

VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL MARKETING Handbook



KANSAS GLOBAL
TRADE SERVICES

Virtual International Marketing Handbook

2022 Best Practices Guide for Kansas Companies

Table of Contents

- Overview 2**
 - Assemble Your Team 2
 - How to Approach VIM Successfully 3
- International Market Strategy 4**
- Executing Virtual International Marketing 5**
 - Internationalize Your Website 5
 - Tips for Website Internationalization 5
 - Internationalization, Regionalization, and Localization 5
 - Website Globalization and Global Marketing Service Providers 6
 - SEO 7
 - Overview: What is SEO? 7
 - How to Improve SEO 7
 - SEO and Global Marketing Service Providers 8
 - International SEO 9
 - Assessing Website Performance 10
 - Common International SEO Weaknesses 11
 - ECommerce and International Payment Platforms 12
 - ECommerce 12
 - International Payment Platforms 12
 - eCommerce Service Providers 13
 - Other International Virtual Marketing Tools & Best Practices 14
 - Social Media 14
 - Virtual Relationships 16
 - Virtual Trade Shows 16
 - Virtual Meetings 16
- Resources 17**
 - Funding for VIM 17
 - Other Resources for VIM 19

Overview

Reaching customers overseas is a strategic process that involves a comprehensive export plan, but there are a few key areas that a company can leverage to attract international customers. Virtual International Marketing (VIM) refers to the virtual/digital sales and marketing strategies and actions to increase export sales. In this guide, we share simple steps to help implement VIM best practices in the areas of **International Market Strategy, Website Globalization, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), eCommerce and International Payment Platforms**, and **Other VIM Tools and Practices**. We also share resources for executing VIM plans and break down the top priorities a CEO, international sales manager, and marketing manager should consider.

Assemble Your Team

One or more of your team will be involved in planning and executing a virtual international marketing strategy. Typically, we see responsibilities involving these roles:

- CEO or other executive-level decision maker
- International sales manager
- Marketing manager

How to Approach VIM Successfully

A VIM strategy will be most successful when it is part of a bigger picture international marketing and export strategy. Internal infrastructure like customer support for new markets, production capacity, and other considerations should be evaluated and planned for alongside any VIM projects.

Incorporate digital tools and platforms into existing sales practices

The foundation of VIM is just that – virtual – so now is the time, if you have not already, to incorporate digital tools intentionally and systematically into established practices like networking, trade shows, trade missions, distributor meetings, and other sales outreach. Creating an integrated approach to marketing will benefit your business in numerous ways, but it is especially crucial to carry this mindset into your VIM process. This will look different depending on your internal process but could include such steps as augmenting face-to-face meetings and/or phone calls with video meetings, replacing fax with email, and incorporating a robust social media presence appropriate for your marketing strategy (see page 14 for more about [social media](#).)

Optimize your website for international use

A common misconception is that a website works anywhere. There are many reasons why even the best U.S. website is inadequate for international marketing, beginning with search engine optimization: [Google U.S.](#) is different from Google in other countries. For your international customers to find you, you need to optimize your website for their search engine. Further, machine translation like [Google Translate](#) is good in a pinch, but not adequate for conveying a sales message to a potential customer. If you have a market opportunity in a specific country, it is important to take your website a step further and localize it (or parts of it) for that country's market. It is worth the time to optimize your website and translate content using a professional localization service.

Key Takeaways

- A comprehensive strategy should guide your VIM efforts
- Use digital tools like video meetings as part of your established sales process
- Google U.S. is different from Google in other countries
- Google Translate is not adequate for most internationalization efforts – you need a professional
- Localize your website for specific markets

International Market Strategy

Who involved: **CEO**, **sales**, **marketing**

The first and most important step in developing your Virtual International Marketing strategy is understanding where in the world you want to export. A good starting point is a **Global Market Scan (GMS)**, performed by **Kansas Global Trade Services (KGTS)**. The GMS uses a variety of databases and formulas to analyze the best country opportunities for you to target with your company’s particular product and provides market research and key insights about regulations, costs, competitors, and other factors that will affect your export success.

