

The global ecommerce playbook

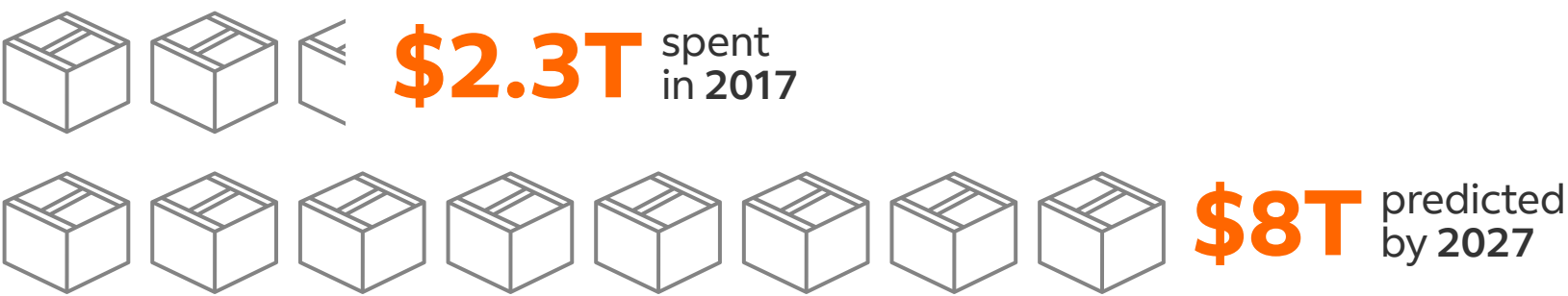
Make your business work worldwide.



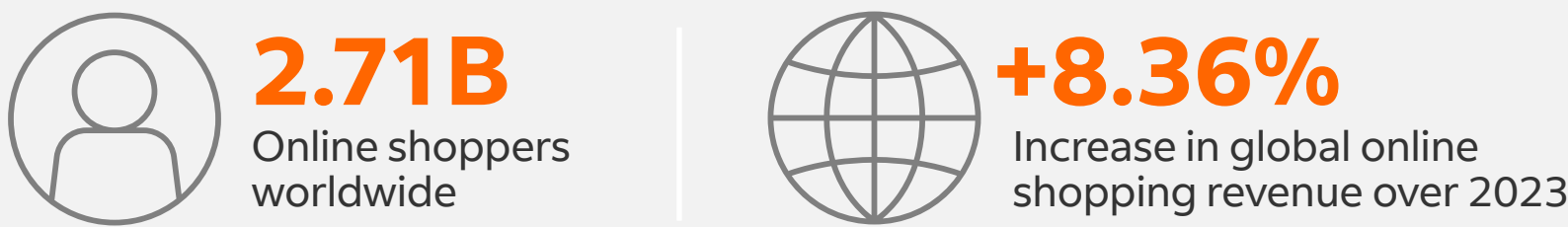
Deliver on global customers' expectations

You've built a business. And now you want to grow into international markets. It takes planning and research—from figuring out the legalities to understanding cultural nuances. This playbook provides insights and guidance to get you started on the right path.

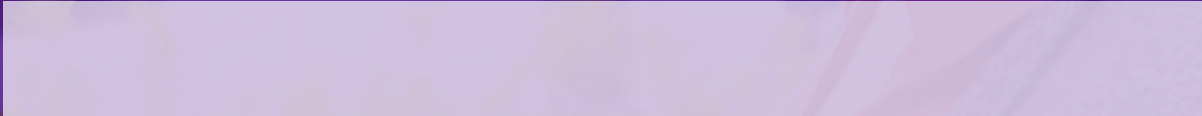
Global ecommerce is growing¹



In 2024:²



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Map out your strategy

If you were visiting a foreign country, you'd need a map. The same goes for growing your business across borders. The first step: **research**.

01 Identify your target markets. Learn about the demand for your product category and consumer purchase behavior. Ask yourself:

- Is the population high enough to warrant expansion?
- Is there a proven demand for your product or service?

02 Analyze the competition. Entering a market with well-established players can be costly—and risky. Look for untapped or underserved locations.

