

Exploring Opportunities: Overcoming E-Commerce Challenges for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses in Developing Countries

Prof. Ass. Dr. Sc Abdulla Prebreza¹, Phd. Cand Rrezart Prebreza², Phd. Cand Besart Prebreza²

AAB College¹, Pristina, Kosovo,

UNI-Universum International College², Pristina, Kosovo,

Corresponding Author: Prof.Ass.Dr.ScAbdullah Prebreza, PhD Cand Rrezart Prebreza, PhD Cand Besart Prebreza,

Abstract: Small and medium-sized businesses have a significant impact on the economic development of a country. Also, the development of a global market without barriers can provide many opportunities for businesses. In developing countries, e-commerce can be seen as an opportunity for SMEs to have the opportunity to compete with larger businesses, as well as to have access to identifying lower cost sources in the international market.

However, the levels of e-commerce development in SMEs turn out to be lower than the potential that this market offers. The acceptability of new technologies or discoveries is estimated to be lower, which may be a result of limited financial resources and lack of qualified staff. On the other hand, it is estimated that small and medium-sized businesses have a high contribution to the development of a country, so their orientation to new trade patterns is important; for their performance, as well as for the development of the country.

Keywords: e-commerce, business, technology, electronics.

1.Introduction

In the twentieth century, which was the century of industrial civilization, the world economy was characterized by the transformation of physical products, mass production, and the dominance of material factors such as raw materials, labor, and labor.

Today, it is said that we are living in the age of the information society, where as a result of the rapid development of information technology and its application, the rapid transformation of industrial society to information society¹. Advancement of the electronic process - represents a process, which implies business improvement with the help of modern technology. With the proliferation of global communication, the Internet, the business world has changed the way it works. The Internet has played and plays a huge role in the development of businesses, using it as an instrument that has transformed and shaped a large global market. The Internet has created an opportunity for organizations to thrive by working in a broader market, reducing costs, increasing their efficiency, meeting customer needs and increasing collaboration with their partners and

competitors. The internet has made a difference in many aspects of our lives. Its effect is seen in the way we do business, or in the way we spend our free time. Consider, e.g. how we have been using the internet lately. Maybe we have sent an email, paid a bill, read a newspaper from a distant city, etc. - all over the Internet. The Internet is a communication system that offers a wealth of information organized for us. E-commerce is emerging as a new way to help businesses increase competitiveness and thus contribute to the country's economic success². Based on a questionnaire developed by DM Consulting Services, most Albanian companies do not have sufficient knowledge of e-commerce, and how investing in e-commerce can generate more profits for their businesses and increase their competitiveness in the market local but also global. Opportunities and opportunities for e-commerce are on the rise due to the steadily improving access to technical and communication infrastructure. In the developed global economy, e-commerce and e-business have become increasingly necessary for business strategy and at the same

¹ Jessup, L. and Valacich, J. (2004) "Information Systems: The foundation of e-business", 4th Ed., Prentice Hall.

² Berisha, M. (2004). Informatika e biznesit. Prishtina: Universiteti i Prishtines.

time a catalyst for economic development³. The integration of information and communication technology business enables reduction of product costs, improving productivity, and promoting greater participation and involvement in the mass of consumers.

2. The Role of Information and Communication Technologies

They play a special role in developing a competitive economy based on knowledge and innovation. This technology enables a higher quality of life for citizens, facilitates and streamlines business processes and enhances the effectiveness and transformation of governance. The development of the ICT sector is considered as a horizontal policy, as the effects and impacts of its implementation extend to all social and economic sectors of the country.

The continued development of technology, especially the internet, has influenced the decisions of many businesses. They are geared towards finding new forms of doing business, which will provide more benefits and security for market performance.

Thus, the use of the Internet to facilitate e-commerce constitutes a new economic development. The use of the Internet for commercial purposes has influenced the changing business structure in order to adapt it to changes in information systems. In this way, it is estimated that information technology has influenced the change in the structure of many businesses, compared to the structures in previous years⁴. He argues that the use of e-commerce is an opportunity for businesses to have the opportunity to directly contact the customer without having to go through some processes like the traditional model of doing business. Such behavior will allow for a comparative advantage with other similar businesses.