The results of the GMS can be used by your company to identify which countries fit best with your goals. With the help of KGTS or your international sales team, you can pursue meetings with in-country partners to help further refine your target countries. This selection process is important for focusing your marketing strategy and your virtual marketing tactics. Below is an example of the factors the GMS considers, weighted by importance to your company, when determining which markets are ripe for business in your industry. The sample report below evaluates ease of doing business, GDP, English proficiency, exchange rate volatility, population density, percent of target market represented in the country’s population, current imports of competitive products, and other factors.

Global Market Scan		
EXAMPLE: BREWERY		
Factors/Matrices Considered	Importance	EDIT VALUES BASED ON IMPORTANCE TO COMPANY (WITH CONSTANT 100% SUM)
Logistics Performance Index	7%	
Ease of Doing Business	10%	
GDP per Capita	10%	
English Proficiency	5%	
Exchange Rate Volatility	8%	
Population Density	7%	
Male Population Ages 20-39 vs Beer Consumption per Capita	15%	
Average Annual GDP Growth % vs Urban Population %	8%	
Imports of 2203: USA Beer vs CAGR	15%	
Imports of 2203: World Beer vs CAGR	15%	
Total	100%	
Country Name	Region	Rank
South Korea	Asia	1
United Kingdom	Europe	2
Netherlands	Europe	3
China	Asia	5
Japan	Asia	4
Hong Kong	Asia	6
France	Europe	8
Belgium	Europe	9
Australia	Oceania	7
United Arab Emirates	Middle East	10

Executing Virtual International Marketing

Who involved: **marketing**

Internationalize Your Website

Before embarking on any website internationalization, it is critical to know your priority markets, as there are linguistic, cultural, and technical differences between markets that will affect your website choices. In the following sections we will explore the topics of **localization** and **international search engine optimization (SEO)**.

Tips for Website Internationalization

- Localize your website for your target market(s), translating pages and creating separate pages and/or website(s) for target market countries. For example: <https://www.asiwheels.mx/>
- Modify your website to capture SEO to help potential customers find your site. Keyword research can uncover triggers that prompt your customers to act and might even uncover potential sales or distributors.
- Produce original digital content regularly for your target markets, particularly video content, which is the fastest growing. For example: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ReliabilitySource>
- Align social media and your website and ensure that internationalization efforts occur across your digital brand. For example: <https://www.instagram.com/bgproducts/>

Internationalization, Regionalization, and Localization

Once you have chosen your target countries, it is time to choose your virtual strategy. There are three levels of focus: internationalization, regionalization, and localization.

- **Internationalization:** culturally neutral, high performing regardless of bandwidth, and structured to facilitate translation.
- **Regionalization:** focused on a particular region of the world, but not a specific country.
- **Localization:** modifying a company's website to focus narrowly on a particular country.

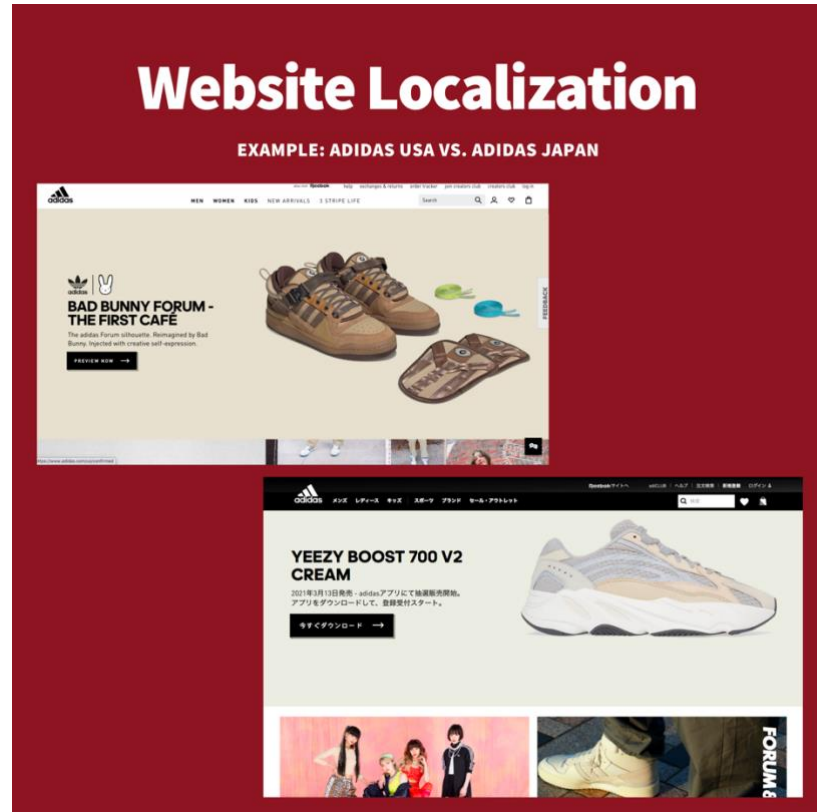
Cont. Start by internationalizing your website, then decide how precise— or broad— your efforts should be. The more specific your strategy, the more time-consuming and expensive but the more targeted it will be.

