TPO Network World Conference and Awards 2016

E-COMMERCE

25 NOVEMBER 2016

Speakers

Ms. Kelly Dolan, Social Commerce Strategy Lead, UK Department for International Trade
Ms. Kwanapa Phivnil, Director of International Trade Promotion Strategy, Department of International Trade Promotion, Thailand
Mr. Al Amin Serhani, President, National Federation of E-Commerce in Morocco
Mr. Fabian Stäechelin, Business Development Mobile Manager, eBay

Moderator:

Mr. Marcos Vaena, Chief of Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness Section, ITC

CONCLUSIONS

- E-commerce technology is an opportunity for trade, while digital payment solutions and e-logistics remain major bottlenecks to trade.
- Online platforms are tools to expand and generate businesses, and also to present a company internationally.
- Mobile commerce, smart devices and social commerce all play major roles in trade.
- As digital transformation is an ongoing process, online and offline B2B matchmaking is provided as an integrated marketing approach.

QUOTES

- ‘A key success factor is also about how we triage our companies before listing them on a particular market place,’ Kelly Dolan, Social Commerce Strategy Lead, UK Department for International Trade
- ‘There are more than three million micro and small enterprises in Thailand, for which this evolution represents both a challenge and a formidable business opportunity,’ Kwanapa Phivnil, Director of International Trade Promotion Strategy, Department of International Trade Promotion, Thailand
- ‘E-commerce brings great opportunities, but has also raised a whole range of new issues for SMEs, in particular in customs formalities,’ Al Amin Serhani, President, National Federation of E-commerce in Morocco

SUMMARY

The Thai Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP) outlined the challenges of the large growth in the population using e-commerce:

- Cybersecurity
- Need for awareness-raising (Internet is still seen as a communication platform, not a selling platform)
- Lack of IT staff
- Short product life-cycles
- Rules and regulations do not follow the pace of innovation, leaving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) unprotected
- Online payment options not widely available

To respond to some of these challenges, DITP launched thaitrade.com five years ago as a B2B platform providing certifications to decrease fraud risk. The Department set up partnerships with public and private players like with Paypal, DHL and Alibaba. Online and offline business matching is provided as an integrated marketing approach. DITP runs training and workshops offered to exporters as well as an SME programme, working on product attractiveness.

The National Federation of E-commerce in Morocco (FNEM) advises the government on legislation, including on consumer protection. The Federation launched a market place, Made in Morocco and works with ITC to internationalize the platform, focusing on compliance with international standards.

FNEM faced challenges moving to B2B, specifically in the area of customs clearance. In general, each market entails new requirements and challenges. FNEM remarked that some marketplaces do not list African products and multinationals fix higher prices in Africa. FNEM recommended that African countries create a pan-African platform to include African products and reduce their dependency on multinational platforms.

eBay lists 165 million active buyers who purchase products at the right price. eBay’s vision is an ‘open market place accessible to everyone and powered by technology.’

The UK Department for International Trade (DIT) observed that by 2020, 40% of retail in the UK will take place online. In this context, DIT launched their social e-commerce programme in 2014, building formal partnerships with platforms across the globe. Great.gov.uk lists these sites with country and sector filters.

DIT recently launched UK technology products on New Egg, a US e-commerce site, with a ‘GREAT Britain’ branding campaign. The programme offers reduced fees and special deals such as ‘free trial for the first three months’ to participating UK companies.