Details of improving your business:

- New technology transforms business processes, the way products and services are created and marketed, the dynamics of competitions, the organizational structure of the enterprise and the nature of the enterprise itself. This includes

marketing, customer supply management, sales management, product development etc.⁵.

- Transparency makes business strategy more effective. Many businesses have already started recognizing key customers, employees and suppliers. E-commerce will lead to better customer service, more personalized products, lower costs, process efficiency and faster market delivery. The most important aspect of e-commerce is the new market development.

- The current system has contributed to increased transparency as well as increased standards and efforts to harmonize registration procedures with EU directives⁶.

3. Reasons why a business should use the Internet

Every small or family business should look at the opportunity to open a website. Of course there are businesses whose websites would not offer anything important but for most of them the web site can be a very effective sales channel and an important marketing tool.

Online spending by 2000 is estimated to have been around \$ 7 billion. It is therefore difficult to ignore such a huge potential of customers.

Some of the reasons why businesses today need to use and have their own Websites:

Low Price - Using the Internet for your business is very cheap. An unlimited number of link addresses are available for a fee of around € 20 per month and include Internet access and email. It can only be started by using email (e-mail) as a way to communicate with existing and new customers.

E-Mail - You can communicate with customers and employees anywhere in the world and pay no expensive phone bills. And while you're communicating, you can attach other documents to your email. For example, you could send your representatives around the world an updated proposal - quickly and without spending.

The number of users worldwide will be 3.9 in 2019, and is expected to grow to over 4.3 billion by the end of 2023. Over half of the world population uses email in 2019⁷.

³ Beqiri, E. (2002). Interneti-Komunikimet kompjuterike. Pejë: Dukagjini

⁴ Jessup, L. and Valacich, J. (2004) "Information Systems: The foundation of e-business", 4th Ed., Prentice Hall, 2004.

⁵ Abdullai, B. (2008). Biznesi elektronik. Tetovo: Universiteti Shtetëror i Tetovës.

⁶ Berisha, M. (2004). Informatika e biznesit. Prishtina: Universiteti i Prishtinës.

⁷ THE RADICATI GROUP, INC. (2013). *Email Statistics Report*, 2019-2023.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Worldwide Email Users* (M)	3,930	4,037	4,147	4,258	4,371
% Growth		3%	3%	3%	3%

Table 1: Worldwide User Forecast by Email (M), 2019-2023

Customer Support - Provides personalized customer support by answering common questions, providing assistance with specific products and services, and offering a range of ways for them to contact you. And it does all this without ever answering the phone and hiring nobody.

You're available for business 24 hours a day - This sounds like a bad thing but it's actually a huge plus. By email people can contact you at any time they want⁸. You can answer them when you find it most appropriate. Of course, it is suggested that the answer is timely as if someone had called you on the phone. When you open websites, prospective customers can receive information about you and your products 24 hours a day. And of course, it's better than having someone call you at 5am.

Global Outreach - The Internet is regularly used by millions of people around the world and the number of "links" is constantly increasing. Many of the new users are from different parts of the world. They want to buy the "latest and the best" products⁹.

Saving money - Today your phone bill will reach hundreds of euros due to numerous calls to your business. These costs can be greatly reduced if you reach out to customers, suppliers, partners, etc. by email.

Updating or changing your products and services easily and with little cost - If you have printed catalogs, brochures, "on paper" sales ads, you know how difficult and costly it is to change them. You want to add only one item. But you will need to change the entire publication. On paper this is really hard but on the website these changes are very simple and not costly at all.

New way of presenting your products - When there was no Internet the usual way of presenting your products was somewhat limited and quite expensive. With the Internet you can easily and easily upload pictures of products.

Receiving orders through the network - You can receive orders on the Internet either by e-mail or through your Website. By browsing e-mail your customers can send you

messages just like they send them a fax, letter or call. They send you the name, the address where the goods should be shipped, the number of parts, etc. Customers can look at your stocks and see what you offer them, put them in the "shopping basket" and end up giving the name, address where the shipment is to be made, credit card information, etc¹⁰. Then the message is sent to you. And the whole process is very simple.