For instance, if you are only focusing on Mexico, localization might be great for your business. Localization would allow your website to display Mexican culture-related news, content written in Mexican Spanish instead of general Spanish, communicating precisely with your target audience using cultural references, vocabulary, and expressions that resonate.

However, if your business wants to target multiple Latin American countries, regionalization might fit best. Then, your website would have a general approach to Latin American culture and language.

Localization can also be useful if your target market differs by country. For example, in Country A, a business might sell their product directly to contractors but in Country B, the same business might need to coordinate with government procurement officials instead. Messaging would be quite different for these two groups. There are other circumstances that might prompt you to choose one approach over another, but the more specific your targeting becomes, the bigger investment it will be, so embark on localization only with suitable strategic reasons to do so and after internationalization.

Adidas localizes their international websites. Below, USA (top) and Japan (bottom) feature different color schemes, products, and models, among other differences.



Website Globalization and Global Marketing Service Providers

- **IBT Online:** IBT Online is an International Business and Technology company that offers international online marketing, Search Engine Marketing, Social Media Marketing, and Reporting and Analytics Programs to grow your traffic, engagement and conversions.
 - Andrew Lawlor, Business Development Manager, al@ibt.on, (616) 649-7005
- **TransPerfect:** TransPerfect provides translation and language services, content creation and management, global brand management and customer support to allow companies to reach new markets globally by connecting with their audiences and providing the best possible customer experience—in any language.
 - Dana Weber, Global Director, Client Services, dweber@transperfect, (484) 885-3726
- **CommGap:** CommGap International Language Services offers Interpretation and Language Translation services to customers.
 - Lelani Craig, CEO and Founder, lelani@commgap.com, (801) 944-4049

SEO

Overview: What is SEO?

Originally, search engine optimization (SEO) debuted to compile websites by category to make them easier to find. Later, Google took over the search landscape and many SEO strategies today revolve around mastering the behemoth's algorithms. Today, SEO is driven by content more than keywords, although there are many aspects of SEO to consider. Websites that address how your business solves your customer's challenges filled with robust content that answers customer questions will perform well in search rankings. Although Google is the giant of the Internet in much of the world, you should ensure your website is registered in other search engines like [Bing](#) and [Yahoo](#).

How to Improve SEO

What is the key to international SEO success? First, ensure your website is ranking well in the U.S. Many businesses are curious about how to improve search rankings, as web traffic is an important sales funnel for many businesses. Google has shifted toward rankings that favor websites displaying expertise and value – which is a wonderful experience to offer your website visitors, too. The best way to approach SEO strategy is to answer customer questions and establish your business as a reliable, authoritative resource for the topic or industry you are targeting. There are many marketers who specialize in SEO and can advise you on both SEO and content creation, but these steps can also be accomplished in-house.

- Solve customers' problems first, then do keyword research to reverse engineer how to write about your business
- Create content by writing summary articles that address common customer questions and publish them online regularly
- Repurpose content to efficiently build authority and expertise, creating short versions of website articles for social media, or longer e-books from multiple articles, for example
- Use [backlinks](#)ⁱ to establish expertise with respected references
- Use accurate content descriptions and title tags so that tools like Google Analytics can track data and measure your progress, with the goal of using your website to make more sales from [organic traffic](#)ⁱⁱ

Cont. Social media is an essential way to support your website’s search engine performance. These platforms are connected, and Google looks for signals in social media platforms as interactions. Using your website as a referral source for other content provides third-party proof for identity and authority purposes. Beyond the search engine, using social media content to support your website can be an effective way to generate additional traffic for your website.