TAKE ACTION

Target market

- Read industry data (e.g., [McKinsey Reports](#)).
- Analyze any international traffic coming to your website. For example, a skincare brand might have a lot of traffic from South Korea and Japan. Why? Both countries have skincare-obsessed markets with many online shoppers.³

Competitive research

- Look at marketplace sites or platforms local to the region.
- Check out local reviews, social media platforms, and influencers.
- Search online for your product + location. You'll see which competitors are running paid ads.

75%

of Canadians
shop online⁴

\$68B+

projected revenue
in 2025⁵

Want to ease into expansion? Start with Canada.

Canada has unique opportunities—and advantages for ecommerce businesses. It's close, which simplifies logistics and fulfillment.

Similarities between Canada and America

Benefit

English is spoken in both countries

Quick market entry

Shoppers are tech-savvy and digitally engaged

Similar buying behaviors

Many celebrations and traditions are aligned

Same peak shopping seasons

FedEx can help make shipping to ecommerce customers in Canada fast, easy, and affordable. You get:

- Customizable services with customs clearance included.
- Simple pricing and flexible billing options.
- Delivery to major markets in 2–3 days (with FedEx® International Connect Plus). Also, increase convenience—and loyalty—by adding the recipient's email address to the shipping label. They can track packages, redirect them to a FedEx location, and more.

Create global messaging that translates

Before you can communicate with your customers, you need to understand them—beyond buying behaviors. Here are some ways to make an emotional connection.

Research their lifestyles and daily routines.

This could help you tap into preferences and pain points (such as financial constraints or small living spaces).

Look at customer reviews and competitors' social media accounts.

You can learn a lot by doing some simple “social listening.”

Don't neglect cultural nuances.

For example, a lucky color in one country may mean something somber in another. Or your product name might sound perfect to you but be offensive in your customers' language.

Get to know their values.

You can use values like status, sustainability, and community to differentiate yourself from the competition. Maybe it's offering cutting-edge products, using eco-conscious packaging, or donating a portion of your profits to a local cause.

TAKE ACTION

- Investing in a translator is money well spent. In 2009, HSBC went global with their message “Assume nothing.” Except it translated to “Do nothing” in some countries, leading to an expensive rebrand.⁶
- Different generations have distinct purchasing preferences, so tailor your messaging by age group, too.⁷

51% of Gen Z discover new brands via TikTok and 40% via Instagram

27% of millennials prefer to purchase direct through a brand's site or app



TAKE ACTION

Tell the story with video.

Film your own, hire an expert, or create shoppable videos through your ecommerce platform.



82%

of consumers are convinced to purchase by brand videos.⁸

Get a helping hand from AI
so you can focus on growth.



2.5

AI currently saves retailers 2.5 hours daily in marketing efforts.⁸

Share global messaging that lands

Once you've created and localized your messaging, it's time to deploy it. Here are some considerations.

WEBSITE

- Add content that's personalized to your new audience.
- Optimize website performance for international traffic (e.g., load times, SEO).
- Implement your audience's preferred payment methods, currencies, and delivery options.

Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL)

These payment options are more popular in certain countries. For example, many Germans prefer BNPL to traditional credit cards.⁹

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Share your messaging on the most popular platforms in each region.
- Engage local influencers to help you build trust.

\$247.3B

spent in 2024 on influencer marketing and advertising

\$266.9B

predicted by end of 2025¹⁰

PAID MEDIA

Run geo-targeted ads that are customized to regional preferences. You can source global agencies to handle your paid media needs or do it yourself with tools such as [Google Ads](#).



TAKE ACTION

Learn more about the fulfillment process and how to optimize it to save time and money.

[Check out tips and tools.](#)

Develop a smooth global fulfillment process

From checkout through delivery, your customers expect a simple shopping experience. Here are five tips to help you start creating a travel-ready fulfillment plan.

01 Strengthen your supply chain

Make sure you can [effectively coordinate logistics](#) to reach customers on time and on budget.

02 Get speed on your side

Find inventory locations near borders or key international markets. This can help expedite delivery to your customers.

03 Look into AI-powered fulfillment

AI can make order processing and shipping faster and easier. Plus, you may be able to more accurately predict purchase trends, which helps you manage inventory.

04 Prioritize your packaging

- Choose [durable packaging](#) for products that will be handled at more touchpoints.
- Test your shipment at the [FedEx Packaging Lab](#) to see how it will hold up on the journey.
- Use [sustainable packaging](#) for environmentally conscious customers.

