Creating a successful web presence in Korea

Having a strong web presence in your new target market is critical to export success, whether you operate a B2B or B2C business, as customers tend to start their research into potential suppliers online. It is therefore vital that:

- Your web presence in Korea meets the requirements and expectations of prospects there
- Your website can be found by potential customers and partners in Korea i.e. is optimised and supported by an Internet marketing strategy for that market.

Meeting the two above requirements in a new and different market, means your web presence needs to be adapted to that market. Below is a summary of the main areas to look at and the key questions to ask and answer when adapting your web presence to Korea.

Developing a competitive Internet strategy for Korea

As in your local market, your web presence should start with a clear strategy that lays down the goals of your web presence abroad and a high-level plan as how these can be achieved.

Given that Korea is a large and competitive market, the most important questions to ask at this stage relate to your overall value proposition and how you articulate that on your website in Korea to make it stand out and appeal to potential customers.

**Purpose:** What is the purpose of your website abroad? Is it the same as at home or does the new website - due to a different mix of your sales channels and of your resources abroad – have a somewhat different purpose and different KPIs?

**Competitive differentiation:** Who are your online and offline competitors in Korea? What do their websites look like, how do they compete, and what implications does that have for your new website in Korea?

**Target market audience:** Who is the target audience in Korea - what is their demographic make-up, what needs and expectations do they have, what is their culture? What implications do these differences in target audience have for the required features, functionality, content and use of language (including spelling and keywords) of your new target market website?

**Value proposition and USP:** In light of different competitors and a different audience abroad, what is your value proposition and USP for Korea and how can you clearly and compellingly articulate your USP within that market on your website? What role does your brand play in your value proposition and how well known is your brand in Korea for this to form part of your value proposition abroad?

**Technical:** Are there any new or additional technical implications you need to consider to ensure your website can be found and used in Korea e.g. based on the technical infrastructure in that market and requirements for search engine optimisation for that market?
Legal and miscellaneous: Are there other legal or regulatory considerations that need to be taken into account, e.g. domain name?

Process and resources: The new website will typically have an impact on some business processes and on resource requirements. What resources (financial and human) will you need to create, maintain and update your web presence in Korea? What implications, if any, does your web presence in Korea have on your processes?

Creating content that meets the cultural requirements of Internet users in Korea

Having defined what you want to achieve and what is required to articulate your value proposition and to differentiate yourself Korea you need to turn your attention to how this is best achieved there given that you are operating in a different cultural environment.

Content: What content, and in which format, is best suited for Korea so you meet the requirements of the local market and differentiate yourself from competitors? How will you produce that content and how can you integrate it into your website for Korea and into your other Internet marketing tactics?

Language: For all text content, language is key as language needs to be suitable for the target audience and contain the relevant keywords used by searchers in the new market. What type of search language do your target customers in Korea use and what impact does that have on the words and style of your text content?

Translation and adaptation: How can you best create the text content of your website in Korea? How do you ensure that the foreign text clearly articulates your value proposition and markets your offering? How will you approach text updates and the ongoing creation of fresh content on the web platforms you have chosen for Korea?

Conventions and standards: Most countries have, as part of their explicit culture, some conventions and standards that impact website localisation and thus need to be planned for. Do you use any of these on your website and how can you ensure they are converted to local practice in Korea? Are your pictures, symbols, colours, and icons suitable for Korea?

Local relevance: People like to see and best trust content that has local relevance. How can you integrate local signals into your web presence and make your content relevant to users in Korea?

Making your web presence visible to Internet users in Korea

While the purpose of your web presence in Korea is to support your marketing, your web presence itself also needs to be marketed in order to ensure it reaches your target audience in Korea. This is especially important when your brand is not known in the new market.

Key areas to look at and plan for include:

Domain strategy: What is your domain name for Korea? Does that name convey any meaning or association for a Korean speaker? Is the name easy to spell and remember for a Korean speaker? What is your approach to URL structure for Korea?

On-page search engine optimisation (SEO) of your new website: What are the typical keywords potential customers in Korea use when searching for an offering like yours? What are the keywords that describe your USP in Korea? How will you integrate these keywords into your website in Korea – text content and meta-tags? How can you optimise your website for the search engine/s used and search patterns used in Korea?

Off-page search engine optimisation (SEO): What are suitable high quality local websites that you should target for inbound links into your website in Korea? How can you approach these link targets and what content/value can you offer them to get them to link to your website?
Social media: What are the social media your target audience in Korea uses? How can you become active on these social media? How you can share content and what content should you share, and how often?

Other digital platforms: What are the typical digital platforms used by your target audience in Korea? Are there local online directories, online marketplaces, price comparison engines etc. that you should get your new website listed on?

Other digital marketing approaches: Do you need to employ additional paid digital marketing approaches (e.g. affiliate marketing, search engine marketing) to be found in the new market, and if so, which are most appropriate for Korea?

The local digital marketing characteristics in particular are important to bear in mind. Considerable differences exist between popular sites and platforms used in different countries and if you want to compete at a par with your local online competitors, you need to understand these. It’s advisable to speak to a local digital agency to help you with this.

Enterprise Ireland’s Internet Marketing Unit (IMU) helps export-focused clients across all sectors to exploit the Internet as a route to market and to assist them in developing a strategy that will shape how they do business online.

The IMU provides a range of services, including strategic guidance, workshops and seminars and funding support.

Please contact your Development Adviser for further information.