SEO and Global Marketing Service Providers

- **Ayokay**
 - Jack Shepler, Founder & CEO, jack@ayokay.com, (833) 429-6529
- **Mayes MarCom**
 - Katie Mayes, CEO, katie@mayesmarcom.com, (785) 556-0183
- **Kansas City Website Design & SEO**
 - Phil Singleton, CEO, phil@kcwebdesigner.com
- **Bondfire Strategy**
 - Jordan Walker, Owner, jordan@bondfirestrategy.com, (316) 469-6055

International SEO

International SEO is a process of optimizing your website for search engine performance outside the U.S. The process and considerations of international SEO vary depending on your international marketing strategy, so it is important to know whether you are **internationalizing, regionalizing, or localizing your website** before embarking on serious international SEO efforts. International SEO is based on a combination of language and geographic data and can change a bit depending on which part of the world you are trying to reach. For example, China's most popular search engine is Baidu, not Google.

Language drives a lot of website interaction along with search engine performance, and although Google Translate can be a starting point for taking your website international, in most cases it should not be the ending point. Google Translate, while fast and free, is often inaccurate, rife with grammatical errors, and is ill-equipped to convey context. At best, this can be cumbersome and confusing for your potential customer.

Geography drives search engines, too, and using separate URLs for country or regional pages or versions of your website along with incorporating details like contact information in the target country are some of the steps that can help your website show up to people in a particular area of the world. There are many other strategies to grow your website in this way, like sharing reviews from people in the target country and even hosting the country website on a local IP. There are experts in website internationalization who can guide you through the best strategies for international SEO.

Tips for International SEO

- Create content particular to the country you are targeting. What questions do customers in this area frequently ask? What differentiators do you offer over competitors in that country?
- Create case studies, share reviews, or other proof of your credibility – particularly when it comes to building trust outside the U.S.
- Review your analytics and look for feedback by country or region. What key trends do you notice that could help you create a better user experience?

Assessing Website Performance

The U.S Commercial Service provides a free service called the **Website Globalization Review (WGR)**. WGR analyzes how directed the site is for international customers a company's website is. WGR also assesses how well the website performs in terms of design, speed, and SEO. This is a great tool that will guide you regarding the areas of greatest opportunity for improvement.

An actual WGR shows SEO weaknesses identified in a Kansas company's website alongside other weaknesses and strengths.

Website Globalization Report

SEO WEAKNESSES



Weaknesses

- **Online Marketplace-** A clear connection is needed between the website channel, marketplace channels, and social media channels, which is important in building brand credibility with overseas consumers.
- Consider making it clear on every page that your products are "Made in the USA", which is often viewed as an indicator of quality and brand authority for many overseas consumers.
- Try branching out to other social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter and YouTube to connect with clientele.
- Consider adding certifications to your searchable content- foreign buyers find that listing certifications and product ingredients are indications of a more trustworthy business and are therefore more likely to buy.
- Consider adding page content to product descriptions that will direct international shoppers to pages/resources where they can find out how much it will cost for their shipment before purchase. Also consider adding customs duty/tax information for the transactions- consumers may deny the shipment when they suddenly see customs duties upon delivery, which will always cost you in the end.
- Consider adding an element on the home page that indicates you are open for international business This is one of the simplest, yet most impactful things, U.S. companies can do. Foreign buyers want to know that you're both interested and capable of transacting internationally. As you navigate through [REDACTED] website, there's no real indication that [REDACTED] has any interest, or is capable of, international business. Feedback from our posts and customers overseas indicates that this often leads to site abandonment