Speed - Nothing surpasses the Internet in terms of "speed in the market". You can contact five or five hundred clients with one e-mail almost immediately. The Internet operates at almost the "speed of light". "You send an email tonight and tomorrow morning all your customers will have an order at their addresses. That way you can reach 5,000 customers as if you were only contacting one.

Illusion of size - The Internet makes all businesses equal. Clients do not need to know if your business is a small one-man business or is it a very large business. All are almost equal on the Internet.

Keeping in touch with customers - A key concept of successful sales is "always being close to the customer". For that, McDonalds spends millions of dollars on advertising¹¹. They like when someone thinks about eating hamburgers to think about them.

Finding Workers - At some point you decide to expand your small business and you need help. Use the Internet to find skilled workers. There are many Websites where biographies of job candidates are posted. There are many Websites where vacancies for free or for a small fee are placed. Put your job requirements there. Post job vacancies on your Website. You will be surprised how many people in your industry are looking at your Website and thinking about working with you.

4. Use of intra e-commerce

Despite these sometimes businesses find it difficult to respond to these new demands and opportunities. Enterprise

⁸ Stephen, H., & Cummings, M. (2012). Management Information Systems for the Information Age

⁹ Stephen, H., & Cummings, M. (2012). Management Information Systems for the Information Age.

¹⁰ Abdullai, B. (2008). Biznesi elektronik. Tetovo: Universiteti Shtetëror i Tetovës.

¹¹ Jelassi, T. and Enders, A. (2005) *Strategies for e-Business. Creating Value through Electronic and Mobile Commerce*, New York: Prentice Hall, p.3

information systems are often inflexible, difficult to access, and unable to address these new requirements. In the meantime, information technology organizations try to determine which software supports the functionality of a particular business in order to meet user requirements. Today the whole business process fits into this interplay of mass production and marketing: a market is discovered, demand accounts are made, the product is designed and then manufactured, it goes beyond the wall separating the business from the market, then it is hoped that it will succeed. The market is really a strange, difficult and ever-changing mechanism.

The way of communication is so similar that it is very difficult for workers to distinguish themselves from customers: they merge into customers. This merging and eradication of the distinction between business and market creation is an enormous resource¹². Companies are practicing intra e-commerce, since their economy and market are not "somewhere outside" but exactly within their business. They help a business develop new products. They have complete knowledge of the existence of these products. And they will buy the products because these products are tailored to their customers' needs. And there is no need for advertising or traditional marketing!

Take Stern magazine as an example. This illustrated German magazine asks its readers online to design a magazine advertising campaign. Within a few days, the magazine's publisher's email address was filled with hundreds of designs. This shows that the "consumers" themselves are doing free advertising to promote the magazine themselves. Maybe this is a small step but customer feedback shows what the potential is.

GeoCities also practices intra e-commerce: When GeoCities founder David Bohnett says he employs 55 people but has 500,000 publishers, he clearly describes that your business will have less work when the market is used as a source of business itself¹³.

Conclusion

The development of information technology and systems, as well as the widespread use of the Internet have significantly contributed to the growth of economic development, which today many workers can work from home. The development of e-commerce has influenced the changing business model. Businesses can reach out to customers directly, eliminating some links. Customers may also be more informed about the products being offered, by accessing electronically the

business approved site. Related ways of contact include: email, website, various software to make the purchase, etc.

Advances in technology have positively contributed to improving the economic situation worldwide, this has already been proven. The development and management strategy of manufacturing enterprises must be based on professional resources, technological advancements, solar and biomass utilization, to produce high quality products, with contemporary design and in line with market demands and competition. The development of technology as a primary issue has raised the social and intellectual awareness of a country's society. Technological advancements are directly related to the development of the economy, this is argued by the fact that manufacturing enterprises that were once highly productive, have today almost disappeared in the absence of technological innovations and at the mercy of the concrete actions of the institutions concerned. Online spending by 2000 is estimated to have been around \$ 7 billion. It is therefore difficult to ignore such a huge potential of customers. Some of the reasons why businesses today need to use and have their own websites: Email, e-commerce, websites etc.

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