unless trading with a country which does not yet accept them).
- [Legal Documentation](#).
- [Project & Task Management](#).
- [Remote Monitoring & Management](#).
- [Supply Chain Management](#).
- [Team working & internal communications](#).
- [Virtual Offices & Meeting Rooms](#).

Some of the above need no further explanation. However, others could benefit from a more detailed description, which is provided below.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Your CRM might be the single most important tool when it comes to proper customer journey mapping. A traditional CRM is built on the outdated idea that the relationship with a lead begins and ends with the salesperson. Complete CRM, in contrast, takes a broader view.

Your CRM should act as the foundation for all other business efforts, including sales, marketing, customer service, and other operational efforts like event management, invoicing, etc.

An effective CRM system has three goals:

1. To organize and share customer information.
2. To measure and report across the company to support sales and marketing insights.
3. To assist in communication and collaboration between customers and employees.

This process breaks down into a number of key points:

- **Automation:** Instead of communicating with groups of leads on a manual basis, marketing automation enables fully automated email marketing and social media campaigns.
- **Nurture:** By automating lead nurturing you are able to develop leads that are not ready for a sales discussion.
- **Prioritisation:** By making available the full activity of the individual as well as the social media history, sales people can learn more about their prospects before they actually make the sales call.
- **Alerts:** The timing of sales calls can be much more appropriate e.g. if a sales person receives an alert that the lead is currently viewing the website or clicked on an action call, then the sales person can reach the lead at the right time.
- **Consolidation:** Increase the quality of the CRM data, such as appending duplicates and identifying merging of records. A marketing automation system will assist you in importing the information and holding data from multiple systems.
- **Prediction:** Automation integration with the CRM system provides data to help manage the revenue cycle based on metrics. Metrics make revenue more predictable and indicate contributions to the company's bottom line.

A Complete CRM collects, houses, and organises your data into one single platform. This allows the whole team to have an up-to-date 360-view of the customer at all times. CRMs simplify and centralise internal process, build confidence, and enable teams to do their jobs better. You should expect:

- Revenue increases per sales person.
- Decreased sales cycles.
- Lead conversion rate improvements.
- Customer retention improvements.
- Decreased sales and marketing costs.
- Improved profit margins.

For a list of CRM platforms, see [The Exporters Almanac CRMs](#). No matter what solution you choose, it should have, at a minimum, built-in marketing automation, project management, a mobile app and business intelligence.

N.B. [Green Rope](#) uses a pricing structure where all features are available to unlimited numbers of users. The pricing is based purely on the number of contacts in your CRM.

eInvoicing

It is important to note that eInvoices are not simply pdf files sent by email. An eInvoice can be defined as structured invoice data issued in Electronic data interchange (EDI) or XML formats, possibly using Internet-based web forms. These documents can be exchanged in a number of ways including EDI, XML, or CSV files. They can be uploaded using emails, virtual printers, web applications, or FTP sites. Some companies have their own in-house eInvoicing process; however, many companies hire a third-party company to implement and support e-invoicing processes and to archive the data on their own servers.

eInvoicing frees up your administration and helps you to get paid more quickly. Not only that, for certain sectors (e.g. the Public Sector) and for certain countries and indeed for certain companies the use of eInvoices is obligatory.

N.B. Your eInvoice system should also be integrated with your other Administration Support Systems described above.

Most accounting packages enable you to send and receive eInvoices, see: [The ExportersAlmanac - Support Services](#) - Accounting Software.

TradeTech Solutions has partnered with Pagero [to offer eInvoicing](#) services to allow you to go digital quickly and easily. eInvoices not only cut your administration costs but can also speed up payment (and discounting, if you discount your invoices). For more details See: [B2BCentral](#).

There are 3 options for you:

1. Pagero Free

Handle invoices and order messages electronically with Pagero Free. With Pagero Free, the easy-to-use web portal, you can quickly and easily manage a limited number of e-documents each month.

2. Pagero Web Portal

The web portal has no restrictions to the number of e-documents you can send, receive and handle. Log in to your web-based account and generate and send or receive your documents quickly and easily online, without any requirements for new software or systems.

3. Pagero Connect

Seamless integration to optimise your ERP and financial systems. Create your invoices as usual in your financial system and have them delivered to your business partners with Pagero Connect. The files are automatically converted to e-invoices in the preferred format of your business partners before being delivered. Non-digital business partners can receive invoices by PDF or by post.

However, Pagero's solution may not be for you, in which case see: [The ExportersAlmanac's - eInvoice Solution Providers](#).

Helpdesk Support\Ticketing

A key support function is that of the Helpdesk and managing the actions that result from a query. Failure to act promptly to provide a satisfactory response may cause significant adverse comment regarding a company's reputation.

For a list of Helpdesk & Ticketing platforms see The ExportersAlmanac Helpdesk Platforms.

HR & Group Calendars

Hiring Personnel

If you are in the fortunate position where you need to increase your headcount – either on a temporary or a permanent basis – then there are online agencies and services which allow you to either engage an agency or search for yourself (see: [The ExportersAlmanac – Support Services](#) – Freelance Agencies and Recruitment Agencies). – The freelance services on offer may be of particular interest if you need assistance with your eCommerce program.

HR Management & Group Calendars

There are now programs which allow you to easily manage your HR administration. See The ExportersAlmanac [HR Programs and Group Calendars](#).

Legal Documentation⁷⁶

Document Management Platform

Should you decide to use LawBite's services then you have the additional advantage of being able to use LawBite's document management platform:

- **Search documents** - Search LawBite's library of legal documents and contracts. Edit, share and download for free with LawBite Access.
- **Upload your own documents** - Upload a document you want checking, editing or to access LawBite's e-sign service.
- **Edit your documents** - Use LawBite's online document editor to make changes to your contracts & agreements in the cloud.
- **Print or e-sign** - You have the option to download, print or send your documents digitally for e-signing.
- **Store and share** - Your documents are stored in the cloud meaning you can share them with anyone.
- **Masters/Instances** - Create master templates and duplicate copies for new.

– say goodbye to filing cabinets and lost signatures.

See: [LawBite's Pricing Plans](#).

Document Templates

Legal Document Templates from Simply-Docs. "Prevention Is Better Than Cure." Hundreds of Documents for the Price of One!

⁷⁶ N.B. TradeTech Solutions Ltd does not offer any legal advice.

Simply-Docs can provide you with a trusted, affordable and simple alternative. Their extensive portfolio of editable document and contract templates will enable you to protect your business and keep up with your legal and compliance requirements.

For further details and discounts See: [B2BCentral](#).

Other Support Services

Accountancy and Tax Advisory Services

Your requirements will depend very much on your particular circumstances. If you think you would benefit from reviewing how your accountancy and tax advice services are provided, check out the resources in [The ExportersAlmanac - Support Services](#) - Accounting & Tax Advice.

Communications

There are many providers of online: Phone, Messaging, Video and Online Collaboration platforms. In reviewing these, our view is that they all have something to offer but none are perfect. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the use of these tools is indispensable to:

- Making home and distance working possible.
- Enabling interaction with clients and suppliers – without having to travel.

These are vital elements in the world of eCommerce (notwithstanding some very real security concerns⁷⁷).

Lists of the main online communications services available online can be seen on [The ExportersAlmanac - Communications](#) are:

- Faxes (yes, they are still used in some places for some purposes)
- Newsletter Mailing Services.
- Phone, Messaging & Video Services.

Compared to what was available even just 5 years ago, they offer fantastic services for free or very low costs; decide which ones are best for your requirements.

Company Management

By using Kudocs, you will have an accurate and real-time repository of all of your core information, easily accessible and available in one place to enable the smooth running of your business; as well as the ability to invite potential buyers, investors, insurers, liquidators and other interested parties to view instantly if required.

Manage your company's corporate affairs efficiently by digitally performing essential tasks and recording in real time, rather than after the event. Kudocs also removes the burden of informing Companies House as this is handled automatically during the action you are performing.

For more details including pricing [click here](#).

⁷⁷ Some are subject to more security concerns than others.

Legal Advice⁷⁸

It is important that you do take appropriate legal advice and use well-drafted documentation. If you're happy with the legal support that you are receiving, that's good. If you're looking for something more, then the following should help:

- UK Legal Advice.
- Foreign Legal Advice.
- Official Translations.

UK Legal Advice

LawBite offers a simple 3-step process:

1. Make an enquiry - Tell us about your issue or upload a contract for review.

LawBite covers:

- Brexit.
- Business Legal Advice.
- Contract Reviews.
- Debt Recovery.
- Dispute Resolution and Litigation.
- Employment.
- GDPR.
- Intellectual Property.
- Legal Health Check.
- Property.

2. Speak to your lawyer.

LawBite will assess the situation, match you with the correct LawBite lawyer and then arrange a call within two working hours.

3. Get a quote - Get a no-obligation fixed-price quote.

See: [LawBite's Pricing Plans](#).

Foreign Legal Advice

See: [The Law Society's Find a Solicitor](#)

Run by the Law Society, Find a Solicitor is a free service. The Law Society does not provide legal advice. Please [read the Law Society guides to common legal issues](#) for information about getting advice from a solicitor. You can find solicitor based overseas using their online [Find a Solicitor](#) search tool, by selecting the appropriate country from the drop-down list in the search form.

Staff Training

Investing in your staff's skills is often one of the best investments you can make – improving efficiency and morale. (If you have seen opportunities in this Guide but do not have the in-

⁷⁸ N.B. TradeTech Solutions Ltd does not offer any legal advice.

house skills to take full advantage of them, then the chances are that you can find online courses to help you.)

There are two options:

1. The New Skills Academy: Online courses for individual students.

- Access to an entire library of 700+ courses for all staff members.
- Engaging learning materials.
- Courses compatible with all major browsers and devices.
- Diverse range of courses from 10-minute micro-learning video lessons to 40-hour full courses.
- CPD approved learning material.
- New course material regularly added.
- 24-hour customer support.
- Dedicated account managers.

Thanks to TradeTech's agreement with the New Skills Academy, you can access courses benefiting from an average 65% discount giving an average cost of around £35+VAT per course. For more details and to search for courses [click here](#).

2. Staff Skills Training: Learning Solutions for Business of all sizes.

Staff Skills Training pride themselves on offering affordable, innovative training to businesses of all sizes. Not only do they offer the expected range of courses (excel, office, word), they also offer staff a huge range of Personal and Professional Development courses, everything from Improving Personal Effectiveness to Boosting Your Work Efficiency.

You choose how training courses are delivered via:

- Online Courses.
- In-House Training.
- Blended Learning.

Below are some more benefits to the system.

