

American University Kyiv

A Capstone Project

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO GLOBAL MARKETING:

A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR THE “INTER-COSMETICS” COMPANY

ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ГЛОБАЛЬНОГО МАРКЕТИНГУ:
СТРАТЕГІЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ДЛЯ КОМПАНІЇ “INTER-COSMETICS”

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ABSTRACT

The global beauty industry is undergoing a transformative shift driven by innovation, technological advancements, and evolving consumer preferences. This study explores innovative approaches to global marketing with a focus on the company "Inter-Cosmetics," particularly in the context of entering the Polish market. Leveraging theories such as Disruptive Innovation, Diffusion of Innovation, and Speed of Adoption of New Products, the research highlights how innovative products and business practices can address unmet market needs. The study identifies key strategies, including product differentiation, educational initiatives, and digital marketing, to position "Inter-Cosmetics" as a leader in the Polish beauty industry. By focusing on newest cosmetic plant-based exosome products, the study demonstrates the potential of targeted marketing, innovative positioning, and consumer education to drive successful international market expansion.

Keywords: innovation, beauty, marketing, strategy, consumer.

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CHAPTER 1. ONGOING TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY

In the ever-evolving beauty industry, innovation has become a key driver for growth and competitive advantage. It is necessary to examine how innovative products in the beauty sector, particularly in Ukraine, can shape international marketing strategies and help companies enter new markets.

In this project, I aim to explore the impact of innovative products on global markets in the beauty and aesthetic medicine industry, where my company has successfully operated for many years. The growing global demand for modern cosmetic products, driven by an aging population, has created a need for cutting-edge solutions that deliver high efficacy without invasive procedures. As consumers become more informed and selective, marketing strategies must evolve to meet these shifting expectations and preferences.

Additionally, the beauty industry's growth has been significantly influenced by global urbanization. Urbanization, a long-standing trend, has seen more people moving to urban centers in search of economic opportunities, better access to services, and improved living standards (Figure 1).

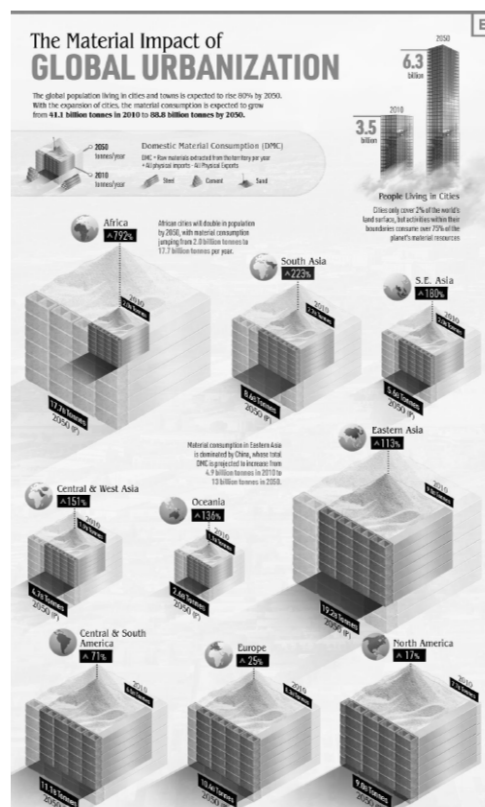


Figure 1. The growing impact of urbanization

Source: Bruno Venditti, 2022, Visualizing the material impact of global urbanization

By 2022, over 55% of the world's population resided in urban areas, and this figure is projected to reach 80% by 2050, with the global population estimated to hit 9.7 billion. Urban dwellers, increasingly focused on appearance and wellness, drive the demand for advanced beauty services and products. This shift is further supported by technological advancements in the beauty industry, particularly in cosmetic and anti-aging medicine, which cater to the urban desire for a polished and youthful appearance.

The Ukrainian beauty industry, despite the challenges of the full-scale war, continues to function and create value. In 2024, the research agency "Fama," in collaboration with the Association "Perfumery and Cosmetics of Ukraine," commissioned by the Office for Entrepreneurship and Export Development and the national project Diia.Business, with the support of the international cooperation program "EU4Business," conducted a study on the Ukrainian cosmetics industry under the conditions of full-scale war. As of the end of 2023, there are 1,159 registered operators in the Ukrainian cosmetic market, including both distributors and manufacturers. Many of these operators focus on the production of skincare, haircare, and decorative cosmetics. The largest concentration of companies is in Kyiv (29%), followed by the Kharkiv (12%) and Dnipropetrovsk (10%) regions. In 2023, the sector generated 12,333.52 million UAH, which represents a 20% decrease compared to 2022. However, the beauty industry's share of the total processing industry increased from 0.45% to 0.83%, highlighting the sector's resilience.

The importance of entering international markets has become particularly critical for Ukrainian companies, especially given the full-scale war that has disrupted local business operations and created uncertainty. Many companies are now exploring international markets not only as a way to diversify sales but also as a survival strategy. This expansion is crucial for Ukrainian distribution companies, retailers, and manufacturers alike, enabling them to mitigate risks and seize new opportunities for growth. Examples of Ukrainian companies such as Nova Poshta, which has expanded its logistics services internationally, and the beauty platform Makeup.ua, which now operates in several European countries, demonstrate how Ukrainian firms can successfully enter global markets. Innovations have become the cornerstone for many of these companies, serving as a key entry point into the global business environment.

This study focuses on two interconnected markets: Ukraine, where innovation is vital for business survival and growth, and Poland, which acts as a strategic gateway to broader European expansion. By analyzing these markets, this research will highlight the most effective marketing strategies for promoting innovative beauty products in both local and international contexts.

The structure of this project is as follows: the first section provides a comprehensive literature review of theoretical frameworks and practical examples related to global marketing and innovation. This includes key theories such as Disruptive Innovation, Diffusion of Innovation, and Speed of

Adoption of New Products, along with their application to the beauty industry. The subsequent sections analyze current trends, including the impact of digital marketing and e-commerce strategies, and present successful case studies from both Ukrainian and international markets. The study aims to offer actionable insights for businesses seeking to leverage innovation and strategic positioning to achieve success in the global beauty industry, with a particular focus on the Polish market.

CHAPTER 2. COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW: RADICAL INNOVATION AND DISRUPTIVE POSITIONING IN GLOBAL MARKETING

2.1. Theoretical Background: Radical and Disruptive Innovation

Radical innovation and disruptive positioning are essential strategies for reshaping global markets.

Clayton Christensen's theory of Disruptive Innovation explains how new entrants can outpace established competitors by offering simpler, more affordable solutions that appeal to previously underserved customer segments. In his seminal work, *The Innovator's Dilemma* (1997), Christensen demonstrated how such innovations can create new markets and shift competitive dynamics by addressing unmet consumer needs.