Common International SEO Weaknesses

- **CSSⁱⁱⁱ and HTML^{iv} Content:** The way that your site is coded can affect the way search engines read the content. Sometimes visually attractive websites are packed with code that clutters a bot's ability to index your website. This has to do with the integration of design and web performance. Other times, a website does not take advantage of the ability to add extra tags (words) in hidden HTML code that could boost search results. Sometimes website buttons are not formatted correctly. There are many potential issues ranging from big problems to missed opportunities, but they are usually technical in nature and issues with the website code should be addressed by your website developer, graphic/web designer, and marketing strategist.
- **Backlinks:** Having more backlinks helps increase domain authority. This means having your website link on other websites; this increases your footprint online and increases your credibility. The better the websites; the better the backlink. For instance, having a backlink on a website that has a million visits a day will give you more credibility than having a link on a website that has 100 visits a day, but this is also influenced by how well the niches of the sites where your backlink is present align with yours.
- **Translation:** Some websites use free or low-cost plug-ins or apps (like Google Translate) that allow a website user to translate website content. However, one common issue is that not all the page's content is read by the plug-in, meaning that the user does not get to read all the content. Other plug-ins must be provided with manual translations or adapted by the SEO master. If you are using a plug-in instead of professional translation (which is recommended), make sure all words that you want translated are in plain/readable text (if words are in a graphic or pdf format, plug-ins cannot detect them).
- **Contact Forms:** Some contact forms are exclusively formatted for local U.S. phone numbers, preventing international users from completing the form (for example, the format (XXX) XXX-XXXX is not universal and does not allow international number formats to be entered). By using either a contact form with an adaptable phone number field or a separate "International Contact Form" you can make your website contact accessible to users in and out of the U.S.
- **Open to International Business and USA Made:** Make it clear on each page that you are a U.S. company and that you are interested in international customers. Some ways to do this include: utilize videos or pictures demonstrating product use, provide international duty (taxes) and shipping rate information in pre-checkout, include currency and size conversions.
- **Metadata:** This is information that the website user cannot see but search engines look for. By updating metadata descriptions for each page and using a keyword strategy focused on the most relevant keywords, your search engine ranking can increase significantly. Deploy this strategy with your marketing and web development team.
- **Online Payments:** Consider adding online payment methods that are popular with the international customers you are targeting – credit cards are not necessarily the payment method of choice.
- **Social Media:** Align social media, digital and traditional export activities to improve global presence.

ECommerce and International Payment Platforms

Who involved: sales, marketing

ECommerce

To reach international markets virtually, Kansas companies need tools to support their entire online purchasing experience. Although needs vary depending on the target country, purchaser (B2B vs. B2C), and size of purchase, choosing eCommerce and online payment platforms that work well internationally can save both time and money and result in a greater number of sales with higher profit margins.

Pursue widely supported solutions that will allow your ecommerce website to access support from many providers. It can be dangerous to rely on a single agency that builds a custom solution for your business, because then you are locked into their support. This becomes even more important when taking your business global, because the number of ecommerce platforms that offer cross-border capability are limited.

Some platforms that are commonly used include: [Shopify](#), [BigCommerce](#), [Adobe Commerce](#), [WooCommerce](#), and [Wix eCommerce](#). The top factor for success is how well you can support your eCommerce solution over time, so choose your provider carefully and research their capabilities before committing.

International Payment Platforms

One of the top areas of support that companies request is assistance with online payment platforms appropriate for their target country. Payment habits vary quite a bit across the globe. Some countries, like the U.S., use credit cards as the dominant online payment method. Others almost exclusively use a third-party payment processor. Knowing which payment methods are typical in your target country is an important part of bringing your virtual buying experience online, particularly because your choice of payment platform relates to your choice of web platform.

Think about payment systems as a part of your [website localization strategy](#). First, pinpoint where you want to do business, and then research the top method of payment. Your international pricing strategy is multi-faceted but does include additional costs that may or may not be customer-facing. Consider the way that fees are shown to the customer, accounting for the difference between a B2C and B2B customer. B2B customers are more familiar with charges like VAT and other costs but a B2C customer may need some additional transparency or explanation to avoid “bad surprises” that could result in a costly rejected or returned order. In *any* situation, you will need a plan for dealing with duties and taxes and communicating costs with your international customers.

Handling currency exchange can also present both logistical and economic challenges for your business. When funds are sent through a third party, like Amazon or eBay, you often face high conversion rates to exchange payment from one currency into another. Accepting payment in the buyer’s currency and then converting it later can be advantageous to your bottom line. Additional currency strategies may include using virtual accounts to hedge and manage currency volatility for larger transactions, especially for purchases that include a lengthier processing time.

