

Tackling Emerging Markets

Usually when one speaks of emerging markets the assumption is that he or she is referring to countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. These markets do indeed offer companies growth opportunities if tackled the right way. Interestingly enough, however, there are significant emerging markets right here in the United States that, if properly targeted, can offer companies perhaps even greater opportunity without all the risks typically associated with penetrating a foreign market.

While foreign markets are often a sexier topic for discussion, this article will focus on the emerging markets within the United States and how companies might be able to reach out and grab a piece of the billions of dollars they will be spending.

Tudog has a nine stage process designed to assist companies in their efforts to reach out to internal emerging markets. They are:

1. Define

Your first step should be to determine which emerging market or markets you seek to target. This decision should be based on solid data and not gut feelings or instinct. There are many emerging markets to select from, including African American, Latin, Generation X, Generation Y, Gays, Women, and others. You need to understand the proposition you will be making to your target market and, based on data, feel assured that this proposition is (a) needed, (b) desired, (c) delivered in such a way that the market can receive it.

2. Analyze

Unlike the cold data you need in order to consider which market you should target, the analysis step is focused on the culture of the emerging market and attempts to determine what the positioning of the product should be as directed to the group of newly targeted customers.

3. Introduce

Once the positioning has been determined and there is a genuine, market derived understanding of the culture of the emerging market, the products should then be introduced. Tudog recommends initial soft market landings, and typically likes to first target community influencers. Once the products have gained the acceptance (and perhaps even the informal endorsement) of the influencers, a broader awareness campaign can be undertaken.

4. Pursue

Once the influencers have accepted your product, you can begin an active pursuit of the entire community, consistent with your marketing plan (be it via geographical region, through specific cross promotion campaigns, etc.). The pursuit should be handled with the lessons about the market's culture in mind.

5. Persuade

The pursuit stage generally needs to be supplemented with persuasion tactics. There are a number of marketing techniques that can be utilized to raise awareness and create interest. With regard to emerging markets, Tudog often likes community based persuasion tactics (event sponsorships, community appearances, etc.) that demonstrate to the target market that the company is intent on working with and contributing to the community from which it also seeks to profit.

6. Reinforce

Once you have launched your persuasion phase you can also begin to reinforce your message through targeted advertisements, well distributed postcards, and other communication vehicles that allow you to restate your message to the community. This allows the new target market to recognize that, even though you are new to their community, you are committed to succeeding with them

7. Support

This step requires that you activate a highly visible effort to verify that there are high levels of consumer satisfaction with the new community. This demonstrates your desire for their approval, and also shows that you will repair or improve your product based on the feedback you receive.

8. Integrate

Once you have established yourself in your new, emerging domestic market, integrate some aspects of your specific campaign within your general population marketing effort. While every emerging market appreciates being treated distinctly, they also want to feel a part of the broader community. You can demonstrate how accepted they are by the community at large by using some of their culture in your overall marketing effort.

9. Monitor and Maintain

Once you have completed the first 8 steps the task remains to constantly monitor the progress and performance of your effort, with an eye toward adjusting aspects that are not working up to expectation, and maintaining those elements that are performing up to par.

The United States has many emerging markets, most of which offer U.S. based companies significant opportunity to expand their revenues. With markets as promising as these, doesn't it make sense to explore domestic opportunities, even while also exploring overseas options?