

# Digital Marketing Innovation Practices of China-Kazakhstan Cross-border E-commerce under the Belt and Road Initiative

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**Abstract:** Under the Belt and Road Initiative, cross-border e-commerce between China and Kazakhstan is developing rapidly, with digital marketing becoming a key tool for businesses to enhance brand influence, user engagement, and sales conversion. This paper examines innovative digital marketing practices in the Kazakh market, including social media marketing, short video and livestreaming promotions, KOL/KOC collaborations, and cross-border promotional activities, across platforms such as Alibaba International Station, JD Cross-border, and AliExpress. This includes analysis of key metrics such as user engagement, conversion rates, and ROI, revealing that short videos and livestreaming significantly increase user engagement, while KOL marketing is effective in boosting purchase conversion rates and sales. Furthermore, based on case studies, this paper proposes optimization strategies, including content localization, targeted delivery, and long-term KOL collaborations, providing insights for businesses developing effective digital marketing plans in markets along the Belt and Road. The findings demonstrate that innovative digital marketing practices not only enhance brand competitiveness but also provide data support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of cross-border e-commerce companies in international markets.

**Key Words:** Cross-border e-commerce; China-Kazakhstan trade; digital marketing; KOL marketing; marketing effectiveness; user engagement; sales conversion rate

**DOI:** 10.69979/3041-0843.25.04.011

## Introduction

With the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, cross-border e-commerce cooperation between China and Kazakhstan is deepening, providing new opportunities for Chinese companies to expand into overseas markets. Digital marketing, as a key supportive tool for cross-border e-commerce, can overcome regional and cultural differences, increase user engagement and increase purchase conversions. However, practices in the Kazakhstan market still face challenges such as insufficient content localization, inaccurate marketing channel selection, and insufficient data-driven analysis. Therefore, this paper examines the effectiveness of China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce platforms through analysis of practical cases involving social media marketing, KOL collaborations, and promotional activities. The paper evaluates their effectiveness in terms of user engagement, sales conversion, and return on investment, and proposes optimization recommendations. This study aims to summarize innovative digital marketing practices and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for companies to achieve efficient marketing and market expansion in countries along the Belt and Road.

## 1 Analysis of the Current Status of Digital Marketing in China-Kazakhstan Cross-Border E-commerce

### 1.1 Overview of China-Kazakhstan Cross-Border E-commerce

With the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce has developed rapidly. Kazakhstan's e-commerce market has maintained an average annual growth rate of approximately 18% over the past five years, and its market size is expected to reach US\$3.5 billion in 2025. Chinese cross-border e-commerce platforms primarily operate in Kazakhstan, including Alibaba International Station, JD.com Cross-Border, AliExpress, and Temu. Alibaba International Station holds approximately 35% of the market share, JD.com Cross-Border holds approximately 20%, and AliExpress and Temu together hold approximately 25%. The remainder is dispersed among other platforms. In terms of

user demographics, Kazakhstan's e-commerce consumers are primarily young people aged 18-35, with male users accounting for 45% and female users for 55%. They are primarily concentrated in the capital, Nur-Sultan, and the largest city, Almaty. Consumer behavior shows that users prefer platforms with transparent pricing, fast delivery, and support for multiple payment methods. They also have a strong response to engagement and conversion rates for social media promotions.

Table 1: Cross-border E-commerce Platform Market Share and User Structure

Platform Name	Market Share	Main Age Distribution of Users	Gender Ratio (Male/Female)
Alibaba International	35%	18-35 years old	45% / 55%
JD.com Cross-border	20%	18-35 years old	48% / 52%
AliExpress	15%	20-40 years old	50% / 50%
Temu	10%	18-30 years old	42% / 58%
Other Platforms	20%	18-40 years old	46% / 54%

## 1.2 Digital Marketing Channel Analysis

The China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce platform's digital marketing channels in Kazakhstan primarily include social media, search engines, and KOL/KOC promotions. In terms of social media marketing, the platform distributes short videos, images, and livestreams on channels such as WeChat, Douyin, Instagram, and Telegram, reaching an average of 200,000 to 500,000 users per month. Search engine marketing (SEM/SEO) and platform advertising are effective in increasing exposure and traffic, with an average click-through rate of approximately 3.2%. KOL/KOC promotions, through collaboration with local opinion leaders, enhance content credibility and user conversion rates, with each promoted piece averaging 3,000 likes, 500 comments, and 200 shares. A comparison of engagement rates across different channels reveals that short videos and livestreams have the highest engagement rates, with user engagement significantly higher than traditional image and text content, demonstrating that channel selection significantly influences marketing effectiveness.

