

# 5 Steps to FDI Marketing Success

*An eBook to Simplify & Accelerate Your International Marketing in 5 months*

 CSTUDIOS

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FDI marketing is often an afterthought for many U.S. state and local EDOs. Domestic priorities consume budgets and focus, especially as FDI can be complex to execute.

Language and cultural differences are just the start. Some tactics are less effective because of smaller audience sizes. And in some countries, particularly those in Asia, the channels are entirely different.

What to do? Together with our European partners at **C Studios**, we're here to decomplicate. We've developed a simple 5-step plan that can be executed over 5 months to prepare your marketing operations for overseas success.

Scheduling these out with your team and taking a disciplined focus each month -- none of it overwhelming, by the way -- will have you ready to go by next fiscal year (or within this fiscal year) if you play your cards right.

We've kept it simple on purpose. This doesn't have to be hard. Read through the eBook and see for yourself!

# 5 Steps to FDI Success



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# Align With Business Development

## *Key Priorities*

How well the marketing and business development teams within EDOs work together often determines how strong annual outcomes are. This is just as true for FDI as it is domestically. On the following pages are three critical areas to get right before diving into strategic discussions.

**Identify the geographies & sectors with opportunity.**

**What's the biggest need: awareness or leads?**

**Where & when is the team traveling overseas?**

# Identify the geographies & sectors with opportunity.

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EDOs can start by analyzing global investment trends and aligning them with their location's strengths. Look at recent FDI patterns in your state or region, and identify which countries are showing increased interest.

Consider factors such as existing international business relationships, cultural ties, and direct flight connections that might make certain geographies more promising. At the same time, evaluate your region's key industries and assets.

Which sectors are growing or have unique advantages that might attract foreign investors? Cross-reference these with global industry trends to pinpoint sectors where your region has a competitive edge.

Done with both marketing and business development together, this analysis will help focus your FDI marketing efforts on the most promising geographies and sectors.



# Which is the biggest need: awareness or leads?

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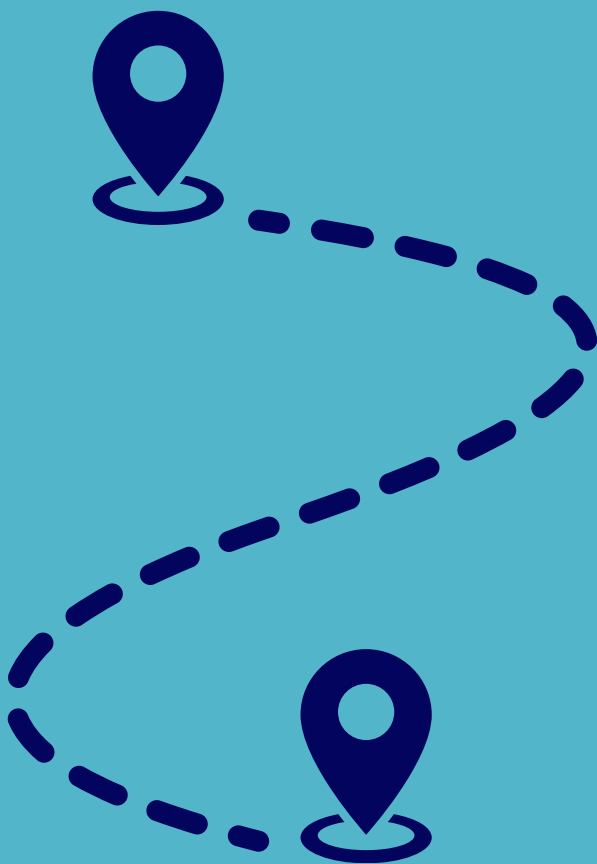
Assess your current position in target markets to determine whether your primary goal should be raising awareness or generating leads.

In markets where your region is less known, focus on building brand recognition and educating potential investors about your value proposition. This might involve advertising, sponsored content and/or public relations efforts.

If awareness is already strong, the focus can shift to lead generation. Develop targeted campaigns that speak directly to the needs and pain points of potential investors in your key sectors. Create valuable lead magnets such as industry reports, case studies of successful

foreign investors in your region, or guides to setting up operations in your area. Remember, the quality of leads is often more important than quantity, and you will get some curiosity-seekers rather than real opportunities along the way.