Disruptive Innovations in product offerings, creating standout items that challenge traditional expectations and provide unique experiences unavailable before. Disruptive innovation is designed to help customers create value. It is customer value-oriented and realizes the radical change impact on existing customers to establish a value proposition based on customer thinking. Disruptive innovation is different from incremental innovation, which is an improvement based on existing products or services, while the former challenges traditional ways, subverts market rules, and reshapes the industry landscape. This innovative approach breaks through the existing thinking framework and is usually driven by new companies entering the market. It not only changes the product or service itself but may also involve the business model, consumer experience, supply chain, and other elements.

Dzimba et al (2024), examines how small businesses can develop disruptive innovations in resource-constrained environments, especially in emerging economies. Key success factors include the knowledge and prior experience of founders, which shape the company's strategic position, as well as their focus on emerging markets, learning orientation, and flexibility. Risk-taking allows entrepreneurs to seize opportunities despite uncertainties and limited resources, while information networks help compensate for resource shortages. Disruptive innovations often start with minimally functional products aimed at lower market segments, enabling companies to avoid direct competition with industry leaders and gradually capture new niches.

Innovativeness, as a new approach to business across the entire value chain, is positively linked to business sustainability. As Christensen and others point out, innovative business models are essential for enabling disruptive innovations. Furthermore, a learning orientation is crucial for entrepreneurs operating in resource-constrained environments, as it helps them build the capability for disruptive innovation. Research also shows that focusing on emerging markets rather than

mainstream markets enhances the potential for disruptive innovation, allowing companies to avoid competition with larger players and establish strong market positions.

Morizet et al (2021), introduces the Learning-Use-Deprivation (LUD) framework as a new approach to evaluate user perception, adoption, and product performance of new-market disruptive innovations, particularly when no clear market benchmark exists and when targeting non-consumers of current market categories. Traditional assessment methods are often inadequate for evaluating new-market disruptive innovations because they lack comparison metrics and target consumers who are unfamiliar with the product. Morizet et al (2021) outline the following LUD Framework Components:

- Learning Phase. At this stage the users familiarize themselves with the product's unique benefits and usage, measuring the time, ease of learning, and behavioral patterns.
- Use Phase. After users learn to use the product, repeated exposure measures user satisfaction, functionality, and sensory experience.
- Deprivation Phase. After product use ends, user response is gauged to assess missed benefits and likelihood of long-term adoption, considering positive and negative memories of the experience.

The study applies the LUD framework to a solid shampoo stick, a product type unfamiliar in the market. Findings show that the framework effectively measures product performance, enhances understanding of user behaviors, and indicates potential market success. Additionally, the LUD framework addresses factors influencing adoption, including relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

This research highlights the LUD framework's effectiveness in evaluating new-market disruptive innovations and suggests it can be adapted to other products. By enabling a detailed assessment of learning processes, emotional responses, and product deprivation, the LUD approach provides valuable insights for validating product potential and guiding development and marketing strategies.

Chen, Seecharan, Feng et al (2024), investigate the importance of educating consumers to promote the adoption of sustainable cosmetic products, utilizing the Learning-Use-Deprivation (LUD) framework discussed earlier. Through the LUD approach, education focused on informing consumers about harmful ingredients, increasing their awareness of product content and encouraging interest in sustainable alternatives.

Additional training on sustainability standards and eco-certifications enhanced trust in certified cosmetics and motivated a desire to purchase these products. Educational interventions also shifted priorities: while “quality” remained the top factor, “sustainability” rose to second place, surpassing “price.”

The most important factors for choosing sustainable cosmetics, according to participants, were ingredient safety, environmentally friendly sourcing, and eco-friendly manufacturing processes. These aspects, emphasized during the LUD-based education, confirmed that informing consumers is essential for raising awareness and accelerating the adoption of sustainable innovations.

This trend of Sustainable Innovations is gaining popularity in Western countries, especially in the EU markets, where strict regulatory policies are already in place regarding harmful ingredients in cosmetic products and their replacement with environmentally friendly, natural eco-friendly components. At the same time, Ukraine does not have such strict restrictions in the regulation of cosmetic ingredients and the new perfume and cosmetic regulations for manufacturers and distributors have been postponed due to the war. Moreover, there is a stable and steady demand for products that fulfill the basic needs according to Maslow's pyramid without focusing on eco-friendly products

Pawar, Ambedkar et al (2023) figure out how companies in the beauty and cosmetics industry can create effective marketing strategies for global success, using the example of the Indian market as a key emerging segment. In a highly competitive and fast-evolving industry, successful brands need to consider cultural preferences, maintain flexibility in their approaches, and leverage digital technologies to reach audiences.

To succeed globally, brands must adapt products to regional preferences, considering local traditions and values. The Indian market, for instance, requires a deep understanding of local preferences, impacting ingredient choices, design, and brand messaging.

The beauty industry is constantly evolving and trend-driven, where innovation is crucial in product development, packaging, and branding. The article emphasizes that research into innovation helps businesses anticipate and adapt to new trends, ensuring they stay at the forefront of consumer preferences.

Given the significant influence of social media, an effective digital strategy requires active user engagement, e-commerce integration, and partnerships with local influencers. In the Indian market, where digital technologies play a huge role, this approach is especially relevant.

Modern consumers favor eco-friendly and ethical brands. Strategies that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility positively impact brand reputation and appeal.

In conclusion, successful marketing strategies in the beauty industry should include innovative approaches, consider the cultural and social nuances of target audiences, and remain flexible to adapt quickly to emerging trends.

2.2. Disruptive Positioning

Disruptive positioning complements this by emphasizing how businesses use innovative strategies to redefine their market position, creating new categories of products or services that appeal to emerging consumer needs. This approach allows companies to avoid direct competition and instead establish new value propositions. A classic global example is IKEA, which changed the furniture market by offering affordable, flat-packed products that consumers could assemble themselves, meeting a previously untapped demand for cost-effective, stylish furniture.

In Ukraine, several companies have effectively applied these principles of radical innovation and disruptive positioning to expand their reach both locally and internationally, demonstrating the power of innovation in global marketing.

The results of analysis allow outlining the several practical examples of the radical innovation in action:

Monobank disrupted the traditional banking model in Ukraine by offering a fully mobile banking service with no physical branches. This radical innovation allowed the bank to eliminate overhead costs and provide better rates and services to its customers through a simple, user-friendly mobile app. By focusing on digital services, Monobank was able to attract over 500,000 users by 2023, establishing itself as a leader in fintech with a valuation exceeding \$1 billion.