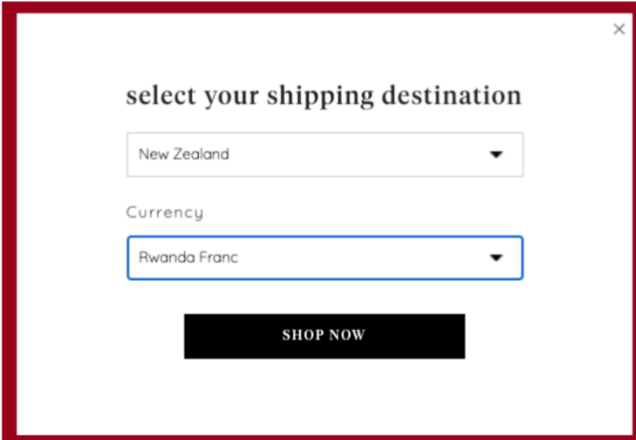
Other challenges include managing chargebacks, avoiding fraud, and handling legal issues. Opening a bank account in another country can be difficult, if not almost impossible. Using online services can help circumvent the need to open a bank account in another country. There are a number of platforms available to help secure your business’s international financial transactions that may also offer safeguards against doing business unknowingly with countries, businesses, or individuals under U.S. sanctions or Specially Designated Nationals.

Tips for eCommerce and International Payment Platforms

- Choose an eCommerce platform that will allow you to grow globally *Features like local shipping destinations and currency can make your ecommerce experience appealing to international customers.*
- Price products in local currency
- Choose payment methods that are popular in your chosen country/region
- View payment and e-commerce as part of website localization strategy
- Choose financial partners wisely, and work closely with your credit card processor to avoid unnecessary chargebacks and fraud

International ECommerce

EXAMPLE: WEBSITE FEATURES



The screenshot shows a web form titled "select your shipping destination". It features two dropdown menus: the first is labeled "New Zealand" and the second is labeled "Rwanda Franc" under the heading "Currency". Below the dropdowns is a black button with the text "SHOP NOW". The entire form is enclosed in a red border.

eCommerce Service Providers

- **Getting to Global:** Getting to Global offers services for digital transformation, digital platform development as well as export and eCommerce accelerators.
 - Patrick Perreault, CEO, piperreault@gettingtglobal.org, (514) 242-7915
- **Monex:** Monex helps importers/exporters and eCommerce merchants manage every aspect of foreign currency and cross-border payments whether sending or receiving foreign currency.
 - Andrew Woelflein, Chief Strategy Officer, awoelflein@monex.com
- **Borderless:** Borderless is an online bank payment processor making local and international bank payments simple, accessible and affordable.
 - Raffi Kayat, CEO, raffi@getborderless.com, (717) 860-1591

Other International Virtual Marketing Tools & Best Practices

Who involved: **marketing**

Social Media

Social media is useful in many ways for enhancing your company's digital presence on the global stage. From marketing to SEO, social media plays an essential supporting role in your virtual marketing efforts. Did you know that **YouTube** is the #2 search engine after Google? Good YouTube content can aid your outreach efforts, but YouTube is not the only social media platform that should be in your strategy. Although platforms will depend on your industry, customer demographic, target country or region, and other factors, there are some similarities in what kind of content works well on each.

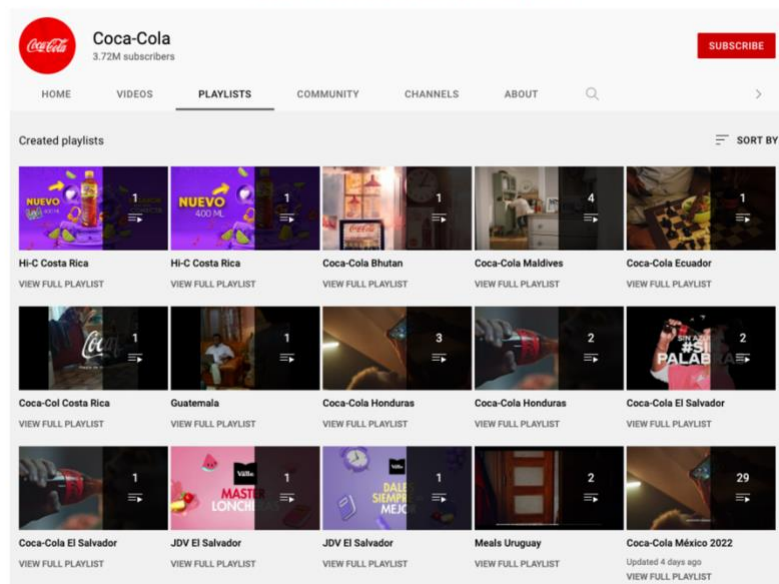
Commit to your online brand and execute a cohesive marketing strategy. Your values and character matter, and social media platforms give you an outlet for the kind of conversations and content that would be hard to house on a website. They can also be important traffic sources for your website, with posts repurposing or linking to website content as part of your **SEO strategy**. However, social media content should be about more than sales. Most of your posts should be about other facets of your company, customers, industry, and how you help solve your customers' problems.