- Full access to over 560 certified online courses.
- Engaging Micro and video learning courses added weekly
- Easy to use admin area where account managers can track all progress, and assign new courses to their staff.
- Easily downloadable reporting to monitor user progress
- Notifications area where admin users can send emails or push messages to users
- 24 hour customer care and dedicated account managers.
- Fully branded platforms with your company logos and colours.
- Accessible anywhere, anytime.

If you are interested in exploring how Staff Skills Training could help your company, simply send an email to [Jacob Hoy](#).

Translation and Interpreter Services

If you are exporting or planning to export to non-English language countries, then you will need to translate: your product, collateral and commercial documentation and - most likely - your website and email exchanges as well. However, you don't need to spend a fortune.

Your requirements can be probably categorised as follows:

1. Simple English to be translated now e.g. emails and/or foreign language text to be translated into English.
2. Your website and complex formal documentation.
3. Complex formal documentation and official translations.
4. Interpreters.

So, what are your choices?

1. Standard technical translation can be applied to technical, factual, non-emotional documents. These are often related to the engineering, financial, and medical fields, and might include machine manuals, system descriptions and specifications, labelling of hazardous substances, safety instructions, staff handbooks, annual reports, patient medical history, etc.
2. Certified translation will also be often required for official purposes. These might relate to legal documents and information such as birth, death and marriage certificates, legal contracts, academic transcripts, etc.
3. Both standard and certified translation are usually a rigid, word-for-word, literal translation. Fine, if that is what you are looking for. But if you are looking for translation that is a little more nuanced, protecting the original meaning across languages and cultures, neither standard nor certified translation will do.

Computer Translation – for simple English

If you have short text that is simple⁷⁹ and to be translated immediately e.g. emails and/or foreign language text to be translated into English, then we suggest you use [Google Translate](#). Google's free service instantly translates words and phrases from English in to over 100 other languages (the translation service also works from the foreign language to English.)

However, there are real limitations to the quality of machine translations.

Your Website and more Formal Documentation

Traditional advice says you need a mother-tongue speaker to translate more complex documentation (including your web content), but this is costly and time consuming, which limits the number of languages you can target.

⁷⁹ As a general recommendation, we would recommend that all your documentation should be written using simple, straightforward English – avoiding long, complex sentences, jargon or any words or phrases that could be ambiguous. This will not only help communication in English but also greatly facilitate machine translations.

ExhOL⁸⁰ has developed an alternative method that combines the expertise of a human copywriter with the latest translation engine. The platform can generate translations in 20 languages—at a fraction of the time and cost of mother-tongue translators!

Hybrid machine translation is different to other computer translation methods because it involves a human writer and checker at key points:

1. By writing in plain, simple English, an expert copywriter ensures the text achieves the best translation first time around.
2. A human proof-reader then uses refined reverse translation techniques to check the translated text for accuracy.
3. If there are any ambiguities, then the original text is tweaked, and the process is repeated until a satisfactory translation is achieved.

Pricing: This will depend upon the: (a) the length of the translation (b) the languages involved and (c) the complexity of the text. However, you will be given a quote to allow you to decide whether you wish to proceed.

International Copywriting

If you are not concerned about cultural differences for the content you are translating and do not have to pay close attention to the brand language, standard translation can be used. However, marketing campaigns and website content needs to be tailored to the reader and the purpose.

The fact is, when you need your marketing content to be read across a variety of regions and to accurately reflect your marketing messages, you need international copywriting services.

International copywriting is the best option when you need to adapt the content to the local and cultural context. This might include advertisements and billboards – both physical and digital – headlines and body copy, slogans and straplines. Indeed, international copywriting is ideal for any type of content you want to emotionally engage your global audience with.

A consistent brand tone of voice

Working with a dedicated team of professional bilingual copywriters ensures the protection of the consistency of communication for the brands you represent. As a result, you maintain the power of your marketing messages, reinforce the brand with a consistent tone of voice, and build an authentic, long-lasting connection with customers.

International copywriters understand local cultural reference and the value of maintaining consistency for your communications and the brands you represent.

Whereas translators work with an existing text which they have to ‘transpose’ into another language, copywriters must create the text from scratch by working to a brief, which will generally contain information about the objective of the content, the desired

⁸⁰ The company behind ExhOL, Armagard, realised the potential of machine translation for its own export strategy and refined a style of writing in simple English that achieved the best results. This process was so effective that, when blind testing during development, native speakers were frequently unable to tell the difference between pages that had been created by a human translator and those using hybrid machine translation.

length, where it will appear, the target audience, etc. Copywriters need to be able to carefully structure their arguments throughout the text, apply storytelling techniques, express themselves in a certain tone of voice, and write eloquently, of course.

In sales and marketing language is one of the most powerful instruments.

Getting the marketing campaigns and website content to your audience successfully, requires knowledge of your audience and your subject, clarity of intention, discipline, and dedication. And when the impact of cultures and customs on how we say what we say is not acknowledged and respected, things sometimes go wrong; see Appendix Twelve – Translation “Howlers” for some examples.

Today, in a globalised world, language should no longer be considered a barrier to trade, but - instead - a great tool to deliver persuasive, engaging and exciting messages regardless of culture or location. With marketing campaigns and website content needing to be tailored individually for each market, the 7 Pillars of International Copywriting applied [by ILC Communications](#) provide a fantastic starting point.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Relevance. | Is it something the reader is interested in hearing, or just something you want to say? So, for example, a product launch would have to be relevant to something you know about your reader’s life, not just you announcing a new product. |
| Accuracy. | Is it in line with the original messaging if it is being translated? Does it reflect national, regional or local differences? Does it feel like it was originally written in the native language? |
| Brevity. | Is it the right length? That means content being no longer than necessary. No-one wants to read reams of text. Some languages use longer words to expand the length of the content. Google search algorithms may dictate an optimum content length for SEO purposes, but these are always changing. |
| Inclusivity. | Is it genuinely about the reader? Do they see themselves in what you have got to say? That means looking at their situation and telling them something that makes this situation better in some way. |
| Brand-supporting. | Is it reflective of the brand? Does the content feel like it has the same personality? That means using the right tone of voice, the right language and the right subject matter – not to mention attitude. |
| Achieves objectives. | Is it moving the project forward? Are you telling them something they do not know? Are you confirming an arrangement? Are you asking them to upgrade? That means being clear from the start. |
| Incites action. | Are the next steps clear? That means making sure what you want your reader to do after they have read your content. Best practice is one or two clear options – perhaps phone or email – to arrange an appointment, buy a product, register for an event, etc. rather than a vague request to visit a website. |

Cultural Considerations in Social Media

Social media communication is an essential part of international growth strategy. Digital marketing and advertising agencies are under ever-increasing pressure to deliver quality content and stay culturally relevant.

Your social media campaign could have all the elements to be successful overseas, but if you are trying to communicate only in English, people who speak a language other than English simply will not be able to find you. Research shows that more than 1 billion of the 1.7 billion people who use Facebook speak a language other than English, and that the 82% of consumers are more likely to buy a product if it's marketed in their native language.

In most languages, words can have several different meanings. Without expert knowledge of both languages, it can be difficult to know the correct translation for the context. When you need to create a post on social media in a foreign language, the reality is that inaccurate automatic text translation – or machine translation – can fall short. Ideally, you need a fluent English speaker to create a post in English, and a French fluent speaker to create a post in French for French-speaking audience. If you are managing social media posts in a language your audience is comfortable with, you are much more likely to get engagement.

When posting on social media in a foreign language, it is very important to be sensitive to different cultural norms and values. Each culture has its own. For example, in China, there is a list of keywords which will result in your content being banned by the government. Without truly understanding the culture of the people who speak the language, it becomes easy to offend people when interacting with them.

People tend to use social media for different purposes in different countries, so it's useful to have an understanding of what people from different cultures will best respond to before launching. You need to ensure your social media marketing is appropriate for your target audience.

When you need creative linguists, the [ILC Communication](#) team is here to assist. They will use the right words and the right tone to effectively communicate your content to your foreign audience. We are experienced in delivering all of the following services to a wide range of international clients transcreating and creating content for:

- Website Localisation.
- Multilingual Copywriting.
- Multilingual Social Media Content.
- Ecommerce Websites.
- Blog Writing.
- Press Releases.
- Brochure and Flyer Content.
- Technical Business Writing.

Formal Documentation and Official Translations

You may also have to translate⁸¹ your legal documents - either from a purely commercial or official rationale. 'Official' requirements vary from country to country, depending on that country's particular legal system. Each country will also have its own system for appointing and regulating official translators. [ExhOL](#)'s agency partners can help you understand these requirements, ensuring you get the right translation service for your needs.

Pricing: Again, this will depend upon the: (a) the length of the translation (b) the languages involved (c) the complexity of the text and (d) whether the translation has to be notarised – there may be additional legal fees. Again, you will be given a quote to allow you to decide whether you wish to proceed.

Interpreters

You sometimes need the service of an interpreter – either for face to face meetings or (maybe better) on video conference calls. A quote for such services will be based primarily on (a) the length of time the interpreter is required (b) the language(s) involved and (c) whether the interpreter has to travel or can provide their services by teleconference. To request a quote for the services of interpreters from Pabcom [click here](#).

⁸¹ Types of Official Translation

1. Certified.
2. Legalised.
3. Notarised.
4. Sworn.

Certified: The translator must attest that the translation is "***a true, complete and accurate translation***" of the original document. Each page of the translation should be stamped and/or initialled (by the translator and/or certifying authority).

Legalised or Apostilled: These translations carry a declaration endorsed by a Notary Public. Usually, the original document will bear the Apostille. An Apostille verifies the authenticity of the signature; it does not endorse the content of the document. If you require an apostille, contact the UK Government's [Legalisation Office](#).

Notarised: This usually means that the translation either (i) carries a declaration by the translator that has been signed by the Notary or (ii) carries a declaration by the Notary Public concerning the original document and the translation. Notarised translations are usually for providing accountability in terms of the translator's details. The Notary's signature ***does not endorse the quality of the translation***.

Sworn: In the UK, as a common law country, there is no such thing as a sworn translator. However, in civil law countries sworn translators are appointed and accredited by the relevant government authorities. Depending on the country, only sworn translators who are listed on the official list of sworn translators may produce a 'certified', 'sworn' or 'official' translation (these can be checked via the Embassy of the relevant country; see overseas representation in the [ExportersAlmanac](#)).

Chapter Summary:

There are many online (and offline) services which can: simplify, facilitate and reduce the costs of your back office operations. If you have not done so, you should review whether you could benefit from the following:

Accountancy, Legal and Tax advisory services: A number of competing services are listed on The ExportersAlmanac.