This digital innovation allowed the company to rapidly capture market share and attract a younger, tech-savvy customer base. Dmitry Dubilet's approach to digital innovation is a clear example of how radical shifts in business models, supported by digital technologies, can lead to significant market success.

Makeup.ua, one of Ukraine's largest online beauty platforms, exemplifies how radical innovation can transform an industry. By focusing on a seamless digital shopping experience, fast delivery, and personalized product recommendations, the company quickly grew to serve 7 million customers across 14 countries. In 2020, Makeup.ua was valued at approximately \$100 million.

The company expanded into Poland by opening a showroom in Warsaw in 2023, further solidifying its presence in Europe. This strategy highlights how leveraging e-commerce innovations can drive international expansion and build strong customer loyalty.

Nova Poshta, Ukraine's leading logistics company, has utilized radical innovation to redefine the postal and delivery services market. With over 30,550 branches across Ukraine and operations in 16 European countries, Nova Poshta is revolutionizing logistics by integrating technologies such as drones and launching its own airline, Supernova Airlines, to handle international shipments. The company delivered over 412 million parcels in 2023, a 30% increase from the previous year, and is valued at more than €1 billion. This demonstrates how innovations in logistics and customer service can enable a company to scale internationally and maintain its competitive edge.

By applying radical innovation and disruptive positioning, Ukrainian companies such as Monobank, Makeup.ua, and Nova Poshta have shown how innovative strategies and products can reshape industries and drive businesses onto the global stage. Their success underscores the power of innovation to create new markets, meet evolving customer needs, and establish competitive advantages globally.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this study, I applied a comprehensive methodology based on the theoretical frameworks and research findings of renowned scholars, including Christensen C., Dzimba E., Andrew van der Poll J., Morizet D., Doyen A., Dairou V., Lebarbanchon L., Spinelli S., Chen H., Seecharan T., Feng C., Pawar A., and Ambedkar B. The methodology was designed to develop a reliable strategy for launching innovative products into the Polish market, with a specific focus on disruptive innovation.

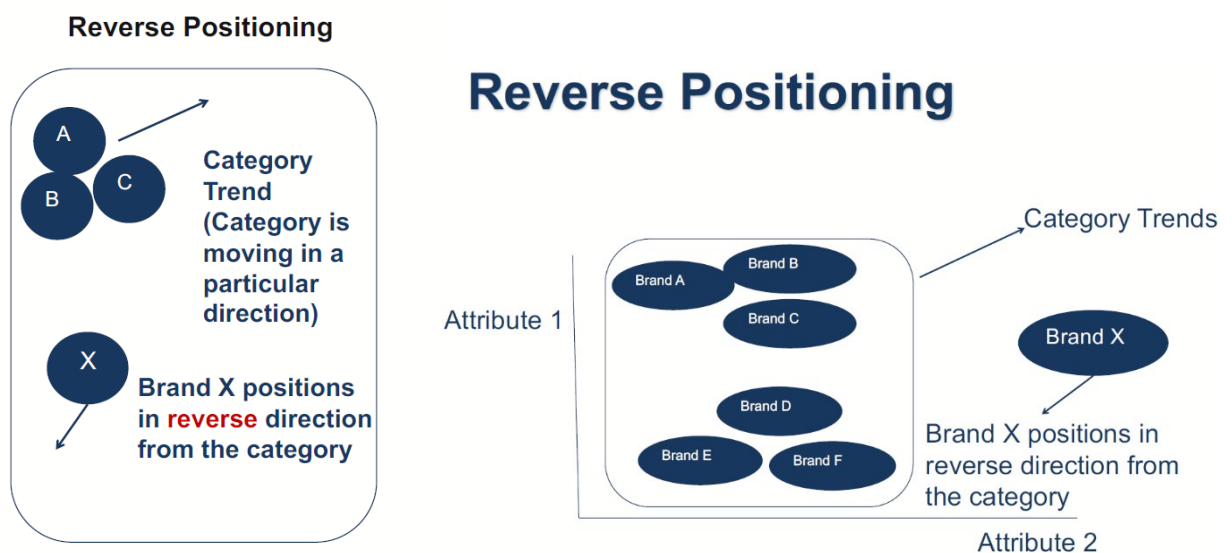
In order to build a such reliable strategy, I performed it within the following stages:

1. Launch of Innovative Products
2. Creating of Unique Value Proposition
3. Adoption of Unique Business Practices
4. Educational and Partnership Initiatives
5. Market Research
6. Competitors Analysis

In the process of developing my strategy, I apply various marketing theories and methodologies derived from lectures, presentations, books, and supplementary materials provided in the Marketing Strategy and Management course at AUK.

Methodology of Brand Positioning, Reverse Position

For developing such reliable strategy, I apply the Reverse Brand Positioning methodology. In entering the Polish market, brand positioning through disruptive innovation will play a central role in differentiating the company from established competitors, reverse positioning (Fig.2).



Source: Seigyoung Auh, Phd, "Global Marketing Strategy and Management" at ASU

Instead of directly competing with large, long-standing brands, the focus will be on identifying unmet needs and introducing innovative products and business practices to address these gaps. This approach allows for capturing market share without engaging in direct price or feature-based competition.

The strategic goal is to differentiate from the category as a whole by defying traditional norms and expectations. The target market consists of consumers disillusioned by certain aspects of the category identity, such as oversaturated product lines or outdated formulations that no longer meet modern standards of innovation. By breaking away from conventional industry trends, the brand aims to redefine consumer expectations and deliver a fresh perspective on what beauty products and services should offer.

Methodology of Adoption of New Products. Driving Market Adoption through Strategic Application of Innovation Theories

These frameworks provide insights into consumer behavior and offer strategies to overcome potential barriers to market acceptance. I consider three key theories—Speed of Adoption of New Products, Diffusion of Innovation, and Crossing the Chasm.

Speed of Adoption of New Products

The Speed of Adoption model highlights six critical factors (Fig.3) that influence the rate at which a new product is adopted by the market:

1. *Relative Advantage*. Refers to the degree to which the new product is perceived as superior to existing alternatives. Products with clear benefits, such as improved efficiency, better results, or lower costs, are adopted more quickly.
2. *Compatibility*. Measures how well the new product aligns with existing consumer values, lifestyles, and needs. The more seamlessly the product fits into daily routines, the faster it is adopted.
3. *Complexity*. Reflects how difficult the product is to understand or use. Simpler products with intuitive applications are adopted faster, while highly complex solutions may face resistance.
4. *Divisibility*. Refers to the extent to which the product can be tested on a small scale before full adoption. Providing trial versions or smaller product sizes reduces consumer hesitation.
5. *Observability*. Observability is the extent to which the product's benefits and results are visible to others. Products with clearly demonstrable results are adopted more quickly.
6. *Risk*. Refers to the perceived uncertainty or potential downsides of adopting the product, such as safety, cost, or effectiveness. Reducing risk encourages faster adoption.