These mediums give you a way to tell your story in a relatable, living way. Social media platforms are an extension of your marketing collateral, so consistency and content matters, although each platform has differences in how and who it reaches that should be considered (see next page).

Coca Cola shares international content on YouTube in many languages and localized for many markets.

International Social Media

EXAMPLE: COCA COLA ON YOUTUBE



Social Media Platforms and Uses

Platform	Content
<u>Facebook</u>	Share information about your business story, your programs, and make posts simple and conversational, accented with photos and video.
<u>Twitter</u>	Share tidbits of company culture, news about expansions, relocations, holiday hours, changes in leadership, etc. Posts are shorter and often more news oriented.
<u>Instagram</u>	Showcase photos and videos of your product and company culture alongside feature stories of partners and customers.
<u>YouTube</u>	Use video to share demonstrations of products, behind-the-scenes, Q & A, and interviews with satisfied customers, thought leaders, and team members.
<u>TikTok</u>	Short, fun videos highlighting your product and company culture.
<u>LinkedIn</u>	Share information about your business story, company news, and interact with other companies in your industry, distributors, and even potential international customers.

Align your corporate leader’s online presence with the online corporate brand to make a company more relatable and human, encouraging others to interact with the company, build a relationship, and become customers. This can be even more important when expanding internationally.

Social Media Best Practices

- Social media should be part of your cohesive international marketing strategy
- Posts should be consistent and should often link back to your website
- Provide guidance and training for employees or contractors, including digital brand guidelines
- Content should be about more than selling and social media gives you an opportunity to convey your company values and personality while building relationships around the world
- Align your corporate leader’s online presence with your corporate brand

Virtual Relationships

Virtual Trade Shows

Attending trade shows in person is the best option, but virtual trade shows and hybrid attendance at traditional trade shows offer many benefits and are becoming widely available. Virtual trade shows can allow you to attend a trade show you otherwise would not be able to due to time or resource constraints and can allow you to explore a new market or show without making a big investment. Many trade shows offer digital networking, which is sometimes available for months after the show ends. Just as you would after attending a traditional trade show, prepare beforehand and follow up with contacts afterward. Further, virtual trade shows can help build media relationships and allow other members of your team an opportunity to experience educational sessions without the time and cost of travel.

Virtual Meetings

The world's boundaries continue to melt, and virtual meetings are now a standard practice, especially for building international relationships. Meet virtually for introductions to potential new international partners, to manage relationships, to gather market intelligence, to prepare for trade shows and international trips, to select distributors, and to conduct sales activities. Even trade missions can be coordinated virtually, offering a streamlined process to build deep relationships that can sometimes make for a quicker market entry.

Common platforms include: [WebEx](#), [Zoom](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), and [WhatsApp](#) for cross border communication.

Resources

Funding for VIM

Kansas companies can take advantage of grant funding from several sources that can cover up to 50% of your expenses in several VIM areas. These programs are not exclusive, meaning you can apply to all of them and maximize your benefit – if each grant is used for a different expense.

Kansas International Trade Marketing Assistance Program

The Kansas International Trade Show Assistance Program (KITSAP) helps introduce Kansas companies to new foreign markets through participation in international trade shows. Companies can receive up to \$3,500 per trade show, up to \$7,000 total, per fiscal year in reimbursement for trade show expenses.

Requirements:

- To qualify, company products or services must originate in Kansas or receive substantial value-added processing in Kansas.
- KITSAP supports trade shows held in a foreign market, virtual international trade shows, or trade shows held domestically but with significant international participation.
- The company must be a first-time exhibitor at the trade show for which it is applying or must have a new technology or product being introduced into that market for the first time.