Administration support systems: There are providers of: Accountancy packages, CRMS, eInvoicing, Helpdesk Support, HR Support, Legal Documentation, Project & Task Management, Remote Monitoring and Management, Supply Chain Management as well as Team Collaboration Platforms and Virtual Offices & Meeting Rooms (all listed on The ExportersAlmanac).

Communications: Review your provider(s) of phone, messaging, video and online collaboration platforms. It's worth reviewing which ones you currently use and competitive (or complementary) services.

Company management: Kudocs offers an efficient service to manage your corporate affairs.

eInvoicing: Improve the efficiency of managing the process of managing your invoices – and get paid quicker. (Also, many buyers now insist on eInvoices as a necessary pre-qualification.)

Hiring personnel: Reach out to the biggest pool of talent for temporary, full-time and freelance staff.

Legal advice and documentation: Make sure that you get the best advice and documentation – at the most reasonable prices.

Staff training: Access a wide range of training courses at considerable discounts either on an individual basis or for company-wide solutions.

Translation and interpreter services: Decide which level of service you need to get the best, quickest, most reasonably priced results.

End Notes

Technology and Regulations affecting in eCommerce will continue to develop and have significant impact on operations. Indeed, the title of this Guide “The Essential B2B eCommerce Guide” is likely to be too limited for future editions. One suggestion has been “The Essential B2B Guide to Industry 4.0”⁸². The concepts behind the Fourth Industrial Revolution can be synthesised as:

Digitalisation + eCommerce + ESG

- Digitalisation:** At its simplest, the replacement of all documentation in paper by electronic files and processes and the reduction of manual input to the absolute minimum required. This can then be further enhanced by the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI)⁸³ which removes all the “grunt”, boring work of data and information analysis.
- eCommerce:** Not just B2C online buying and selling, but as is indicated in this Guide, but the whole range of supply chain activities carried out online.
- ESG:** Environment, Social, Governance policies which can be explained as “Green (low to zero carbon footprint and no pollution), Socially Responsible (to all stakeholders and society at large) and Transparency (no “hanky panky”).

These will be assisted by the roll-out of superfast 5G internet connections allowing for the explosion of the Internet of Things (IoT)⁸⁴ - see below Blockchain\Distributed Ledger Technology.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is going to have a major impact on the eCommerce sector, with data showing that — out of all sectors — eCommerce is one of the top ones that is ripe for AI investment.

At least initially, rather than a distinct product or service, expect AI to be built into current service offerings to make them much more efficient and to provide much greater insight into your operations.

Blockchain\Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)

Blockchain is the technology behind cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. However, the technology developments relating to trade raised here are not in connection with cryptocurrencies but how the technology could be used to improve the flow of international trade documentation. The

⁸² The Fourth Industrial Revolution (or Industry 4.0) is the ongoing automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart technology. Large-scale machine-to-machine communication (M2M) and the internet of things (IoT) are integrated for increased automation, improved communication and self-monitoring, and production of smart machines that can analyse and diagnose issues without the need for human intervention.

⁸³ Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly advancing technology, made possible by the Internet, that may soon have significant impacts on our everyday lives. AI traditionally refers to an artificial creation of human-like intelligence that can learn, reason, plan, perceive, or process natural language. These traits allow AI to bring immense socioeconomic opportunities, while also posing ethical and socio-economic challenges.

⁸⁴ The Internet of things (IoT) describes the network of physical objects -“things”- that are embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the Internet.

term more widely used in this connection is “Distributed Ledger Technology” rather than blockchain – but they are interchangeable.

The tamper-proof and decentralised nature of DLT makes it useful for breaking the silos that constrain international trade. Many projects that were at an exploratory in 2019 have matured and reached the production stage (see the WTO and Trade Finance Global’s video “[Blockchain & DLT in Trade: Where do we stand?](#)”

The potential benefits of DLT can be summarised as follows:

- Elimination of content conflict between documentation covering the same shipment.
- Faster border crossing processing.
- Faster payments.
- Total transparency and clarity – to all aspects of the documentation.
- Increased use of artificial intelligence to facilitate processing and administration.
- Better statistical analysis – in real-time.

Watch this space.

In addition to facilitating the flow of international trade documentation, the increased credibility of the documentation will significantly facilitate trade finance and ESG “tracking” see below.

However, these developments are still too early for most SMEs to adopt in the very near future and there are issues related to transaction speed and cost to be resolved.

Environment, Social and Governance (ESG)

What is Environment, Social and Governance?

1. **Environment:** Covers the themes of climate sustainability and environmental responsibility.
2. **Social:** Covers the roles that human and social capital play in business.
3. **Governance:** Covers a company’s commitment to ethics and social benefit.

ESG may not seem to be a fundamental element relating to eCommerce at the moment. However, ESG considerations are destined to become an increasingly important business factor and consideration. These factors will be a blend of legal requirements, voluntary frameworks and market expectations.

These considerations can be summarised as:

- Financial:** The main focus of these pressure will of course be on publicly-listed companies, but at the same time will spread to the private arena. Private businesses need financing and equity as much as public entities — and if financial institutions continue the trend of factoring ESG issues into their lending and investment decisions, then increasing numbers of

private companies will also have to adopt relevant policies and reporting metrics⁸⁵.

Green Policies⁸⁶: The UK Government (at national and local levels) will be implementing ever more “green policies” supported by “carrots” – financial incentives – and “sticks” – taxes and legal requirements to conform. These carrots and sticks will create business opportunities for forward looking companies and the sticks will increasingly cause economic challenges for those companies which do not or cannot adapt.

Market Forces: Products which are not deemed to be “ethical” e.g. that damage the environment and/or are produced using child or slave labour will be increasingly shunned by consumers and/or subject to legal sanctions⁸⁷. These policies will be increasingly imposed by major companies on their suppliers – and their suppliers’ suppliers.

Positive Actions: Expect growing pressure to move to:

- The Living Wage (upwards from the Minimum Wage).
- Transparency requirements on workforce: (i) composition (ii) equality of pay, training and promotion prospects (iii) the workplace environment – both at the office and in homes.

Chapter Summary:

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is happening and eCommerce developments are just the first steps that can be seen and used. (Near) future developments will see greater applications of:

- Artificial Intelligence: The use of AI will take the guess- and grunt work out of much of business and provide deep insights into a business’ operations and markets.
- Blockchain\ Distributed Ledger Technology: DLT should significantly streamline the flow of international trade documentation and facilitate trade finance.
- ESG requirements: These factors are destined to become an increasingly important business factor and consideration – offering both opportunities as well as challenges.

Future editions of this Guide will include expanded Chapters on these and related topics.

⁸⁵ At the time of writing New Zealand has announced it will bring into a law forcing its financial firms to report on the effects of climate change. This will require financial firms to assess not only their own investments, but also to **evaluate the companies they are lending to, in terms of their environmental impact**.

⁸⁶ “Green Policies”: Essentially the reduction in pollution and the emission of green-house gasses.

⁸⁷ If in doubt, consider the criticisms by Parliament’s [Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee](#) stating that “it was appalled companies still cannot guarantee that their supply chains are free from forced labour. Those that cannot prove they don't have links with Xingjian should face sanctions”, the MPs said. The report recommends the government accelerates proposals to amend and strengthen the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Conclusions

The bold claim on the front page of this Guide is that it can help you to:

- Increase sales.
- Find finance.
- Reduce risks.
- Save money.
- Reduce your carbon footprint.

It is also claimed in the Foreword that “for every solution and explanation proposed that there is a link to a relevant service - that can be accessed online – where you can access immediate economic benefits.”

If you have read the Guide and checked out the services indicated, then you will have seen that these claims may well be bold – but they are also borne out. You can have all the commercial benefits listed and (by travelling less and enabling home\smart working) significantly reduce your company’s carbon footprint.

No matter how big or small your company, no matter the sector you are working in, eCommerce is going play an increasingly important role in your day-to-day business activities.

- The bad news is that if you do not adapt to the new normal, your business may well be at risk.
- The good news is that if you do embrace the tools and opportunities that eCommerce presents, then you can prosper and thrive in the new normal.

Furthermore, eCommerce effectively removes most of the barriers to exporting – and helps you easily overcome those that remain. The additional cost and effort required to extend your market reach beyond the UK is absolutely minimal – and the benefits that accessing the global market can bring are phenomenal. This Guide shows you how to maximise your opportunities.

The size of your company today is irrelevant, the tools and opportunities are available to all companies – the only limit is the limit of your ambition.

Therefore, don’t delay – the biggest prizes will go to those who adapt the quickest.

P.S. Given the fast pace of change, don’t forget to [register to receive free updates](#) of “The Essential Guide to B2B eCommerce” as well as to check out [The ExportersAlmanac](#) and [B2BCentral](#) on a regular basis.

Appendix One – Online Reference Resources

The ExportersAlmanac provides the following reference resources:

Bank, Corporate, Industry and Product Codes

Used for: [Industry Payments, Product & Tax reference](#).

Blacklists and Embargoes

[Check](#) whether a potential partner is subject to any such order. If in doubt, please seek advice.

Brexit – The Latest News

[The latest news](#).

Country, Location and Currency Codes

[ISO, IATA and UN Codes](#).

Customs and Non-Tariff Barriers

[The key international organisations and commercial service providers](#).

Domestic Support Organisations

[UK organisations](#) which provide assistance to UK companies.

Glossaries

[2 comprehensive Glossaries](#) covering eCommerce and Trade and Trade Finance.

Government Support

The UK and devolved governments provide a number of [services to exporters](#).

Industry Associations

Links to [British Industry Associations](#) – most, if not all, offer support to British exporters.

Overseas Support

[Country specific support](#) for British exporters inside the UK as well as abroad.

Packaging

The [international standards](#) used in packaging.

Reference Resources for UK Exporters

[UK specific reference material](#).

Standards Bodies

[International bodies](#) which issue standards affecting international trade.

Appendix Two – Kompass Directory Coverage by Industry Sector and Region

N.B. These figures were valid as at 15th March, 2021 and are subject to change.