05 Create a solid shipping plan

Your shipping choices affect your bottom line. Take a closer look at some ways to [develop a smart shipping strategy](#).

A glance at the global shipping process



- 01 Learn about shipping, labeling, and packaging rules and regulations, including prohibited items.
- 02 Select a customs broker.
- 03 Gather product info for customs documentation. This includes its value, where it was made, and more.
- 04 Determine the documents you need.
- 05 Create international shipping labels.
- 06 Fill out your customs documents. You can do that online with FedEx® Global Trade Manager. Want to submit your documents online too? It's easy with FedEx® Electronic Trade Documents. Make sure you understand your total landed cost to avoid surprises.
- 07 Package your items.
- 08 Drop off your package(s) at a retail FedEx location or arrange a pickup.

TAKE ACTION

Before you start shipping, check your tech.

Is your existing ecommerce platform robust enough to handle your international needs? FedEx® Compatible has global tools to help you with:

- Ecommerce shipping
- Enterprise resource planning
- Transportation management
- Warehouse management

Tariffs can be a complex factor in your international shipping equation.

Sign up for regulatory alerts to stay informed.

How to choose an international shipping service

Think about your target market's shipping and returns expectations. But don't forget the impact returns will have on your bottom line. For example, can you offer free shipping? Or is flat-rate shipping the way to go?

TAKE ACTION

Establish your threshold to maximize purchase size. Customers will often add items to their cart to meet the threshold.¹¹

75%

of shoppers will wait longer for delivery to save money

81%

of shoppers will add more items to their order to avoid delivery charges

TAKE
ACTION

91%

of consumers value proactive and accurate order communication.¹²

- Use the [FedEx Advanced Tracking tool](#) to manage up to 20,000 packages. Send recipients email delivery alerts.
- Keep customers in the loop with [FedEx Delivery Manager®](#). They can track packages with email or mobile notifications. And redirect packages to FedEx locations for pickup.

Compete to win with a well-traveled guide

A successful ecommerce expansion takes planning—and the support of a global team. FedEx has experts in the markets you want to succeed in. And a portfolio of shipping and logistics services for every business—from home-based startups to big storefronts.

Balance speed and cost

Reach ecommerce customers in 195 destinations in 2–5 days with [FedEx® International Connect Plus](#). Ship up to 70 lbs. with simple pricing and included customs clearance.

Choose affordable B2B shipping

Get delivery typically in 2–5 business days with [FedEx International Economy®](#). Ship packages up to 150 lbs. to 220+ countries and territories.



Need to speed up ecommerce shipping?

Get [time-definite, door-to-door priority services](#) with customs clearance included.

[FedEx International First®](#) > Delivery typically in 1, 2, or 3 business days **as early as 8 a.m.**

[FedEx International Priority® Express](#) > Delivery typically in 1, 2, or 3 business days **by 12 p.m.**

[FedEx International Priority®](#) > Delivery typically in 1, 2, or 3 business days.

An easy global returns process goes a long way¹³

62% of consumers are more likely to buy online if the retailer offers free returns

Not able to offer free returns? No worries.

30%
of shoppers want easy-to-navigate return policies

30%
want more convenient drop off locations

28%
want the option to return online purchases in-store

TAKE ACTION

Create an international returns policy. It can help protect your profits and brand reputation.



Deliver a positive customer experience across countries.

Returns aren't fun, but they can be simple with FedEx® Global Returns. Get clear guidance on creating labels, preparing shipments, and clearing customs.

- Link your returns to the original shipment.
- Quickly customize your return label.
- Manage your returns across 200+ countries and territories.

73% say a poor returns experience impacts their decision to shop with a merchant again.¹³

Flexible returns for everyone



01 You create a return label

Include it in the original shipment or email the customer a label to print.



02 Your customer ships their return

They can drop it off at their nearest FedEx location or schedule a one-time pickup online.

Start here. Grow anywhere.

Scaling your ecommerce business globally takes research and analysis. Message strategy. Logistics and fulfillment coordination. And a partner you can count on.

Now that you have a starting point, you can begin to turn your goals into growth. See our resources for more info on next steps.

EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES

- › FedEx ecommerce tools, tips, and services
- › Small business articles and insights
- › FedEx duties and taxes
- › 9 ways a small business can stay on budget with FedEx