Lead magnets or gated forms on your website might not produce much, but social media campaigns are proving quite effective in getting executives with interest to raise their hands. With follow-up, these are turning into productive meetings.



# Where & when is the team traveling overseas?

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Coordinate closely with your business development team to understand their international travel plans. These trips present valuable opportunities to align marketing efforts with on-the-ground activities. If the team is attending trade shows, conferences, or conducting business missions, plan targeted marketing campaigns to support these efforts.

Consider the frequency and history of travel to specific markets. If your team has been visiting a particular country for years, your marketing approach might focus on reinforcing existing relationships and showcasing recent successes.

For newer markets, the emphasis might be more on building awareness and introducing your region's value proposition. Use these insights to tailor your marketing messages and timing for maximum impact.

Also, consistency matters, so consider how these trips can play into a larger campaign. Promoting your state or region for 3 months in 5 different markets and then shutting it down isn't going to move the needle much. More impactful is targeting a single market or two and committing to a longer campaign.



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# Make the Strategic Decisions

## *Key Priorities*

With the foundational input gathered, now the strategy can take shape. There are several important considerations that will dictate how your budget is used, including how big that budget is in the first place. Here are the three top questions to tackle as a part of this process.

Based on BD input from step 1, what is the path forward?

Do you have the right channels for the target markets?

What is your budget?



# Based on BD input from step 1, what is the path forward?

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Review the insights gathered from your business development team to determine realistic goals and strategies. Consider the resources available, including staff capacity and existing relationships in target markets.

This assessment will help you prioritize which markets and sectors to focus on first. Should you look at just 1-2 markets where you can go deeper and make a stronger impact? Or do you prefer not to put all eggs in one basket by staying broader?

If resources are limited, consider starting with a focused approach in one or two key markets or sectors where you have the strongest potential for success. As you gain traction and refine your approach, you can expand to additional markets.

Overall, be realistic about what can be achieved in the short term while also planning for long-term growth.

# Do you have the right channels for the target markets?

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Different markets require different marketing channels and approaches. While considering how many markets you'll be targeting, also research the most effective channels for reaching potential investors.

For example, while LinkedIn might be crucial for B2B marketing in North America and Europe, platforms like WeChat could be more effective in China, and Facebook is often used like LinkedIn in other Asian nations.

Also consider cultural nuances and communication preferences in each market. Some cultures may prefer more formal, traditional marketing approaches like print and trade publications, while others might respond better to digital and social media campaigns.

Lastly, evaluate whether you have the necessary language skills and cultural knowledge in-house, or if you need to partner with local marketing agencies or consultants to effectively reach your audience. Regardless, always make sure there's another set of eyes to review content for various contexts and sensitivities.



# What is your budget?

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Determine a realistic marketing budget based on your goals and the markets you're targeting. PR campaigns may only require a small "carving out" of budget to target specific country publications within a larger domestic campaign. Advertising offers a faster way to scale and can often be paired with PR for a strong 1-2 punch.

Are there conferences where elevated sponsorships, activations and OOH campaigns could be effective? What about cross promotion with your destination marketing organization around new flight announcements or cultural events in target markets? Those are quite common and might provide a platform for shared expenses that stretches your message farther.



Keep in mind that you may need to invest more heavily in markets where you're trying to build awareness, while in more established markets, you might focus on more targeted, lead-generation activities.

Remember to factor in costs for content creation, translation, and any necessary technology or tools, although most of those being used in your domestic efforts can still work abroad.



# 3

## Build the Messaging & Content Framework

### *Key Priorities*

Now that you've set your strategy, it is time to make sure the messaging and content you are working with supports that strategy. This is the time to make sure that terminology, references and the overall flow of your materials isn't too U.S.-centric, but is also applicable to a global audience. Key steps on this journey are as follows.