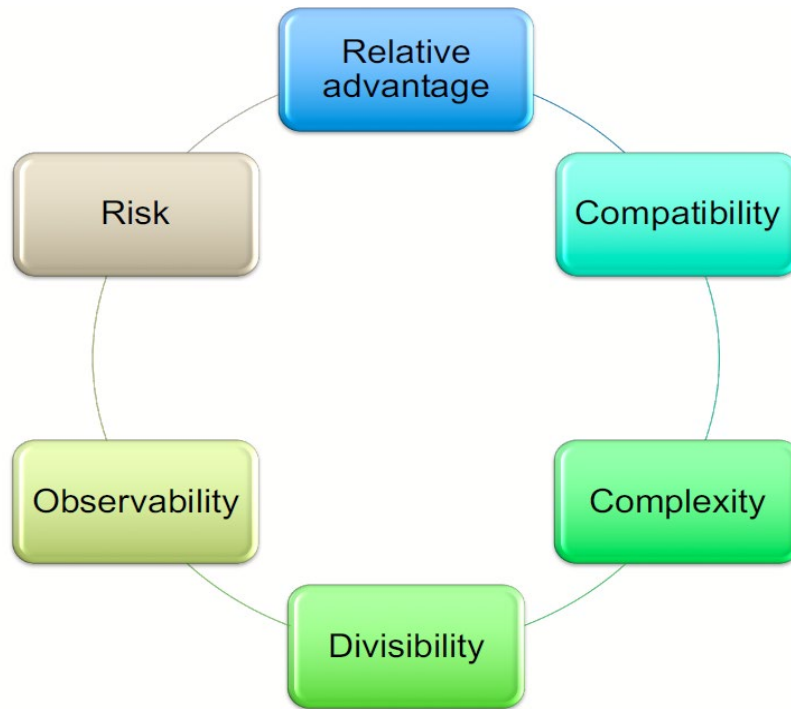


Figure 3. Factors influencing the speed of adoption of new products

Source: Seigyoung Auh, Phd, "Global Marketing Strategy and Management" at ASU

Diffusion of Innovation and Categories of Adopters

According to the Diffusion of Innovation theory, consumers can be segmented into five adopter categories (Fig.4-5).

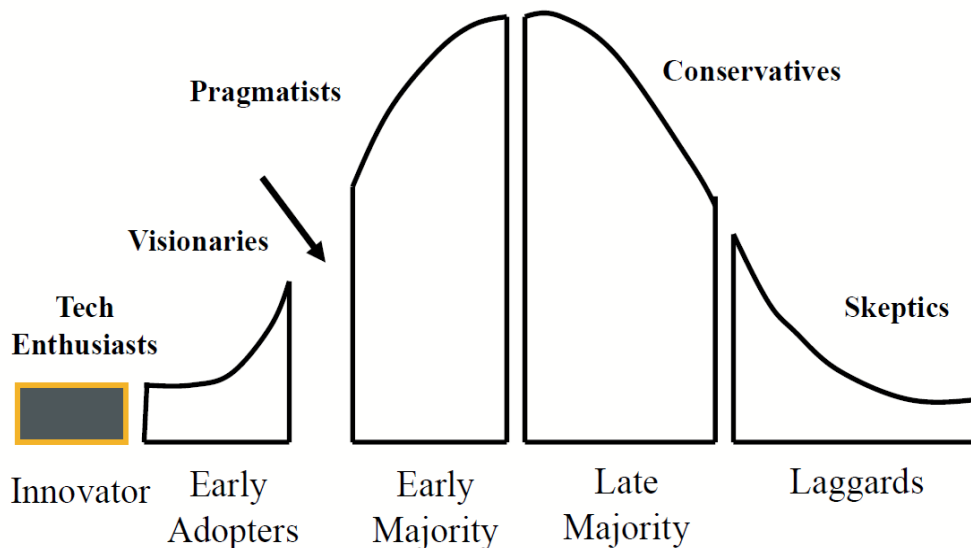


Figure 4. Category of adopters

Source: Seigyoung Auh, Phd, "Global Marketing Strategy and Management" at ASU

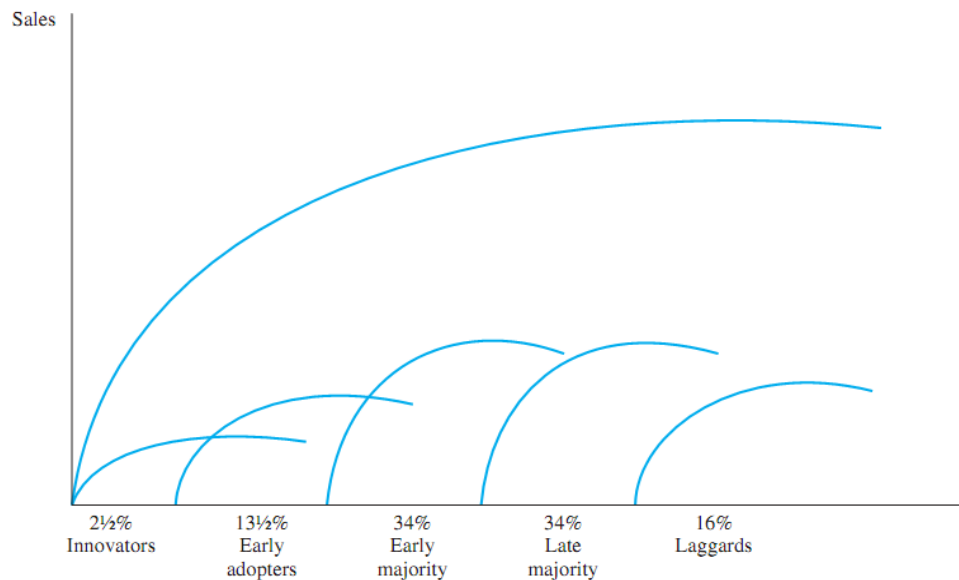


Figure 5. Adopter categories in the adoption of innovations

Source: Seigyoung Auh, Phd, "Global Marketing Strategy and Management" at ASU

Understanding these categories of adopters is essential for crafting effective marketing and adoption strategies tailored to each group's behavior and preferences.

1. *Innovators*. Represent the first segment to embrace new products, driven by curiosity and a willingness to take risks.