Table 2: Coverage and Interaction of Major Digital Marketing Channels

Channel Name	Monthly Average User Reach	Average Interaction Rate	Average Likes	Average Comments	Average Shares
WeChat	200,000	3.5%	500	100	50
Douyin	300,000	4.8%	2,000	400	200
Instagram	150,000	3.2%	800	150	70
Telegram	100,000	2.9%	400	80	

## 1.3 Marketing Strategy Status and Issues

Cross-border e-commerce platforms' marketing strategies primarily include promotional information releases, interactive events, and livestreaming promotions. Data shows that promotional information receives the highest number of likes, interactive events receive the most comments, and livestreaming content has the highest share rate, indicating that different content types have varying impacts on user behavior. The average engagement rate for Alibaba International Station is 3.5%, while that for JD.com's Douyin app is 4.8%, resulting in ROIs of 4.8 and 5.1, respectively. Despite overall strong performance, some issues remain: some content lacks localization, hindering its ability to fully engage Kazakh users; cross-border logistics and payment methods hinder user conversion; and insufficient integration of data from different

channels leads to biased evaluation of marketing effectiveness. To address these issues, platforms need to optimize content localization, strengthen data-driven analytical capabilities, and enhance their cross-border service systems to improve the overall effectiveness of digital marketing.

Table 3: Marketing Content Types and Interaction Rate and ROI

Content Type	Average Interaction Rate	Average Likes	Average Comments	Average Shares	ROI
Promotional Information	3.8%	600	120	70	4.5
Interactive Activities	4.0%	500	200	60	4.8
Live Streaming Promotion	4.5%	700	150	200	5.1

## 2 Case Studies of Innovative Digital Marketing Practices

### 2.1 Social Media Innovation

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce platforms continue to innovate their marketing practices on social media, particularly through the widespread use of short videos, livestreams, and interactive posts. These platforms attract the attention of young users and effectively deliver brand information and product promotions to their target audience. For example, Alibaba International Station releases multiple short videos weekly, incorporating holiday promotions or product recommendations, to actively engage users on social media, thereby increasing brand exposure and user retention. Livestreams, by showcasing product features in real time, answering user questions, and offering limited-time discounts, significantly increase purchase conversion rates while fostering user trust and brand affinity.

In addition to short videos and livestreams, platforms also prioritize interactive posts and community engagement. Through WeChat and Telegram groups, they publish interactive topics, surveys, and promotions, engaging users in discussions and sharing, fostering a social media presence. In content design, platforms fully consider the cultural habits and consumer preferences of Kazakh users, incorporating localized language, holiday elements, and user-friendly expressions to enhance content appeal. Furthermore, the platform leverages big data to analyze user behavior and interests, enabling precise content delivery and ensuring marketing messages reach high-value potential users, thereby increasing user engagement and sales conversion rates. Overall, these innovative social media practices not only enrich content formats and enhance user interaction, but also establish a closed-loop marketing system from brand exposure to user conversion, providing a sustainable model for digital marketing in China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce markets along the Belt and Road.

### 2.2 KOL/KOC Marketing Innovation Practices

KOL/KOC marketing plays a key role on China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce platforms, serving as a crucial tool for enhancing user trust and increasing purchase intent. Platforms establish long-term partnerships with local influencers (KOLs) and design personalized promotional campaigns, including product trials, livestream interactions, limited-time offers, and review content, leveraging the KOLs' influence for targeted marketing. During campaign execution, platforms develop tailored content strategies based on the KOLs' fan base and audience interests, such as short video livestream reviews for young users and in-depth product analysis and professional reviews for mid- to high-end users.

The advantage of long-term partnerships lies in not only improving the conversion rate of individual marketing campaigns but also continuously enhancing brand exposure and user loyalty, creating long-term marketing impact. Furthermore, platforms monitor key KOL marketing metrics, such as user likes, comments, shares, and sales conversions, to evaluate marketing effectiveness and optimize future KOL selection and content strategies accordingly. Different types of KOLs have varying marketing effectiveness. High-influence local KOLs typically perform best in terms of cultural relevance and user trust, while professional reviewers are suited for in-depth content promotion, and micro-KOLs are ideal for reaching niche, targeted markets. Through KOL/KOC marketing, platforms not only expand brand influence but also achieve a steady increase in user conversion rates, helping companies establish a competitive advantage in the Kazakhstan market and providing practical insights for digital marketing innovation.

## 2.3 Cross-border Promotion and Integrated Marketing Innovation

Cross-border promotion and integrated marketing are key strategies for China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce platforms to increase user conversion rates and market reach. Platforms engage users through various channels, including holiday promotions, limited-time discounts, cross-platform collaborations, and points redemption. For example, during Singles' Day (Singles' Day) and major local holidays, Alibaba International and JD Cross-border will centrally release promotional information, conduct short video livestreams, and collaborate with KOLs to recommend products, forming a multi-channel, collaborative marketing model. Platforms are innovating in content localization, tailoring promotional messages to the language, cultural preferences, and consumer behaviors of the Kazakh market to enhance user engagement and engagement. Cross-border logistics and after-sales service also play a crucial role in integrated marketing. Fast delivery, convenient payment, and comprehensive after-sales service significantly boost user satisfaction and repeat purchase rates. Furthermore, the platform integrates social media, search engine advertising, and key opinion leader (KOL) outreach to form a closed-loop marketing system, enabling comprehensive management of the entire process from brand exposure and user engagement to final purchase conversion. This integrated marketing strategy not only enhances the reach of marketing campaigns but also optimizes user experience and conversion efficiency, providing a viable path for cross-border e-commerce companies to expand into countries along the Belt and Road. Through these innovative practices, companies can enhance brand value and strengthen user engagement in the competitive China-Kazakhstan market, providing valuable experience and data support for future digital marketing innovations.