Industry Sector Breakdown

Kompass Industry Sectors	Western Europe	Central Eastern Europe	Africa	Asia-Pacific	South America	North America	Middle East
01 - Livestock and fish	588,051	33,657	606	3,408	16,619	93,600	407
02 - Agriculture and forestry	1,400,515	115,656	3,791	12,233	29,140	155,943	1,416
03 - Food	318,153	69,875	5,723	24,460	40,453	31,848	4,492
04 - Beverages	55,332	12,451	547	5,380	9,656	11,454	718
05 - Organic products	5,401	7,073	564	4,087	147	105	361
07 - Energy, fuel and water	204,392	30,353	671	2,719	5,275	31,123	285
08 - Ores and minerals	12,734	5,845	199	2,914	2,001	2,894	339
09 - Quarried stone	26,527	7,784	577	2,641	6,425	3,560	1,025
11 - Leathers, furs and their products	39,340	4,040	589	6,801	6,444	1,733	521
12 - Textiles	123,509	14,310	2,515	21,892	16,165	68,181	1,843
13 - Clothing and footwear	217,559	30,130	3,453	31,446	34,237	7,859	2,461
14 - Timber, wooden products, machinery and equipment for the woodworking industry	253,460	48,677	2,122	11,878	10,970	26,888	1,680
15 - Furniture and linen	194,618	37,880	4,449	19,739	26,315	28,255	3,425
16 - Paper and board	45,856	14,067	2,208	12,735	4,149	12,864	1,504
17 - Printing and publishing	281,884	41,744	5,893	12,872	33,974	126,438	2,463
18 - Rubber products	71,396	11,505	1,287	10,860	13,575	4,777	870
20 - Plastic products	108,782	41,091	3,898	29,613	14,797	16,540	2,647
21 - Chemical base materials	37,149	15,718	1,456	21,767	9,519	10,630	1,912
22 - Chemical products	66,102	24,031	4,154	25,934	12,285	13,762	2,728
23 - Health, medical and pharmaceutical	943,789	75,524	9,334	21,397	21,139	2,049,387	4,126
24 - Hygiene and cleaning	404,275	45,878	3,074	17,186	46,644	37,995	2,930
25 - Basic metal products	36,166	10,141	3,849	20,614	4,029	9,651	1,418
26 - Metal constructions for the building industry	161,951	36,087	1,860	7,541	14,242	14,336	1,736
27 - Metal pipework, valves and containers	40,549	12,845	1,880	17,255	1,730	7,966	1,860
28 - Hardware, ironmongery, cutlery and tools	97,490	25,932	2,534	25,457	14,885	11,180	1,839
29 - Security equipment	136,828	10,004	1,608	8,409	17,780	3,266	1,432
31 - Glass, cement and ceramics	147,119	43,214	3,888	23,625	21,918	19,992	4,084
32 - Engines and mechanical parts	91,067	17,885	2,665	27,027	9,354	15,477	1,887
33 - Heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and refrigeration equipment	71,053	16,261	2,599	15,878	10,660	8,720	2,289

Kompass Industry Sectors	Western Europe	Central Eastern Europe	Africa	Asia-Pacific	South America	North America	Middle East
37 - Machinery and equipment for metalworking	56,748	10,600	901	17,672	3,586	24,323	948
39 - Electrical equipment. Nuclear equipment	124,507	33,549	2,666	44,199	13,509	37,241	2,973
40 - Electronic equipment. Telecommunications equipment	127,434	21,546	2,552	31,070	18,110	24,370	2,343
42 - Measuring and testing equipment	52,881	16,156	1,814	16,904	5,493	7,101	1,154
43 - Optical, photographic and cinematographic equipment	40,507	9,309	821	6,343	2,210	8,251	556
45 - Precious stone working, watchmaking and jewellery	92,254	7,721	918	13,888	2,409	11,322	1,132
46 - Sports and leisure equipment	52,538	11,961	1,101	16,811	7,378	17,775	1,145
48 - Agricultural and forestry machinery and equipment	66,056	10,094	1,156	4,823	5,012	7,318	611
49 - Food, drink, tobacco and catering industry machinery and equipment	61,765	10,925	2,259	9,128	2,717	9,257	1,381
50 - Textile, clothing, leather and shoemaking machinery and equipment	14,959	1,997	495	5,360	2,659	659	347
52 - Chemical industry plant and equipment	25,648	4,149	973	8,111	334	1,732	632
53 - Rubber and plastic industry plant and equipment	11,154	1,914	265	4,259	976	48	235
55 - Paper and board making plant and equipment	5,968	1,120	126	1,475	562	299	107
56 - Printing equipment. Office and shop equipment	86,484	15,076	1,987	10,032	5,500	33,463	1,433
57 - Information technology (IT) and Internet	658,724	84,066	7,811	36,021	78,575	133,863	4,104
59 - Oil and gas industry plant and equipment	9,575	2,690	545	2,565	609	4,144	1,034
60 - Mining, quarrying and stone working plant and equipment	22,596	5,511	506	3,898	499	575	393
61 - Civil engineering and building machinery and equipment	43,117	11,357	1,398	8,540	3,533	4,086	1,125
62 - Handling and storage plant and equipment	119,367	14,230	1,498	12,062	5,280	7,927	1,596
63 - Packaging machinery, equipment and services	33,398	5,259	528	4,668	2,775	821	400
65 - Industrial subcontractors	268,343	46,355	2,497	13,879	41,267	91,880	1,640
66 - Means of transport	503,274	74,425	3,998	28,143	61,232	291,516	3,227
70 - Civil and marine engineering contractors	359,166	71,744	2,658	4,525	42,127	100,578	1,261
71 - Building industry	2,442,531	275,483	9,122	18,308	100,646	768,197	4,424
72 - Environmental services, renewable energies	229,547	32,607	1,518	9,900	15,689	17,784	1,124
75 - Transportation and logistics services	848,426	187,941	4,673	13,721	104,152	246,677	4,067
78 - Hospitality, tourism, hotel and catering industries	1,470,090	75,784	7,835	20,692	47,504	677,736	3,965

Kompass Industry Sectors	Western Europe	Central Eastern Europe	Africa	Asia-Pacific	South America	North America	Middle East
79 - Postal services, telecommunications, radio and television	346,971	36,424	747	2,115	27,222	87,726	326
80 - Services to businesses	3,662,036	297,962	36,478	40,861	218,906	1,545,600	7,415
81 - General traders, department and retail stores	4,846,117	619,645	34,457	62,391	588,891	2,105,570	11,366
82 - Financial and insurance services	888,800	57,031	8,203	15,627	40,839	700,159	2,434
83 - Hire and rental services	191,401	19,341	842	1,780	47,268	45,427	515
84 - Technical offices and engineering consultancies, architects	565,645	76,802	6,944	13,084	31,277	126,583	3,162
85 - Research and testing	110,736	40,621	967	4,434	8,937	59,613	711
86 - Education and training	499,008	127,329	3,804	8,030	67,193	325,465	1,470
87 - International organisations, administrations and associations	179,384	85,158	4,611	4,813	2,269	236,222	1,195
88 - Medical care, social services	1,048,247	31,275	409	2,111	5,333	727,451	144
89 - Leisure, culture and entertainment	1,073,178	57,637	920	5,892	52,592	177,052	1,483
Total	238,69,859	2,864,827	181,515	661,644	1,072,653	15,366,498	94,442

Table 20 - Kompass Directory - Breakdown by industry sector

Country Coverage

The following table lists those countries which Kompass Covers together with: The ISO Country Code and a link to the country profile in The ExportersAlmanac.

Country	ISO Country Code	The ExportersAlmanac Link
Algeria	DZ	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/DZ/
Argentina	AR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/AR/
Armenia	AM	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/AM/
Australia	AU	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/AU/
Austria	AT	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/AT/
Azerbaijan	AZ	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/AZ/
Belarus	BY	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/BY/
Belgium	BE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/BE/
Brazil	BR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/BR/
Bulgaria	BG	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/BG/
Canada	CA	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CA/
China	CN	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CN/
Colombia	CO	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CO/
Croatia	HR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/HR/
Cyprus	CY	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CY/
Czech Republic	CZ	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CZ/
Denmark	DK	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/DK/
Egypt	EG	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/EG/
Estonia	EE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/EE/
Finland	FI	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/FI/
France	FR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/FR/
Georgia	GE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/GE/
Germany	DE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/DE/
Greece	GR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/GR/
Hong Kong	HK	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/HK/
Hungary	HU	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/HU/
India	IN	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/IN/
Indonesia	ID	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/ID/
Iran	IR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/IR/
Ireland	IE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/IE/
Italy	IT	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/IT/
Ivory Coast	CI	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CI/
Japan	JP	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/JP/
Jordan	JO	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/JO/
Kyrgyzstan	KG	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/KG/
Latvia	LV	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/LV/

Country	ISO Country Code	The ExportersAlmanac Link
Lebanon	LB	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/LB/
Lithuania	LT	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/LT/
Luxembourg	LU	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/LU/
Malaysia	MY	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/MY/
Mexico	MX	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/MX/
Moldova	MD	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/MD/
Monaco	MC	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/MC/
Morocco	MA	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/MA/
Netherlands	NL	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/NL/
New Zealand	NZ	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/NZ/
Norway	NO	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/NO/
Peru	PE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/PE/
Poland	PL	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/PL/
Portugal	PT	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/PT/
Romania	RO	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/RO/
Russian Federation	RU	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/RU/
Saudi Arabia	SA	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/SA/
Serbia	RS	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/RS/
Singapore	SG	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/SG/
Slovakia	SK	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/SK/
Slovenia	SI	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/SI/
South Africa	ZA	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/ZA/
South Korea	KR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/KR/
Spain	ES	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/ES/
Sweden	SE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/SE/
Switzerland	CH	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/CH/
Taiwan	TW	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/TW/
Thailand	TH	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/TH/
Turkey	TR	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/TR/
Ukraine	UA	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/UA/
United Arab Emirates	AE	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/AE/
United Kingdom	GB	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/GB/
United States	US	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/US/
Viet Nam	VN	https://www.exportersalmanac.co.uk/countryprofiles/VN/

Table 21 - Kompass country coverage with links to The ExportersAlmanac Country Profile

Appendix Three – Accessing the Kompass Directory

(For further details and pricing see: [B2BCentral](#).)

Kompass offers 3 levels of service:

1. Free, web-based company search - for single company information.
2. EasyList - use the same interface as for the Free Service, but with the option to create your own tailored target list for downloading.
3. EasyBusiness – full download including access to the Kompass database of 600,000+ UK companies⁸⁸.

Kompass – Free Search

- You can search by: name, activity sector and/or location e.g. city
- At the top left of the page, you can also choose to browse by industry sector.
- The initial search results then provide you with options to further refine your search.
- You can then review the profile of each company found – and then contact them.

Kompass' EasyList

Using the same online interface as the free services, use the search criteria to create your own tailored target list for downloading. The price for the file containing your target list is shown before you buy⁸⁹.

Kompass' EasyBusiness

The global B2B Kompass EasyBusiness database will help you find the right customer leads and marketing lists, whether you use data for telesales, email, digital marketing events or direct mail campaigns.

1. Access a database of:
 - More than 300,000 UK companies.
 - 350,000+ contacts with customised prospect alerts.
2. Segment your searches using 60 search criteria.
3. Flexible 24/7 online and mobile app data access.
4. Create and export sales and marketing data lists including company and contact details.
5. Keeping you up to date with personalised update alerts.
6. Stay up to date with personalised information update alerts.
7. Focus on the right contacts.