2. *Early Adopters*. Often viewed as thought leaders in their social circles, are motivated by quality, innovation, and prestige. This group seeks to stay ahead of trends and values being part of cutting-edge advancements.

3. *The Early Majority*. Tends to adopt products only after they observe proof of success and see clear benefits demonstrated by others.

4. *The Late Majority*. More cautious and often skeptical of new innovations. They require extensive reassurance and tend to adopt only after the product becomes mainstream.

5. *Laggards*. The last group to adopt innovations, are generally resistant to change and need significant reassurance to try something new.

Crossing the Chasm

One of the most critical challenges in introducing innovative products is crossing the chasm between early adopters and the early majority (Fig 6).

Failing to bridge the gap between early adopters and the early majority, often referred to as "the chasm," can result in stagnation or even the failure of a product or brand. Successfully crossing this gap requires a deliberate and strategic approach to gain the trust and confidence of a wider audience while maintaining the momentum generated by innovators and early adopters. The following steps are critical to ensure success and sustained growth.

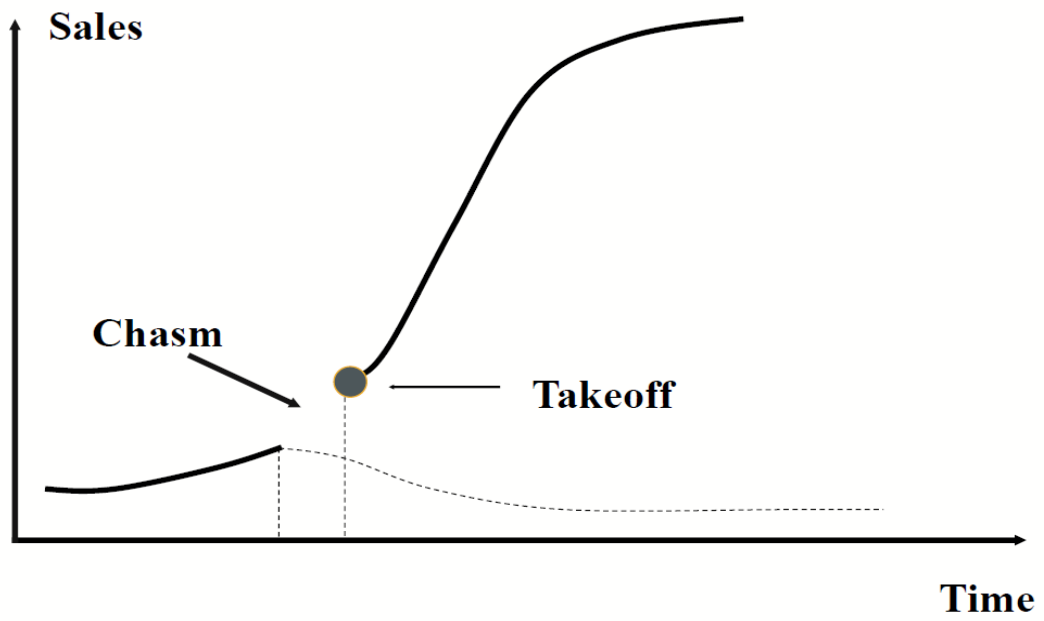


Figure 6. Crossing the chasm in the Diffusion of innovations

Source: Seigyoung Auh, Phd, "Global Marketing Strategy and Management" at ASU

CHAPTER 4. THE INNOVATIVE STRATEGY FOR LAUNCHING NEW PRODUCTS BY THE “INTER-COSMETICS” COMPANY IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

4.1. Implementation Plan

Main implementation objectives: expansion into international markets (e.g. the Polish market), increasing sales and strengthening the brand on foreign markets.

4.1.1 Market Entry Goals and Objectives

The primary goal is to establish a strong presence in the Polish market by offering not only disruptively innovative cosmetic products but also unique business practices that enhance customer engagement and build trust. The objectives set will help the brand to capture market niches that are currently not fully satisfied by existing players. Considering the aims and goals, the following objects were outlined:

1. Launch of Innovative Products.
2. Adoption of Unique Business Practices.
3. Educational and Partnership Initiatives.

Thus, the innovative product should be introduced with basic yet essential features, aimed at segments with lower levels of service. These products will appeal to customers looking for simple and affordable solutions, with both natural and innovative ingredients not offered by major brands. Moreover, implement creative approaches to customer engagement, including educational programs in interactive formats such as webinars, masterclasses, online skincare marathons, offline brunches on structured skin repair programs and the use of appropriate products. Furthermore, it is necessary to collaborate with local Polish beauticians and influencers to host joint events where they can share their experience and knowledge. In addition, these partners will disseminate this information to their customers, expanding the reach and trust in the brand.

Unique Value Proposition 1.

Therefore, for our strategy we use base of mix Innovations + Collaboration + Education.

In 2024, Inter-Cosmetics successfully completed a project to create, develop, manufacture and launch the latest innovative cosmetic products based on plant exosomes in Ukraine. The product is quite inexpensive and easy to use in the professional segment of cosmetology, which makes it affordable and accessible

The project was complex, as it went from idea, product creation to actual distribution in Ukraine. The main stages of the project were:

1. Research of trends and demand of the Ukrainian cosmetics market.

2. Selection and approval of an innovative product, analysis of similar products.
3. Search for a supplier of ingredients and a manufacturer of cosmetics.
4. Approval and coordination with the product manufacturer
5. Production and import of the product. Research and optimization of the processes of the company's branches: import, logistics, training center, marketing, distribution and customer relations in the process of introducing such a product
6. Analyzing the consumer response after the product is introduced to the Ukrainian market.

As a result, Inter-Cosmetics quickly received a lot of positive feedback from customers and became the leading company in Ukraine with an affordable and innovative product with plant exosomes that was not previously present on the market. By obtaining new research on this topic, the company disseminates this knowledge, educates and provides new opportunities for the use of exosomes in cosmetology as a modern paradigm of safety and effectiveness.

Today, Inter-Cosmetics is one of the pioneers in the Ukrainian cosmetics market using products with plant exosomes. Today, the project is quite profitable and will remain so in the near future.

This product with plant exosomes is also planned for distribution in Poland. Moreover, the company already has 6 products that form a line of products of this type with a driving marketing concept (Fig. 7 and 8).

Similar projects with the same action plan can be implemented in new markets, including Poland.



Figure 7. Examples of innovative products with plant Exosomes:
Cream/Mask/Eye Serum/Face Serum

Source: 2024, www.inter-cosmetics.com



Figure 8. Examples of innovative products with plant Exosomes: Mesotherapy products in vials for microneedling therapy

Source: 2024, www.inter-cosmetics.com

Unique Value Proposition 2.