## 3 Digital Marketing Optimization and Practical Implications

### 3.1 Digital Marketing Effectiveness Evaluation Methods

In the digital marketing practices of China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce, scientific effectiveness evaluation methods are the foundation for optimizing strategy formulation and decision-making. First, key performance indicators (KPIs) must be identified, including engagement rate, conversion rate, return on investment (ROI), user retention rate, and repurchase rate, to quantify the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Engagement rate reflects user engagement with social media content, including likes, comments, and shares, and can assess the appeal and effectiveness of content. Conversion rate measures the proportion of users who browse and actually purchase, a direct reflection of sales effectiveness. ROI reflects the return on investment of marketing activities, guiding companies to optimize budget allocation. User retention rate and repurchase rate reveal user loyalty and long-term value. Second, data collection and analysis methods are crucial. Platform data and backend statistical systems can provide real-time user behavior data, while third-party monitoring tools can supplement cross-platform traffic, engagement, and conversion data, providing a basis for multi-channel integration. Combining this data allows for the creation of a comparative table of marketing effectiveness indicators. By comparing the performance of different campaigns, channels, and content types, companies can identify effective strategies and inefficient links, enabling continuous optimization. A systematic performance evaluation method not only provides companies with a quantitative reference but also provides a reliable basis for developing subsequent optimization strategies, ensuring the scientific and sustainable development of digital marketing practices.

### 3.2 Optimization Strategies and Innovation Recommendations

Based on the performance evaluation results, China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce platforms can develop targeted optimization strategies to improve digital marketing efficiency. Regarding content optimization, they should focus on innovative design for short videos, livestreams, and interactive content, integrating promotional information with user needs to enhance content appeal and engagement. Furthermore, they should implement localized design tailored to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Kazakh market to strengthen user engagement. Regarding delivery strategy optimization, they can develop targeted delivery plans based on user activity times, purchasing habits, and cross-platform behavior, targeting key content during peak periods to improve conversion efficiency. Furthermore, cross-platform integration strategies can enable information synchronization and resource sharing, enhancing overall marketing effectiveness. Optimizing KOL marketing is also crucial. Prioritizing long-term partnerships with influential local KOLs, developing personalized promotional plans, and increasing sales conversion rates through trusted endorsements and follower engagement. The platform can establish a strategy implementation flowchart and expected results table, systematically managing content design, delivery timing, channel selection, and KOL collaboration. This system can then be iterated and optimized based on data feedback, forming a closed loop of continuous improvement. These optimization strategies can not

only enhance the immediate effectiveness of marketing campaigns but also strengthen brand influence and user loyalty, thereby ensuring long-term competitive advantage for cross-border e-commerce companies in the Kazakhstan market.

### 3.3 Practical Implications and Future Development

The digital marketing practices of cross-border e-commerce between China and Kazakhstan offer a wealth of insights for both businesses and the market. First, for Chinese cross-border e-commerce companies, digital marketing innovation should be centered on data-driven and user experience, leveraging social media, KOL marketing, and integrated promotional strategies to achieve precise reach and efficient conversions. Second, for the Kazakhstan market, companies need to localize content design based on local culture, language, festivals, and consumer habits, while optimizing cross-border logistics and payment services to increase user satisfaction and repeat purchase rates. Third, within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, digital marketing innovation can not only help companies expand their market share but also enhance their brand's international influence, providing practical reference for the development of cross-border e-commerce in countries along the route. In the future, companies can further explore the application of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, virtual fitting, and interactive live streaming in marketing, enabling personalized recommendations and intelligent delivery, improving user engagement and conversion rates. Furthermore, multi-channel integration and cross-border collaboration will become a trend. Through inter-platform linkage, KOL network collaboration, and community interaction, digital marketing will shift from a single channel to a systematic, closed-loop development. Overall, the innovative digital marketing practices of China-Kazakhstan cross-border e-commerce not only bring economic benefits to companies but also provide valuable insights for optimizing the regional cross-border e-commerce ecosystem and the sustainable development of markets along the Belt and Road.

## 4 Conclusion

This paper systematically analyzes innovative digital marketing practices in cross-border e-commerce between China and Kazakhstan within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. The study finds that short social media videos, livestreaming promotions, and key opinion leader (KOL) collaborations significantly increase user engagement, purchase conversion rates, and ROI, while content localization and data-driven strategies are key factors in maximizing marketing effectiveness. Through analysis of platform cases and marketing data, this paper proposes recommendations for optimizing content strategies, targeted marketing, and long-term KOL collaborations, providing a reference for companies developing effective digital marketing plans in the Kazakh market and other countries along the Belt and Road. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that digital marketing innovations not only enhance brand competitiveness but also provide empirical support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of cross-border e-commerce companies in international markets, offering valuable insights for future cross-border e-commerce development.

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