Smart data will help you find new business contacts as well as develop your business in new markets. Sales Accelerator, Kompass' EasyBusiness add-on, integrates live Big Data from 200k media sources (web, social, networks, blogs). This not only gives you access to thousands of contacts, but you can also setup customised news alerts to help you keep track of your leads.

⁸⁸ The Kompass database has relatively few micro companies (i.e. those with less than 10 employees) – concentrating on SMEs and Large companies.

⁸⁹ ***N.B.** If you just need a list of a few hundred companies, this is an economic alternative to EasyBusiness. However, if you need regular access to the Kompass database, then EasyBusiness is the better option.

Appendix Four – Considerations when Choosing a Digital Marketing Agency

If you do not have a Digital Marketing Agency, then you should take the following into consideration when looking to commission an agency to help you:

Be very wary of:

SEO companies that offer guarantees: This is an “art”, results cannot be guaranteed. However, an educated estimation of the outcome of the work proposed can certainly be made – and should be requested.

Instant results: These can be delivered but may involve SEO practices that are against webmaster guidelines put out by search engines. Invariably, Google seeks out these techniques and penalises them, resulting in lost rankings that can take months to recover.

Low costs: When it comes to SEO, you are not shopping for the lowest price; you are seeking the best level of service. Be wary of rock bottom prices or “[unbelievable deals.](#)”

Offering a large number of incoming links⁹⁰: Quality is better than quantity. SEO campaigns that include a large number of incoming links within a short period of time almost always use unethical and/or low quality linking schemes; receiving the bulk of your links from such directories can and will damage your link profile. **N.B.:** There is nothing wrong with an SEO company/service that does not offer a link development component. It is better to not have a link development initiative than to have one that is going to hurt your ranking potential.

The quoted service price changes (drops) readily and in a significant way to encourage the signing of the contract: There is nothing wrong with offering incentives; however, if the price of the project suddenly drops significantly without any change in the level of services offered, then this should certainly be a point of concern because the original quoted price was obviously inflated by a great margin, or there are corners that will have to be cut to justify the price-drop.

⁹⁰ An incoming or inbound link (also referred to as a back link) is a hyperlink on a third-party web page that points to a web page on your site. Inbound links are important for search engine optimisation (SEO) because Google and other search engines see multiple, relevant inbound links to a page as a sign that the content on that page is useful.

Appendix Five – ExhOL Case Study: How Armagard Increased Export Sales from 6% to 74%

Please [click here](#) for the pdf file providing:

- A fuller description of the Case Study (including graphs).
- An explanation of what's involved in getting started on ExhOL.
- Armagard's vision for ExhOL.

The following is an extract of the key elements of how Armagard increased export sales and then used this experience to develop and promote its ExhOL service.

Introduction

From 2008 to 2018, Armagard grew export sales from 6% to 74% of annual turnover. The company developed multilingual, online marketing techniques that helped it survive the economic crash of 2007/08 and thrive in the years that followed.

Armagard's success provides a blueprint for others to follow, and the company's methods come with years of proven results:

- Armagard increased export sales by 3,000% in eight years.
- Armagard won the National Chamber Award for Exporter of the Year in 2013.
- In 2013, Armagard won the Queen's Award for Enterprise for its contribution to international trade.
- The company used ExhOL to sell to 49 different countries in 2019.

How did Armagard do it? Just read on.

About Armagard

Armagard is a UK-based, B2B SME that specialises in the design and manufacture of environmental enclosures for screens and IT hardware. The company is based in Birmingham and was established in 1991.

In its early years, Armagard was typical of many of the UK's SMEs, with a small workforce, niche customer base and domestic focus. However, thanks to a successful export strategy, over 100,000 Armagard enclosures now protect equipment in 53 countries—in factories, food processing plants, clean industries, transport hubs, drive thrus and more.

How Armagard Grew Export Sales from 6% to 74%

Armagard defied conventional advice to create a winning formula for SME export success.

During the financial crisis beginning in 2007/08, Armagard decided to strategically address export sales. The thinking was that selling into multiple markets would improve business stability, as the company wouldn't be so affected by fluctuations in any single one.

Armagard had explored exporting before, but the traditional routes had presented too many barriers. For instance, selling through distributors wasn't effective, as Armagard's niche products meant resellers could get more sales by focussing their efforts elsewhere. It was also hard to train resellers in the detailed product knowledge they needed to make sales and support customers.

Armagard turned to the Cranfield University Business Growth Program for help. The result was a strategic plan that capitalised on Armagard’s strengths in domestic online marketing rather than forcing the company down traditional routes.

The aim was to sell existing products into new markets. This approach wouldn’t require any extra product development, and it relied on products that were already proven and successful in the UK.

The plan was also built around selling online. Armagard was already selling successfully via the phone and internet in the UK, so it was natural to do the same abroad. From its UK base, the company would use technology to market its products online and in multiple languages to generate inbound sales leads from abroad.

Foreign-language websites were a central part of the strategy, but the company had to choose how to create them and which markets to focus on. Armagard had three options:

1. Carry out comprehensive market research and target a single country with a site that was fully translated by a mother-tongue speaker. Drawbacks of this conventional approach included the time and cost of market research and the wasted resources if the wrong market was chosen.
2. Choose several markets based on their overall level of overseas trade and target those with translated sites. This would take the company straight to market, skipping the research phase. However, it would still require reasonable investment in human translators and web development.
3. Target multiple markets with machine translated websites. This would require the least investment and get the company online in multiple languages quickly, but it was a less conventional, untested route.

Armagard decided to pursue option two and investigate option three. The company created seven international websites written by mother-tongue speakers, spreading the risk across multiple markets. It also used native speakers and online tools to identify the phrases customers might use to search for its products, which helped the sites appear highly in search results in each language.

In 2011, Armagard began to test the effectiveness of computer translation. If it worked, it could be a cost-effective route to reaching customers in as many languages as the company wanted.

The Results

- Export sales went from virtually nil in 2007 to over £1 million in 2010, exceeding UK sales in the same year.
- The largest single remote sale was over €1 million, achieved in 2015.
- Between 2007 and 2015, export turnover increased by 3,000%.
- The machine translation test site generated two-thirds of the leads of mother-tongue translation—at a fraction of the time and cost!

With confidence in machine translation, Armagard began perfecting the method. The company found that the accuracy of machine translation could be maximised if the English was written in the right way. This meant simple, plain English that avoided colloquialisms and ambiguous terms.

Further research into the mechanics of computer translation helped Armagard develop writing techniques that returned consistently excellent results. When blind testing during development, mother-tongue speakers were frequently unable to tell the difference between Armagard's hybrid machine and human translations.

Armagard had hit upon a winning blueprint for export success. Its approach was cost-effective and achievable for SMEs. In 2013, Armagard's achievements were recognised with the national award of The Chamber of Commerce for Exporter of the Year and the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade.

Armagard's multilingual, web-based strategy worked because it capitalised on the willingness of businesses to source products online and from across borders. A trend that continues today, with 71% of B2B research starting with an internet search.¹

The plan also accounted for the fact that people search online in their first language even if they speak English as a second language.

Armagard found that many customers were happy to trade in English once initial contact had been made, but the company's foreign-language websites were vital for being found in the first place.

Creating ExhOL and Reaping the Benefits of Machine Translation

In 2013, Armagard took its formula for export success and distilled it into a standalone platform called ExhOL.

ExhOL allowed Armagard to use computer translation to market its products in 20 languages, covering 84% of world trade. This gave the brand a huge global reach. In 2019, Armagard received sales leads from 49 different countries thanks to its ExhOL pages.

An additional benefit of machine translation was the retrospective market data it provided. For example, established advice told Armagard it wasn't worth creating sites in the Dutch and Scandinavian languages, as English is widely spoken in those countries. However, when the company's ExhOL pages in those languages went live, leads from those countries increased to more than from most other languages.

Again, Armagard's willingness to overturn conventional advice proved effective. Yes, Dutch and Scandinavian natives speak good English, but they prefer to search the web in their own language first. Armagard's ExhOL pages helped it identify markets in those countries that would have otherwise been missed.

ExhOL allowed Armagard to take a broad approach to entering new markets. Computer translation was so cost-effective that the company could target multiple languages at once and retrospectively identify the best ones. With this information, the company could narrow its aim and invest in additional marketing in the countries that guaranteed the best return.

Another benefit of ExhOL was the boost to global brand awareness it provided. As a direct result of being found on ExhOL, Armagard experienced a 9% jump in sales leads from the seven websites it created with mother-tongue speakers. Analysis of visitor traffic showed that many prospects found the company on ExhOL first and then searched for the Armagard name directly.

ExhOL helped the Armagard name appear in the search results of international prospects, winning the company business that it wouldn't otherwise have got.

ExhOL has been a game-changer for the company. Sue Owen, technical director, recalls the success of the platform:

“Armagard had become proficient at generating export leads, but ExhOL widened the reach and scope of the Armagard brand even further. It connected us with new customers and opened up fresh markets, giving us a 24% increase in sales leads since its launch.”

In the following years, Armagard refined ExhOL, turning it into a user-friendly, cloud-based platform that other companies can use to pursue to their own international sales.

“We continue to gain visitors and generate leads, and the reporting tells us how all the languages and keywords are performing. The platform is powerful and simple to use, and the team are always on hand to answer questions and provide advice on how to maximise results.”

Daren Wallis, Cirrus Research, ExhOL user since 2016”

Appendix Six - Agent/Distributor Qualifications Checklist

Consider these factors in evaluating prospective overseas representatives. Their significance varies with the products and countries involved and the needs of the company seeking a rep.

Sales Force	
Number and location of sales staff.	
Would the rep need more staff to service your account?	
Would it be willing add staff?	
How are their sales staff compensated?	
Are any incentive or motivation programs offered?	
How are their sales staff trained?	
Would it pay or share costs of locally based or dedicated online training if needed?	

Table 22 Sales Force Check List

Sales Performance	
Sales volume for the past five years.	
If sale are growing, why? If not, why not?	
Sales goals for next year; based on what assumptions?	
What sales volume does it foresee for your products?	
Based on what?	
Is this adequate?	

Table 23 Sales Performance Check List

Territorial Coverage	
Current territory served.	
Is that the coverage you need?	
How does it serve more distant areas within its territory -- resident staff, branch offices?	
Would it be willing to strengthen coverage in areas you consider important?	

Table 24 Territorial Coverage Check List

Companies/Products Represented	
How many and whose/products does it currently represent?	
Is this a manageable level?	
Would you be the primary supplier?	
What priority would you receive?	
Would your products fit well in this mix?	
Do you compete with any of the companies/products represented?	