Education as a core element of Inter-Cosmetics' strategy

Education is a cornerstone of Inter-Cosmetics' strategy, ensuring the effective distribution of professional products through mandatory training. The company has hosted an impressive number of training events over the years, holding 864 offline seminars in 2018 and 616 in 2019. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of online technologies, the company has shifted its focus to digital education formats such as webinars (Fig. 9 and 10), marathons, and conferences.

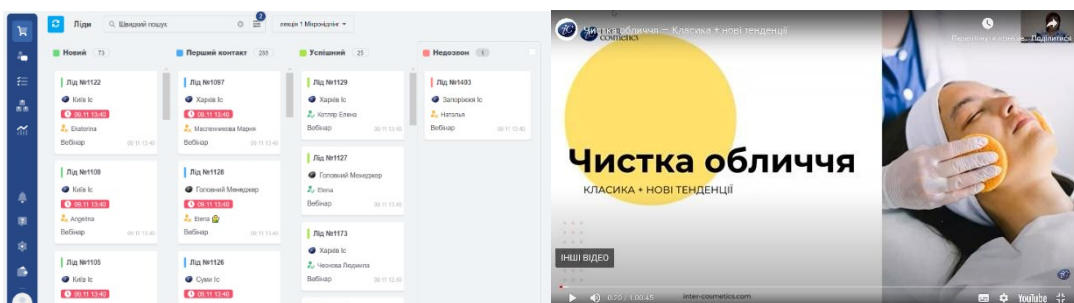


Figure 9. The example of implementation KeyCRM and of webinar, 2024

Source: 2024, www.inter-cosmetics.online

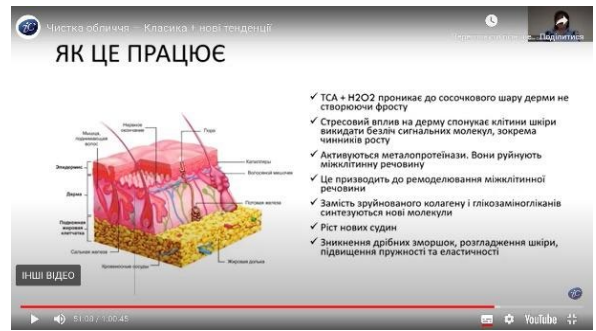
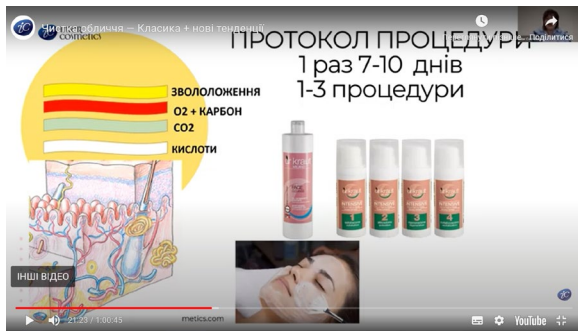


Figure 10. The example of webinars, 2024

Source: 2024, www.inter-cosmetics.online

To support its educational initiatives, Inter-Cosmetics leverages modern tools, including an educational platform like Canvas at AUK. For client registration, an AI-powered chatbot is utilized, ensuring seamless enrollment and communication. Additionally, the Ukrainian CRM system “Key CRM” is employed to manage customer data and preferences effectively, streamlining the flow of information (Fig.9).

Due to the ongoing war, offline events have become less frequent and are not conducted in all regions. However, a new approach to fostering client loyalty has emerged—the “branch” format (Fig. 11).

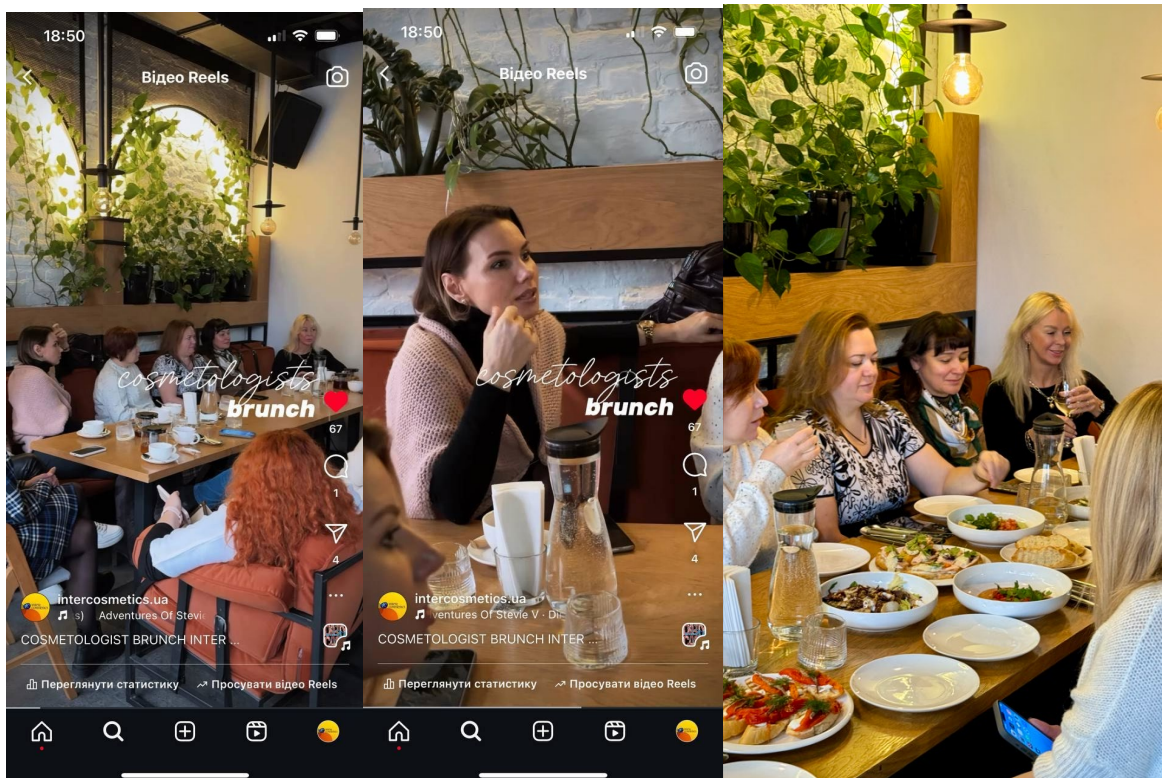


Figure 11. Branch-format of education, 2024, November, Inter-Cosmetics/SOL bistro

Source: www.instagram.com/intercosmetics.ua/

This innovative offline meeting style combines a welcoming atmosphere, unique cuisine, a community of dedicated professionals, and engaging lectures to create a memorable and enriching experience for participants.