**Refine your value propositions for FDI.**

**Confirm your FDI success stories & build content around them.**

**Conduct a "light" audit of your website content.**

# Refine your value propositions for FDI.

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Why foreign investors should choose your location is probably closely related to why domestic firms should choose you as well, but it might vary slightly. Consider top factors for global firms like access to markets, quality and availability of workforce, and quality of life.

Also important -- much like with domestic marketing -- are infrastructure, cost competitiveness and any specific incentives or support programs for foreign investors.

Remember that geographic nuances like county lines are not as well understood abroad, so keep the message simple and applicable to those who are less familiar with U.S. jurisdictions and local politics.



# Confirm your FDI success stories & build content around them.

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Identify and document compelling success stories of foreign companies that have invested in your region. These case studies serve as powerful proof points for your value proposition.

Reach out to these companies to gather detailed information about their experience, including why they chose your location, challenges they overcame, and the benefits they've realized. Most likely, there's an insight in at least one of those conversations that is compelling and could be the basis of a campaign.

Develop a variety of content formats around these success stories, such as written case studies, video testimonials, infographics, and social media snippets. Using your domestic templates keeps this easy to produce, but will be more powerful than using home-grown or domestic examples.

Ensure that these stories address the key concerns and interests of your target investors, such as workforce quality, infrastructure, quality of life, and regulatory environment.



# Conduct a "light" audit of your website content.

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Review your website from the perspective of a foreign investor who may not be familiar with your region. Ensure that key information is easy to find and understand, and that overly localized references are adjusted.

This includes an clear overview of your region, key industries, and why investors should consider your location. Check that your website effectively communicates your unique value propositions and showcases your FDI success stories similar to your domestic ones.

Ensure you have a clear and prominently displayed map showing your location within the U.S. and in relation to major markets. Consider creating a dedicated section for international investors that addresses their specific needs and concerns. This can act as a landing page for campaigns and acknowledges that FDI is important to your region.

Where possible, highlight any global chambers of commerce, business associations or sister city relationships that you have, as well as how many international companies with which you have worked.





# 4

# Translate the Website Efficiently

## *Key Priorities*

Once the content direction is sound and the website messaging is updated, then you can begin to think about translating it. There are a few ways to go about this and it doesn't have to be overly complicated or expensive. Just as important as the initial translations is making sure they're maintained through proper protocols.

**Identify a translation tool that mixes automation & human touch.**

**Coordinate translation & quality control.**

**Establish a process for future web updates.**



# Identify a translation tool that mixes automation & human touch.

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Research translation tools that offer a balance between efficiency and accuracy. Options like WPML for WordPress sites or Weglot for other platforms can provide a good starting point. In many cases, they get translations about 70%-85% of the way and are only improving with time.

These tools use machine translation as a base, which can then be refined by human translators for context and cultural nuance. While machine translation has improved significantly, it is not perfect, especially for niche business content like economic development and FDI.

We recommend against using free tools like Google and Microsoft Translate, as they create a user expectation of being perfect, but are often far from it. The options in the first paragraph above are not cost exorbitant, but if you are looking for a free option, the better path is to enable auto-translation on your website through your CMS.

Doing so will result in a pop-up to the user that your site is being auto-translated. This is important, as the visitor will no longer expect a perfect translation because they know such a tool is in use and has limitations.

That said, if your website uses incredibly witty language, puns and other creative techniques, it will definitely get lost in translation.

# Coordinate translation & quality control.

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Start by using your chosen translation tool to automatically translate your key web pages. However, don't stop there – have these translations reviewed and refined by native speakers or professional translators who understand the nuances of business language in your target markets.

Consider working with your in-market experts located overseas or within your network. Local universities with native speakers can be a potential option to reduce costs. While professional translators can be an option, even they don't always understand the business context of FDI, so proceed cautiously.



Pay special attention to industry-specific terminology and ensure that your value propositions are effectively communicated in each language.

If starting with automation, this “review & edit” process is significantly faster and can be turned around in a matter of days, as opposed to starting from scratch with custom translations.

After the initial proofread, it is helpful to confirm the updates online and have one last review of the live version for final edits.

# Establish a process for future web updates.

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This is critical and often missed, so we're calling it out to be sure it is considered. We recommend developing a system for managing ongoing website updates across all language versions.