Table 25 Companies/Products Represented Check List

Customer Profile	
What end-use sectors does it mainly sell to?	
Are these the right targets for you?	
Who are its key accounts?	
What share of sales do they represent?	
Do they make sense for you too?	

Table 26 Customer Profile Check List

Facilities and Equipment	
Communications facilities and preferred methods -- phone, fax, cable, E-mail, other?	
Warehouse and stocking capacity?	
Is there enough for you, if you need it?	
Customer support facilities/capabilities. Can it install and service your products if needed?	
Training facilities/capabilities.	
Can it train users if needed?	

Table 27 Facilities and Equipment Check List

Localisation Capabilities	
Can it translate your sales literature and ad copy if needed?	
Can it alter the packaging or the product itself if needed to meet local requirement or tastes?	

Table 28 Localisation Capabilities Check List

Market Development Capabilities	
Market research -- Does it conduct or use market research in decision-making?	
Can it help you assess your market potential?	
Promotion -- Does it promote itself and the products it represents?	
What promotional literature is used for this?	
What promotional media are used?	
How are the results measured?	
How much is spent on each method?	
If the principals contribute, what formula is used to allocate the costs?	

Table 29 Market Development Capabilities Check List

Appendix Seven – Ebury Business Cases

The following are outlines of examples of satisfied Ebury clients with links to the relevant business cases.

Foreign Exchange Services

Agrifood Exporter

[How this food exporter implemented an effective risk management strategy.](#)

“Ebury has helped us understand the currency markets alongside our particular exposure. We now have a set rate and comprehensive risk strategy backed up by expert market insight. All of this via a dedicated currency specialist who’s made the process as easy as possible.”

UK-based food exporter.

Apparel Retailer

[How this retailer used local currencies to make savings.](#)

“Working with Ebury has allowed us to achieve significant cost savings and brought us closer to our Chinese suppliers. Paying invoices in CNY is no more difficult than paying in US Dollars, and we’re secure in the knowledge that our risk is mitigated.”

See also the details of the currency flows before and after Ebury provided their solution – showing the savings made.

The business is an apparel retailer in the UK.

Construction Contractor

[How this construction business achieved competitive rates with risk management solutions.](#)

“Ebury’s currency services have refreshed our approach to international payments. We’re now able to access comprehensive risk management tools and save money in the process.”

The business is a construction contractor to the UK’s largest utilities providers.

Glad's House

[How Glad’s House uses local currencies to enhance overseas projects.](#)

“Every penny we are able to raise has a direct impact on the lives of these young street children in Mombasa. That is why we work with Ebury – it is so important that we make the most of the money we have.”

Vicky Ferguson, CEO, Glad’s House.

Irish Manufacturer

[How this manufacturer used market orders to protect margins.](#)

“When we transferred to an overseas supplier, our payments became exposed to currency fluctuations. Ebury has allowed us to manage our risk and minimise the impact it has on our business. It’s a relief to find such a reliable provider.”

The business manufactures cranes in Ireland.

Irish Typesetting Services

[How this manufacturer used market orders to protect margins.](#)

“Working with an emerging market currency is complex but wholly manageable if you choose the right financial provider. Ebury has enabled us to set our exchange rate so we are no longer at the mercy of market volatility.”

The business offers Typesetting and Prepress services in Ireland.

Microloan Foundation

[How MicroLoan makes donations go further with local currencies and payment solutions.](#)

“The competitive rate we achieve with Ebury means more local currency for our operations in Zambia and Malawi. With the value of a life-changing loan starting from just £25, working with Ebury helps our organisation better achieve its mission, of providing loans to the rural poor.”

Peter Ryan, Founder and CEO, MicroLoan Foundation.

Renewable Energy Services

[How this energy business grew beyond its borders.](#)

“The hedging solutions from Ebury could not have come soon enough. The company was previously exposed to currency volatility beyond any of our expectations and it is a relief to finally find a stable and trustworthy currency services provider.”

The company operates internationally, offering renewable energy services.

Trade Finance Services

Dyrhoff

[How Dyrhoff grew beyond its borders.](#)

“We are really impressed with Ebury. The team is knowledgeable and approachable and the facility is an effective approach to raise working capital. It has given us a flexible way to fund our transactions and avoid lengthy documentation processes. Both we and our US supplier are very pleased.”

Matt Rymell, Operations Manager, Dyrhoff.

Fred Balls Fastenings

[How Fred Balls Fastenings uses currency and lending to grow beyond its borders.](#)

“We are very pleased with the level of service and support we have received from Ebury over the years. Their currency services have transformed us into a truly global business and the introduction of business lending has been most welcome. We are now able to trade internationally with surprising ease.”

Richard Parkin, Director, Fred Balls Fastenings.

UK Shelving Importer

[How this importer uses flexible lending to trade internationally.](#)

“We have found Ebury so refreshing, innovative and modern. Our business is now growing rapidly and we don’t wish to utilise a bank facility and let them enjoy our good times as they were absent when we needed the most support.”

The company is a UK based shelving importer

UK Toy Retailer

[How this business uses flexible lending to manage seasonal demand.](#)

“Working with Ebury has allowed our business to grow without being shackled to traditional forms of finance. There’s no denying that this year is going to be big for us but, with this lending in place, we feel ready to meet demand.”

UK-based toy retailer.

Appendix Eight – Kopiki – Case Study of a Successful Marketplace

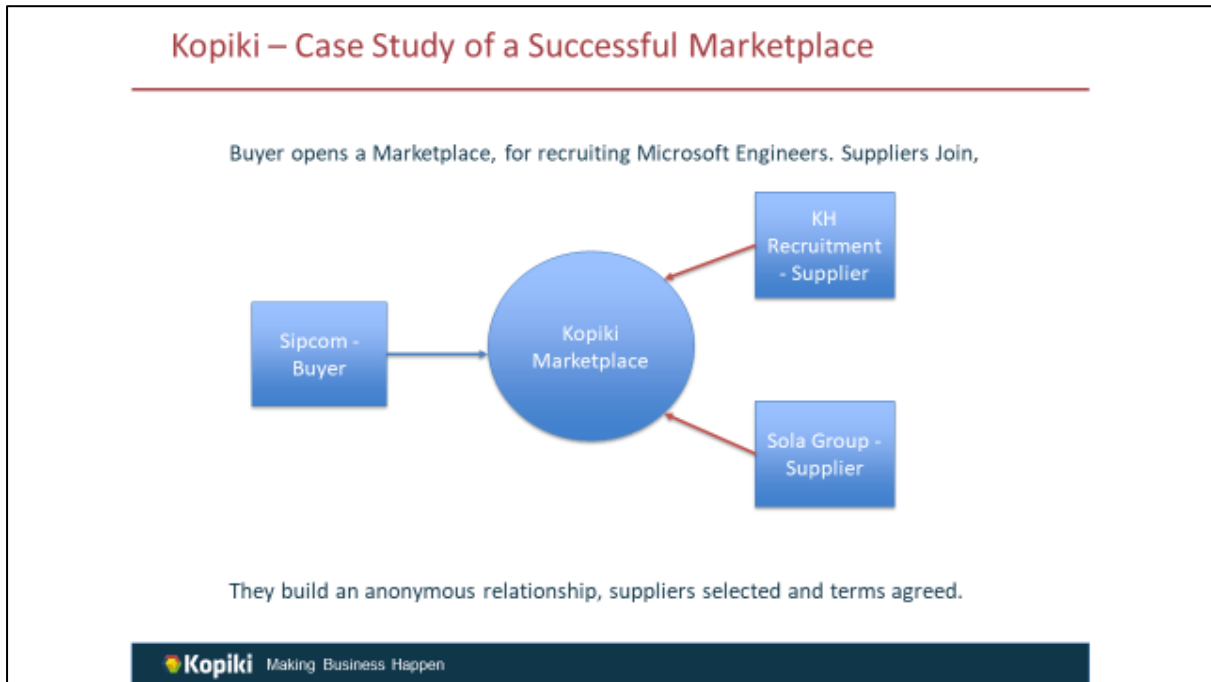


Figure 2- Kopiki – Case Study of a Successful Marketplace

Other recent marketplaces of a more industrial nature have included:

- Latex Surgical Gloves (Nitrile Gloves)
- 200 litre steel drums (0.9 mm) for crude oil storage.

Appendix Nine - Virtual Events – Preparation and Assessment

Preparing for a virtual event is pretty much the same as preparing for a physical event – with a few added considerations. The following check lists should help you prepare for and then assess the level of success your event has achieved.

Event Organiser, Teams and Team Roles

Detail	
Name of event organizer and contact details?	
Team Details: (team names and description of their responsibilities): Pre-event? Event execution? Post-event?	
How many members are needed for each team and who are they (names and contact details)?	
What roles will each member be assigned to?	
Who liaises with: Exhibitors? Speakers\Presenters? Sponsors? Attendees?	
Names and contact details of any 3 rd parties involved in the organisation of the event – with a brief description of their role.	

Table 30 Event Organiser, Teams and Team Roles

Define the Type of Event

Type of Event	
Single webinar?	
Multiple, consecutive webinars?	
Virtual exhibition? Temporary? Permanent?	

Table 31 - Define the type of event

Key Feature Considerations

Feature	
Entrance hall?	
Virtual stands?	
Interpreters?	
Pre-recording of presentations?	
Entrance hall?	
Virtual stands?	
Pre-recording of presentations possible? Desirable??	
Closed or open event?	
Any Initial event set up/software development required?	
Are there bandwidth considerations for attendees? i.e. do they need a specific minimum in order to participate?	

Table 32 Key Feature Considerations

Goals and Objectives

Detail	
What is the purpose of the event	
What is the theme for the event?	
What is unique about this event?	
Why would people want to attend?	
What are the Key Success Factors for this event?	Registration goals? Attendee goals? Revenue goals? Profit goals? Other?
Will you use qualitative or quantitative data?	
How much profit are you looking to achieve (if any)?	

Table 33 Goals and Objectives

Defining the Overall Profile of your Event

Event Details	
Name of event?	
Start date?	
How long?	
Time zone?	
Regular event or one-off? If regular, frequency?	
Start date for event preparation?	
What is the overall time frame for the organisation team to work on the event?	
What are the key stages pre- and post-event?	
Main/default language of the event?	
Other languages required?	
What will be the event program?	
What sessions/topics are planned? (Link to speakers and participants)	
Do any of these run concurrently?	
Who and how many Guests/Presenters?	
Will exhibitors be present?	
Free to register – or pay to register?	
What information should attendees provide about themselves to attend?	
If payment required for attending, are there any:	Discounts? Different access levels?