4.1.2 Stages Of Implementation Using Disruptive Innovations

Market research and identification of opportunities

At the beginning it is crucial to analyze and specify of the Polish cosmetology market in relation to the Ukrainian one.

The cosmetology market in Ukraine is developed on par with global trends in this field. In this regard, Ukraine can serve as a benchmark for Poland, where cosmetology services are presented on a much smaller scale.

Nowadays, more and more people turn to cosmetology to address various aesthetic concerns related to the face and body. Demand drives competition, quality, and diversity. In Ukraine, the beauty market is highly advanced, and Ukrainians are accustomed to receiving the best services, top-notch products, and cutting-edge techniques quickly and efficiently. This development is partly due to a more flexible legislative framework regulating the activities of professionals in this field.

On one hand, stricter legislation ensures better oversight, reducing the risks associated with poor-quality, unprofessional, or unsafe services. However, excessive regulation creates barriers to market growth, decreases the number of market participants, and consequently limits the range of available services while increasing the cost of products and services—making some of them unaffordable for the average client.

On the other hand, a more lenient legislative framework allows for a larger number of market participants, fostering competition that generates a truly high-quality and accessible offering of goods and services for the mass market. In this scenario, it's not the rule of "demand creates supply" that applies, but rather the reverse: supply stimulates demand, according to the marketing concept of "driving-marketing".

When compared to Poland, there are significantly fewer top-tier beauty spaces overall. According to Dr. Kateryna Verzhbytska, an aesthetician at the Leo Beauty Club in Warsaw, "When we opened our first salon in Warsaw, we felt it. Clients came in and were amazed that a salon offering classic nail and hairdressing services could also have a professional cosmetology studio equipped with the latest innovations. In Ukraine, this is the norm. In Poland, it's more of a rarity."

For me, as the owner of a company planning to expand into new markets, including Poland, this creates additional opportunities and horizons for sales, as well as a vast field for development and work.

Identification the capacity of the Polish cosmetology market

It's necessary to analyze the Polish market, focusing on areas where disruptive innovation can create significant value. This includes evaluating consumer needs, trends, and gaps in the current offerings to understand where unique, cost-effective, and innovative products can attract new customers.

To analyze the Polish cosmetology market, it is ideal to use statistical data, data from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other registers. At the same time, the specifics of this business are such that a significant part of working professionals are in the shadows, are not registered as a business entity or are not included in the registers for other reasons. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to determine the exact number of potential clients. Ordering detailed statistics from various analytical centers is quite expensive and time-consuming.

To fill this gap, the company Inter-Cosmetics uses another, its own method of calculating the number of potential clients. Over 14 years of practical experience in this industry, the company has determined a simple formula for calculating the number of cosmetologists. There are 1-2 working cosmetologists per 1000 people. This formula is quite accurate and correlates with available statistics on the Internet.

For example, Oleksandr Bashura, president of the All-Ukrainian public organization "Association of Cosmetologists and Aromalogists", Doctor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Professor and Head of the Department of Cosmetology and Aromalogy at the National Pharmaceutical University, stated that as of 2021, 90-120 thousand practicing cosmetologists worked in Ukraine, including home workers who illegally provide cosmetology services.

If we calculate according to the formula of 1-2 specialists per 1 000 population, then if in 2021 there were 41 million people living in Ukraine, then the number of working cosmetologists was 41 000 – 82 000. 82 000 correlates with 90 000.

by Premier-Expo - the international exhibition operator in Ukraine and the organizer of the largest beauty exhibitions in Ukraine Inter-Charm Ukraine and Pro-Beauty has done own statistic in 2021 year and counted around 60 000 practical cosmetologists that correlates with numbers above.

According to statistical data, the population of Poland at the end of 2023 is 37.6 million people. Therefore, the number of working cosmetologists can be 37 000 – 74 000. Estimating that the cosmetology market in Poland is more regulated by legal acts, you can take 40, 00 working specialists as a basis and target this number.

Outlining the core competitors at the market

However, the Polish market has a considerable number of companies that are either direct or indirect competitors of mine. Moreover, since the onset of the full-scale war in Ukraine, a significant number of Ukrainian companies have opened their branches in EU countries, including Poland, and now represent direct competition in addition to Polish firms. As a result, the Polish market is undergoing a transformation driven by the active marketing efforts of both domestic and international companies, including Ukrainian ones. Table 1 contains the results of the main competitors – Polish manufacturers and distributors: Clarena; Denova Pro (Ziaja); Arkana; Bielenda.

Table 1. The results of the main competitors – Polish manufacturers and distributors: Clarena; Denova Pro (Ziaja); Arkana; Bielenda

COMPANIES	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Clarena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse product portfolio serving both professional and retail markets. • Established reputation and strong presence in the Polish beauty industry. • Offers a combination of cosmetics and professional equipment, providing comprehensive solutions for beauty professionals. • Regular training programs effectively promote the correct usage of their products and equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-reliance on the domestic market, limiting international expansion. • Difficulty in standing out in a saturated and competitive market.
Denova Pro (Ziaja)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denova Pro operates under the Ziaja brand, known for its affordable skincare products, and includes a professional cosmetic line designed for beauty specialists. • Strong brand recognition in Poland. • Affordable pricing strategy, making products accessible to a broad audience. • Extensive distribution network within Poland and internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived as lower quality due to mass-market positioning. • Limited focus on premium product segments, which may reduce appeal to high-end consumers. • Denova Pro does not conduct professional training programs, which is a significant disadvantage in a market where hands-on education builds trust and promotes effective product use. • Lack of professional engagement may hinder the brand's ability to establish strong relationships with beauty specialists.
Arkana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specializes in innovative, advanced dermo-cosmetics. • Builds strong relationships with skincare professionals and dermatologists. • Occasionally conducts training programs targeted at professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited brand awareness compared to larger competitors in the market. • Trainings are infrequent, occurring only 1–2 times a year, which limits their impact as a consistent driver of sales and brand awareness • Missed opportunities to position the brand as a leader in professional education.
Bielenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive product range with a focus on natural ingredients. • Training is a significant driver of product adoption and brand loyalty. • Bielenda places a strong emphasis on professional training as a core component of its strategy, conducting regular seminars and workshops for beauty specialists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential market saturation due to a broad product portfolio. • Challenges in maintaining consistent product quality across all lines.

Source: developed by the author.