It happens all the time -- the website is updated and looks great; two weeks later an update to content is made and changes something that impacts (usually negatively) how the copy appears.

By making sure any updates are followed by additional quality control measures, awkward mistakes can be avoided. This might involve designating a team member to oversee multilingual content, or setting up workflows in your content management system to flag content that needs translation when updates are made.

Schedule regular reviews of your translated content to ensure it remains up-to-date and accurately reflects any changes in your English-language content. Consider using translation memory tools that can help maintain consistency across translations and make future updates more efficient.





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# Focus on Compliance

## *Key Priorities*

You might dislike all those consent pop-ups on global websites, but audiences around the world have a different take. Oftentimes, these notices are signs of trust, responsibility and credibility. Find out what your website needs before you extend your marketing overseas.

**Set up a cookie consent notice.**

**Update your online privacy policy.**

**Ensure accessibility standards are met.**

# Set up a cookie consent notice.

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Implement a cookie consent mechanism on your website that complies with GDPR and other relevant data protection regulations.

This notice should appear when users first visit your site, clearly explaining what cookies are used and for what purposes, and allowing users to accept or reject non-essential cookies.

Ensure that your cookie consent notice is displayed in all the languages your website supports. Consider using a cookie consent tool that automatically blocks cookies until consent is given, and allows users to easily change their preferences at any time.

This is a sign of credibility to international users and also complies with international laws that might not be active or enforced within the U.S. For inspiration on this, almost any government investment promotion agency from overseas uses a tool like this, so feel free to check out overseas competitors and what they're using.

The process is usually quite easy and fast, so this doesn't have to be complicated.

# Update your online privacy.

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Review and update your privacy policy to ensure it clearly communicates what personal data you collect, how you use it, and how you protect it.

This should cover all aspects of your data collection and use, including website analytics, marketing communications, and any forms or tools on your site that collect user information. Translate your privacy policy into all languages supported by your website -- this too can be done using the auto-translate tools.

Ensure that the policy is easily accessible from every page of your site, typically through a link in the footer. Consider having your privacy policy reviewed by legal experts familiar with international data protection laws to ensure compliance across all your target markets.

Tools that offer cookie management often include privacy policy options as well, so getting a 2-in1 package is most efficient.

# Ensure accessibility standards are met.

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Conduct an accessibility audit of your website to identify any barriers for users with disabilities. This should cover aspects such as keyboard navigation, screen reader compatibility, color contrast, and text alternatives for images. Tools like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide a comprehensive framework for improving website accessibility.

This will be similar to any efforts you've done for ADA compliance, but note that the EU will be enforcing a slightly higher level of compliance starting in July 2025.

Implement necessary changes to meet accessibility standards, which may include adding alt text to images, ensuring proper heading structure, providing transcripts for audio content, and ensuring all interactive elements are operable via keyboard.

Aside from seeing this as an inconvenience, remember two things. First, 1.3 billion people (16% of the world population) experiences a significant disability worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. Second, accessibility benefits all users, not just those with disabilities, as it improves overall user experience and a site's SEO performance.



There is one other way to expedite your FDI success. Our overseas team in Europe, **C Studios**, is available to help. As a joint venture between DCI and OCO Global, they extend DCI's award-winning services to international markets to help you raise visibility, gain credibility and identify leads.

Contact DCI or

C Studios directly for more information about how we can elevate your FDI marketing.

## About DCI

Development Counsellors International (DCI) is the leader in marketing places. Since 1960, the agency has worked with more than 450 cities, regions, states and countries, helping them attract both investors and visitors. DCI specializes exclusively in all phases of economic development, tourism and talent marketing. [aboutdci.com](http://aboutdci.com)

## About C Studios

C Studios is the marketing agency for places, with expertise in investment promotion, talent attraction and trade promotion. We consult clients on place marketing strategy, and design & implement bespoke campaigns that attract more international business and talents. [c-studios.com](http://c-studios.com)

The logo for C Studios, featuring a stylized orange 'C' followed by the word 'STUDIOS' in white uppercase letters.

The logo for DCI, featuring the lowercase letters 'dci' in white, with a white arc underneath.