Table 34 – Defining the profile of the event

Platform and Supporting Service Requirements

Having determined the above profile(s) and requirements, use the following check list to compare the respective features of platforms and supporting services under consideration:

Feature	Y/N
Ability to Email Sponsors In-Stand	
Ability to Send Reminder Emails to Registrants from Platform	
Best Practices and How-To Guides for Platform and Marketing	
Between Session Air Time (For Advertising)	
Closed Captioning and other Accessibility Options	
Coffee bar where delegates can meet up – with private\public chat.	
Comprehensive Event Reporting (including detailed analytics and tailored reporting for individual sponsors)	
Continuing Education Certification Options	
CRM Link Options	
Dedicated Microsite for Each Individual Event Available	
Delegate matching\introductions	
Different access\communication rights for delegates at workshops	
Direct Credit Card Processing	
Discount Code Capability	
Easy API Options	
Event Organiser	
Exhibitor Stand Full Customisations	
Flexible On-Demand Period Options	
Full Platform Customisation	
Full Session Length Flexibility	
Gamification Options	
Import Registrations Capability	
In Event Chatrooms (In Sessions, Stands, and General)	
In-Stand Session Capability	
Industry-Unique and Customizable Sponsor Options	
Limited/Unlimited On-Demand Views for Attendees	
Live Chat Support During Event	
Live, Simulated-Live, and On Demand Capabilities	
Number of Attendees Included (Unlimited Options)	
Ongoing Support	
Options for Free or Attendee-Paid Events	
Post-Event Review with Project Manager	
Pricing	
Project (Event) Manager Included with all events	
Quizzes/Polls	
Send Post-Event Emails to Registrants from Platform	
Session Material Downloads In-Event and Post-Event	
Shared Screen Mode (Conference)	
Simultaneous Event Capability	
Simultaneous Translation Services\Availability	
Tracking Code Options for Registration Reporting	
Twitter feed.	
Unlimited Number of Event Days	
Unlimited Number of Session Tracks	

Table 35 Virtual Exhibition Platform Comparison Check List

Advertising, Marketing and Partnerships

Feature	
Advertising program and schedule? (Paid Media Strategy?)	
What marketing strategies/channels will be used to promote the event?	
Email Marketing Strategy	
Blog Promotion Strategy	
How many people are you intending on reaching?	
What pre-event publicity will you develop?	
What Social Media strategy will you follow?	
What media do you want to engage with?	
What branding do you want for the event?	
What Partnerships and/or Sponsorships do you want and how does this reflect on general branding and financials?	
How to liaise with your webmaster to ensure your website also promotes and supports your event.	

Table 36 Advertising, Marketing and Partnerships

Post Event Actions

Action	
What post-event publicity1follow up program will you run?	
Post event budget reconciliation.	
What event statistics will be made available to:	
	Attendees?
	Guest speakers?
	Exhibitors?
	Sponsors?
When? (Pre- during and\or post-event)?	
Resources. links, archiving, post event messaging	
Thank you emails to guests and attendees.	
How will you use the statistics generated?	

Table 37 Post Event Actions

Financials - Outgoing

Expense Item	
What is the overall budget for the event?	
Which software licences are required to manage and host the event?	
Cost of usage of third-party software used for the execution of event (what services are included?)	
What cost savings are service providers able to offer?)	
Event manager fee	
Speaker/presenter fees?	
Registration tools (if not included in software used for event)?	
App development (if applicable)?	
Marketing spends?	

Table 38 Financials - Outgoing

Financials - Incoming

Revenue Item	
Do you want to charge Registration fees? How much? How many attendees?	
If exhibitors will be present, what fee structure is appropriate?	
Sponsorships?	
What other revenue streams can be considered?	

Table 39 Financials - Incoming

Appendix Ten – Graydon Credit Reports

All the information you need to correctly estimate the risk of non-payment⁹¹ and to identify growth opportunities.

- Graydon Credit Rating provides you with an overview of the level of financial risk involved in working with the subject company.
- The Graydon Credit Rating is recognised by all leading credit insurers and can be used to support a claim.

Graydon Credit Reports provide you with all the information you need and rely on (i.e. official sources, big data and community data). All the information (company profile, ratings, financials, payment behaviour, company structure, exceptional specifications and summary) has its value in mapping the overall picture of a company, association or sole trader. Combined, this data gives you reliable financial insights and a good picture of the risk and growth profile of a company you are considering doing business with so that you limit your risks and increase your returns with customers who respect your payment terms.

- Assets.
- Liquidity.
- Profitability.
- Demographics.
- Negative events; e.g. County Court Judgements.

The score is presented in a range from AAA-D.

N.B. The agreement B2BCentral has with Graydon gives you a 20% discount on their retail price per reference report. For more details on pricing and the Graydon Rating and Credit Reports [click here](#).

⁹¹ One third of all invoices are paid late or not at all which has a direct impact on your profit margin.

Appendix Eleven – Spotler’s Automated Marketing Suite & Services

For pricing (and to access Lead Generation Freemium) and even more details see: [B2BCentral - Digital Marketing](#).

Spotler offers the choice of four solutions:

1. **Lead Generation Freemium:** [Get a “free for life” version of GatorLeads.](#)

Key Features:

- ✓ Website Visitor Tracking.
- ✓ Company Identification.
- ✓ Daily Report of Companies Email Directly to Your Inbox!

2. **Lead Generation PRO:** IP lookup & Social & PopUps

Key Features:

- ✓ Website Visitor Tracking.
- ✓ IP Lookup & Visitor Identification.
- ✓ Lead Scoring & Management.
- ✓ Website Popup.
- ✓ B2B Social Media Management.
- ✓ Alerts & PPC Report.
- ✓ Outlook PURL.
- ✓ Marketing Source Attribution & Insights.
- ✓ Site Labels and New Page Filters.
- ✓ Web Visitor Data Purchasing.
- ✓ Upload Companies.
- ✓ Auto Nurture.
- ✓ Multiple Domain Page Tracking.
- ✓ Mobile App.
- ✓ CRM Integration.

Including:

- Unlimited user licenses.
- Email & Telephone Support.
- Extensive online help centre.

3. **Email Marketing Only:** Creating, testing and sending emails has never been quicker or easier to do.

Key Features:

- ✓ Upload Purchased Data.
- ✓ Personalisation & Dynamic Content.
- ✓ Dynamic Sending.
- ✓ Drag & Drop Editor AND HTML Editor.
- ✓ Deliverability Testing.
- ✓ Inbox Rendering.
- ✓ A/B Testing.
- ✓ RSS-to-Email.

- ✓ Snap Shot Manager.
- ✓ Google Analytics Integration.
- ✓ Unsubscribe and Bounce Management.
- ✓ Bot Detection.
- ✓ Industry Comparison & Activity Reports.
- ✓ CRM Integration.

Including:

- Unlimited user licenses.
- Email & Telephone Support.
- Account Manager.
- Extensive online help centre.

4. Marketing Automation

All the features from Lead Generation PRO & Email Marketing *plus*:

- ✓ Behavioural Campaigns.
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence.
- ✓ Email Remarketing.
- ✓ Landing Pages.
- ✓ Smart Web Forms.
- ✓ Nurturing Workflows.
- ✓ Account-Based Marketing.
- ✓ Event Management.
- ✓ Surveys.
- ✓ SMS.
- ✓ CRM Integration.

Including:

- Unlimited user licenses.
- Email & Telephone Support.
- Live Chat.
- Dedicated Account Manager.
- Extensive online help centre.

CRM Integration

SpotlerUK has out of the box integration with the following CRMs:

aCloud	Act	Coins	Goldmine
Google Analytics	Infor	Microsoft Dynamics 365	Netsuite
Open API	Orderwise	Prospect CRM	Sage
Salesforce	Sugar	Workbooks	Zoho

Table 40 Spotler UK CRM Integration

In addition, Spotler UK also offers the following services:

Marketing Automation

Website Visitor Nurturing

When someone lands on your website, you can send them a triggered campaign. Spotler UK helps to build a workflow, set your options up in GatorLeads and effectively remarket your brand to your website visitors.

Event Communications Packages

Spotler UK's team can set up their customers with an event and webinar booking system that syncs to the rest of the platform. They help build the event profile and pull it through to Gator. They create and automate confirmation and reminder emails.

Quarterly Lead Generation Campaigns

Spotler UK will set up all sorts of automated Workflows that generate leads and push people down the funnel.

Brochure Download Follow—up Emails

Spotler UK can set up a smart form on your site. Once the visitor has completed the form and received the gated asset, you have their details. They set up a series of 3 emails to drive them back to the site, warm them up, and get them to the next stage to buy.

Part of the team

If you could do with an extra pair of hands with the day to day management of the platform, or you wish to maintain high levels of brand awareness, then Spotler UK could set up a monthly fixed amount of time that you can outsource your work to them.

Data Purchase and Enrichment

Key Supplier Relationships

Spotler UK has strong relationships with key data suppliers and they can help you get a quote for purchasing lists of the companies with the right job titles in the right industry for you to send your campaigns to.

Data Enriching

Spotler UK can help to complete your data set. With their data enriching partner, they will enhance company info and contact details.

Website Contacts

When a company comes on your website, but you don't know who it was, Spotler UK can give you the contacts based at that company and secure their email addresses, so you can add them to your data pot.

Spotler data packages

Double your dataset and improve your results in an instant. All you need to do is specify your target audience and industry and Spotler UK can provide you with high quality data at high volumes.

CRM Support

Bespoke Dashboard

Spotler UK's team can help you build bespoke dashboards, Sales Lists and different views in your CRM so you can see your data in the way you want to.

Advanced Reporting

If you need any help with reporting from their platform, Spotler UK can create new bespoke reports or help you amend an existing one.

Integrated campaigns

If you have either Microsoft Dynamics or Salesforce, it might be that you need to create new Workflows that set the rules for what you want to happen with the data and put it into groups. Spotler UK can set those up.

No CRM?

If you are not integrated with a CRM, you can use Spotler UK's platform as a standalone.

Template Design and Preference Centre packages

HTML Template

Spotler UK's design team can create your HTML template and upload it to the platform so all you need do is edit the copy and images in each campaign and you're good to go.

Confirmation Opt-in

Spotler UK's confirmation opt-in tool can be completely personalised as you wish to allow your customers to opt out of certain communications but stay included in others.

Training & Consultancy

Review and optimisation of Gatorleads configuration.

The Spotler team will make sure that your page scoring is set up. And that leads are assigned to the right Salespeople automatically.

Lead Generation Workshop

Spotler UK 's team will meet with you to uncover how you work and what you want to achieve.

Review and optimisation of email campaigns

Spotler UK offers consultancy to look under the bonnet at your content, readability, images, frequency, audience groups you are sending to and how well they are interacting.