Learn more: <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/program/business-incentives-and-services/kitmap/>

Contact: April Chiang, april.chiang@ks.gov, (785) 296-5473

Kansas International Trade Show Assistance Program

The Kansas International Trade Marketing Assistance Program (KITMAP) assists Kansas companies in accelerating their export business. The program will reimburse 50% of a company's direct expenses up to \$5,000 per eligible activity each fiscal year.

Requirements:

- To qualify, company products or services must originate in Kansas or receive substantial value-added processing in Kansas.
- When applying for foreign sales trips, at least one full-time company employee (or sales agent) must participate in the trip.
- To receive reimbursement, a company must first apply, be approved, and return the KITMAP contract to the Kansas Department of Commerce before activities commence.
- To receive reimbursement, a company must submit a post-activity report and provide a detailed expense summary, invoices, and proof of payment for each expense.

Learn more: <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/program/business-incentives-and-services/kitsap/>

Contact: April Chiang, april.chiang@ks.gov, (785) 296-5473

State Trade Expansion Program

The State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) is a federal program funded by the U.S Small Business Administration (SBA) and administered at the state level. The STEP program follows the federal fiscal year starting October 1st and ending on September 28th (two days before the end of the fiscal year.)

Requirements:

- To qualify, company products or services must originate in Kansas or receive substantial value-added processing in Kansas and the company must be small or medium sized.
- A company may qualify by revenue or employees. You can access the SBA website and use your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code to find your threshold.
- Please reach out to the Kansas Department of Commerce for guidance with this application.

Learn more: <https://www.sba.gov/document/information-notice--state-trade-expansion-program-step>

Contact: Chang Lu, chang.lu@ks.gov, (913) 515-8541

Other Resources for VIM

Export Ecosystem Connectivity

The export ecosystem connects your business to valuable resources. These organizations are dedicated to your export success and provide services to help you get there. They can also connect you to additional and specific resources in other functional areas like export finance, shipping, and logistics, legal and policy, as well as export promotion and educational events. You can find additional resources on Kansas' International Division Resources page here:

<https://www.kansascommerce.gov/international/export-2/export-resources/>

International Division, Kansas Department of Commerce: Kansas' official international and export division.

- Rosie Nichols, Intl. Development Representative & VIM Program Mgr.
rosie.nichols@ks.gov (785) 296-8886
<https://www.kansascommerce.gov/international-2/>

Kansas Global Trade Services, Inc.: Kansas Global provides customized export services to companies to help them succeed in international trade.

- Laura Lombard, President/CEO
lombard@kansasglobal.org (316) 214-2426
<https://www.kansasglobal.org/>

U.S. Export Assistance Centers: Kansas companies can access services from the Wichita or KC offices depending on where they are in the state. Access the global network in U.S. Embassies and Consulates and get help with your first export sale or expand to new markets.

- **Rural Export Center**
Joshua Erickson, Program Manager
Joshua.erickson@trade.gov
(701) 212-3261
<https://www.trade.gov/rural>
- **U.S. Commercial Service Wichita**
Andrew (AJ) Anderson, Director
Andrew.Anderson@trade.gov
(316) 263-4067
<https://www.trade.gov/kansas-wichita>
- **U.S. Commercial Service Kansas City**
Joshua Kaplan, Director
Joshua.Kaplan@trade.gov
(804) 461-9324
<https://www.trade.gov/missouri-kansas-city>

U.S. Small Business Development Centers (SBDC): Get advice and training on exporting through the SBDC at Johnson County Community College: <https://jccsbdc.com/grow-a-business/exporting/>

- John Addressi, Business Advisor
jaddressi@jccc.edu
(913) 469-3922
- Stephanie Willis, Business Advisor
slwillis@jccc.edu
(913) 469-4485

World Trade Center Kansas City: WTCKC offers a variety of programs and resources to stimulate international trade. Licensed by the KC Chamber of Commerce.

- Melissa Miller, Director,
World Trade Center
mmiller@kcchamber.com

(816) 374-5469

<https://www.kcchamber.com/what-we-do/world-trade-center-kc>

ⁱ A backlink is a link created when one website links to another.

ⁱⁱ Organic traffic is visitors that end up on your website via unpaid sources.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cascading Style Sheets is a style sheet language used for describing the presentation of a document written in a markup language such as HTML.

^{iv} The Hyper Text Markup Language or HTML is the standard markup language for documents designed to be displayed in a web browser.