Product training (online and onsite)

This helps you to be thoroughly confident and comfortable using the platform. It's a powerful bit of kit but requires some time to get the best out of it.

SEO & Paid Media

Full SEO Health Check & Website Audit

Identify the weak points in your website that prevent a search engine finding it and serving it to potential customers at speed.

Keyword Research and On-Page SEO plan

This keyword research document and on-page SEO plan will identify and map each page with a handful of keyword targets and further show how best to optimise each page for these keywords.

Link-building Campaign

Building high-quality backlinks is often the most challenging and time-consuming part of any SEO campaign, but remains the most integral part.

Google Ads Campaign Management (PPC)

PPC (Pay-per-click) is the mode of acquiring traffic via Google Ads.

Content Creation & Copywriting

Copywriting for eShots

Email marketing is highly effective, especially when you offer relevant, professionally created content that captivates readers. Produce emails your customers want to receive.

Copywriting for associated blog and eShot

Blogging is at the heart of most content marketing strategies. It allows businesses to develop a personality, connect with customers and share relevant and valuable content. Moreover, Google rewards companies which produce valuable content for its customers.

Long-form content – e.g. eBook / white paper / feature

Google loves long-form content and so do customers. Longer form content gets more social shares and receives more back links.

Long-form content & design

Spotler UK's designers will match the look of your long-form content to your brand identity. They will also ensure a consistent design approach is taken and will produce custom graphics to support key points.

Landing page including content, design and build

Beautifully designed and functional landing pages help companies target audiences, offer them something valuable and convert a higher percentage of visitors into leads.

Infographics

The key is to create an infographic which combines meaningful and factually accurate data with stunning design – something their partner editorial team of journalists and designers are ideally placed to produce.

Managed content marketing campaigns

Working in collaboration with your Spotler account manager, their partner agency will design and create a bespoke email marketing lead generation campaign that can be rolled out to your existing or potential customers across one quarter.

If you choose Spotler UK, you opt for much more than just amazing software, you also choose 'software **WITH** a service'. You get access to great support, account management, resources and free events to make your marketing automation a success.

Appendix Twelve – Translation “Howlers”

In sales and marketing language is one of the most powerful instruments.

Getting the marketing campaigns and website content to your audience successfully, requires knowledge of your audience and your subject, clarity of intention, discipline, and dedication. And when the impact of cultures and customs on how we say what we say is not acknowledged and respected, things sometimes go wrong.

An example. **Pepsi** introduced itself to the Chinese market with the slogan *“Pepsi Brings you back to life.”* This produced an entirely different meaning to the public by translating as *“Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave.”*

KFC accidentally translated its slogan *“Finger Licking”* to good to *“Eat your fingers off”* when they opened outlets in Beijing in the late 1980s.

Coors, the American beer maker, had their slang *“Turn it loose”* translated to Spanish with an expression commonly interpreted to *“Suffer from diarrhoea.”*

Ford, wanting to underscore its cars’ excellent manufacturing, launched an ad campaign with a slogan that read: *“Every car has a high-quality body”*. In a translation of this phrase, *‘body’* was interpreted as *‘corpse’*.

Clairol — a hair products company — had a curling iron called the ‘Mist Stick’ which was very popular in the US. Taking the product to Germany in 2006, the product wasn’t as well received. *“Mist”* in German slang means *“manure”*.

The Swedish giant **Electrolux** tried to introduce its new powerful vacuum cleaner to the U.S consumers with the slogan *“Nothing sucks like Electrolux.”*

All the above are clear warning signs for every business attempting to internationalise its brand message. When conducting international marketing campaigns, businesses can use language to its full potential only if the culture, customs, history as well as socio-economic and political situation are taken into account when introducing new service or product to a foreign market.

Appendix Thirteen – Glossary

Banner advertising

Banner advertising consists of embedding a banner or advertisement onto a webpage.

Customer Data Platforms (CDPs)

A CDP is a marketer-controlled system that builds a unified, persistent customer database that is accessible by other systems.

Customer Experience (CX)

The Customer Experience is the sum of all interactions a customer has with a company. The experience is purely based on how the customer perceives your brand.

Customer Experience Management (CEM or CXM)

CEM is the process of executing, managing, and tracking every aspect of the customer experience.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer relationship management is a strategy and a software application that helps businesses and their teams manage every aspect of the client-business relationship. A CRM solution is designed to help organize your contacts, house valuable data, and track all interactions with your leads and customers.

Digital Advertising

Simply: Advertising via digital media e.g. Google, LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. The key media for B2B eCommerce are Google, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Digital Asset Management (DAM)

Digital asset management is a system that stores, shares and organizes digital assets in a central location. It amplifies the benefits of creative files such as images, videos and other media. Ultimately, DAM is a company's content sharing and storage solution.

Digital Marketing

This is the next step from Digital Advertising. It covers how you can proactively reach out to your actual and potential clients to sell your products and services.

The same concepts that apply in the physical world apply to both Digital Advertising and Digital Marketing: Simple, Focused Messaging. However, they provide you with the added benefits of much more control and – with feedback in real-time.

Digitise

This simply means to convert paper documents to a digital format for use in a computer e.g. to convert a document or form into electronic format.

Digitalise

Often interchanged with “digitise”, however it is actually using digitised documents or files within a process e.g. having completed the online form, it was possible to generate the VAT report form which was then uploaded to HMRC’s online service.

Drip Campaign

A drip campaign is a series of emails that systematically go out over a predetermined period of time. They are often used in lead nurturing campaigns, as educational messages, for onboarding and more.

EEA

The European Economic Area which consists of the 27 countries of the European Union plus: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Face to Face (“F2F”)

Used in an email or internet chat room to describe a situation where you meet and talk to someone, rather than communicate electronically.

Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS)

Infrastructure-as-a-service is a form of cloud computing that provides virtualised computing resources over the internet. IaaS is one of the three main categories of cloud computing services, alongside software as a service (SaaS) and platform as a service (PaaS).

Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing is a strategy to help drive your leads down your funnel. It consists of a number of different touchpoints between the business and lead. The business personalises their messaging to meet the needs of each lead through proper segmentation and automation. - Lead generation is important. But without lead nurturing, most leads will disappear.

Marketing Automation

Marketing automation is a technology and process helping businesses automate otherwise manual sales, marketing and customer service efforts. Marketing automation streamlines business process, helps qualify leads and increases engagement. (See Digital Marketing.)

Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL)

A Marketing-Qualified Lead is a website visitor whose engagement levels indicate that he is likely to become a customer. To become an MQL, the visitor has demonstrated interest in the website's content. For example, the visitor may have filled in a web form, downloaded content, signed up for a newsletter or have placed items in a shopping cart.

Master Data Management (MDM)

Master data management is a technology-enabled discipline in which business and IT work together to ensure the uniformity, accuracy, stewardship, semantic consistency and accountability of the enterprise’s official shared master data assets.

Mobile Engagement Automation (MEA)

Mobile engagement is the act of engaging a user through available messaging channels inside and outside of an app. Companies use mobile engagement to deliver positive brand experiences, support their business goals and build valuable, long-term relationships. Engagement typically starts the moment a user downloads your app.

Omni-Channel Experience

Omnichannel is a multichannel strategy where the consumer has the same great experience with your brand no matter the channel they use. For example, they have the same experience online, in a physical store, on the phone, in person, etc.

Online Marketplace (OMP)

OMPs are electronic interfaces (website or mobile application) such as a marketplace, platform, portal or similar that facilitates the sale of goods to customers. 'Facilitating' shall mean where any of the following conditions are met:

1. Sets the general terms and conditions of the sale;
2. Authorises the charge to the customer for payment; and
3. Involved in ordering or delivering the goods.

Pay Per Click (PPC)

An agreement whereby you only pay for an ad if someone clicks on it.

Pay Per Impression (PPM)

Where you pay based on how many times your ad was shown (but not clicked on).

Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS)

Platform-as-a-Service is a category of cloud computing services that provides a platform allowing customers to develop, run, and manage applications without the complexity of building and maintaining their own infrastructure.

Product Information Management (PIM)

A Product Information Management solution provides a single place to collect, manage, and enrich your product information, create a product catalogue, and distribute it to your sales and eCommerce channels.

Qualified Trust Service Provider (QTSP)

A Trust Service Provider (TSP) is a person or legal entity providing and preserving digital certificates to create and validate electronic signatures and to authenticate their signatories as well as websites in general. Under Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS), a Trust Service Provider (TSP) is defined as "*a natural or a legal person who provides one or more trust services either as a qualified or as a non-qualified trust service provider.*"

Lists of EU Trust Service Providers can be found on the [European Commission's site](#). The list of UK Trust Service Providers can be found on the [tScheme site](#).

Research Online, Purchase Offline (ROPO)

A trend in buying behaviour where customers research relevant product information to qualify their buying decision, before they actually decide to buy their favourite product in the local store.

Reversed ROPO (Research Offline, Purchase Online)

In this case, the buyer checks out the products in stores and then buys online (often from a cheaper source).

Sales Qualified Lead (SQL)

A sales qualified lead is a contact that has expressed intent to purchase. They are the right fit for your product and are interested in learning more from your sales team, trialling your service or product, or they are ready to convert into a paying customer.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

All that this means is that your website is optimised to be found when companies are searching for your products and/or services on the search engines (e.g. Google, Bing etc.) and has as high a ranking possible i.e. you appear at or near the top of the search results.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

SEM involves the promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs) by combining SEO and Digital Advertising.

SMS Marketing

SMS marketing is the practice of sending business communications or promotional messages via text messages. It differs from text spam mainly because it requires people to opt in to the service. So rather than being averse to promotional SMS, recipients expect the texts and tend to welcome them.

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

Software as a Service is a software licensing and delivery model in which software is licensed on a subscription basis and is centrally hosted. SaaS applications are also known as on-demand software and Web-based/Web-hosted software.

Stock-Keeping Unit (SKU)

An SKU is a scannable bar code, most often seen printed on product labels in a retail store. The label allows vendors to automatically track the movement of inventory.

Transport Layer Security (TLS)

TLS is a protocol which provides privacy between communicating applications and their users, or between communicating services. When a server and client communicate, well-configured TLS ensures that no third party can eavesdrop or tamper with any message.

User Experience (UX)

The user experience is the experience a customer has using your product, such as a website or application.

Website Optimisation

All that this means is that your website is optimised to:

- Provide users with a user-friendly service.
- Generate useful information from and about your visitors.
- Be easily found on search engines and has as high a ranking possible at or near the top of the search results page.

WFH = Work From Home

This is self-explanatory.

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P.S. In case you haven't done so, please [register for free updates](#) to this Guide.