The companies listed in Table 1 have been established in the market for a considerable time, and their products are well-known to Polish consumers. This presents a competitive landscape where direct competition with such entrenched and recognized brands may not be the most effective strategy for market entry. Instead, a successful market entry should focus on identifying areas where innovations in products or business practices can address unmet consumer needs. By targeting these gaps, it is possible to secure a foothold in the market without directly competing with large, established brands. This approach allows for differentiation and creates opportunities to build a unique position within the Polish beauty industry.

One of the key marketing weaknesses of these competitors is their overly extensive product portfolios. Many of these companies continue to produce older products that have lost their innovative appeal due to advancements in cosmetic chemistry and changing consumer preferences. These products, which may have been groundbreaking at the time of their launch, are now less relevant but remain in production, adding to an already overloaded assortment whenever new products are introduced. This creates an opportunity for entering the market with a lean, focused product range that aligns with current trends and consumer demands, emphasizing innovation and relevance.

Brand Positioning: Reverse Position. Results of implementation for Inter-Cosmetics

Execution requires a bold willingness to confront competitive trends by challenging consumer expectations in some areas while exceeding them in others. For example, instead of maintaining an extensive but outdated product portfolio like many competitors, the brand will focus on a small range of innovative, science-driven offerings. This selective approach emphasizes quality, efficacy, and relevance, ensuring that every product resonates with contemporary consumer needs.

Nowadays, the Inter-Cosmetics company assortment includes six innovative products with exosomes, which can serve as a strong starting point in market entry. After analyzing the competitors, none of the mentioned companies has similar products. This unique advantage positions the brand to stand out in the Polish market by offering cutting-edge solutions that address unmet consumer demands and set a new standard in the beauty and aesthetic medicine industry.

Ongoing education as part of positioning

As outlined earlier, education is a key component of Inter-Cosmetics' strategy. Alongside widely attended webinars, the company organizes specialized online schools dedicated to specific topics and problem solutions in the beauty and aesthetic medicine field. For example, schools focus on acne treatment, hyperpigmentation management, and microneedling techniques. These programs feature top instructors from the company, leveraging the latest advancements in cosmetic science and derma cosmetology.

The educational process typically begins with a series of free online lectures accessible to participants after prior authentication and registration. These are followed by paid practical

workshops available both online and offline, offering hands-on experience with the company's products. To further enhance its expertise and reputation, Inter-Cosmetics actively participates in Ukrainian and international congresses on aesthetic medicine, staying at the forefront of industry trends and innovations.

This continuous learning approach generates a steady influx of professionals eager to enhance their skills and knowledge. During these trainings, the company not only delivers valuable insights but also integrates and promotes its product range, embedding them into procedural protocols. Each topic is supported by a comprehensive set of protocols that often include a wide variety of products, showcasing the versatility and effectiveness of the company's portfolio.

The advantages of this educational format include accessibility, the relevance of topics, and the widespread applicability of the skills and products. For instance, in December 2024, Inter-Cosmetics successfully organized a microneedling school (focused on controlled micro-injuries to stimulate new collagen formation). Over 500 participants registered for the program, many of whom continue their education while purchasing the company's latest innovative products.

4.1.3 Tactical Actions For Launching The Innovative Product To Global Market

Driving market adoption through strategic application of innovation theories.

Results of implementation for Inter-cosmetics.

To successfully introduce and establish innovative products such as plant-based exosome products in the Polish market, it is crucial to leverage established innovation and adoption theories, described above in "Chapter 3. Methodology of the study". These frameworks provide insights into consumer behavior and offer strategies to overcome potential barriers to market acceptance. Three key theories: (1) Speed of Adoption of New Products; (2) Diffusion of Innovation; (3) Crossing the Chasm—will guide the tactical actions.

(1) Speed of Adoption of New Products

Relative Advantage. The exosome products provide clear benefits over traditional options, such as non-invasive applications and scientifically proven efficacy in anti-aging treatments. Highlighting these advantages in marketing materials will create strong value propositions for consumers.

Compatibility. The products with exosomes align with current trends in sustainable beauty and non-invasive cosmetic solutions, ensuring they integrate seamlessly with existing consumer expectations and routines.

Complexity. To reduce perceived complexity, educational efforts will simplify the science behind exosomes. Easy-to-understand content, programs including infographics and video tutorials, educational materials and training will be used to explain product benefits and application methods.

Divisibility. Offering trial-sized versions of the exosome products, samples allow customers to test them with minimal risk, increasing their confidence and likelihood of adoption.

Observability. Sharing visible, tangible results through before-and-after case studies, feedbacks, and user-generated content on social media will make the product benefits highly observable to potential customers.

Risk. Will be mitigated through guarantees, customer support, and transparent communication about product safety, clinical data and effectiveness.

(2) Diffusion of Innovation and Categories of Adopters

Innovators. Engaging this group involves connecting with early adopters such as beauty influencers, dermatologists, and forward-thinking cosmetologists. These individuals serve as trendsetters, and their endorsement creates initial momentum for the product. Providing these innovators with exclusive access, personalized samples, and opportunities to share their experiences on social media can amplify the product's visibility and desirability.

Early Adopters. To capture their interest, targeted strategies will include hosting exclusive webinars, educational events, and one-on-one consultations that highlight the advanced science, unique benefits, and sustainability aspects of the products. Building a sense of exclusivity and offering premium experiences will encourage early adopters to champion the brand.

The Early Majority. For this group, the endorsement of early adopters is critical. Marketing strategies will focus on showcasing real-life testimonials, compelling case studies, and before-and-after results. Sharing visible outcomes through social proof on digital platforms, influencer content, and media campaigns will build trust and drive adoption among this segment.

The Late Majority. Reaching this group will involve leveraging mass media channels, running broad-based educational campaigns, and utilizing word-of-mouth recommendations. Highlighting widespread product usage and endorsements from trusted sources will address their skepticism and encourage them to adopt the product.

Laggards. Marketing efforts for this segment will focus on the product's established success, long-term reliability, and affordability. Promotional discounts, guarantees, and testimonials from trusted sources will be utilized to alleviate their concerns and gradually bring them into the fold.

By understanding the unique characteristics and motivations of each adopter category, a step-by-step marketing approach can be developed to maximize product adoption and build a loyal customer base across all segments.

(3) Crossing the Chasm

Building Trust is the cornerstone of crossing the chasm. The early majority tends to be more skeptical and requires tangible proof of a product's efficacy and value before making a purchase. Providing reliable clinical data, expert endorsements from trusted professionals like cosmetologists

dermatologists, doctors from aesthetic medicine and visible, proven results are essential for addressing their concerns. These efforts should be reinforced through testimonials from early adopters and real-world case studies to demonstrate the product’s reliability and effectiveness.

Scalable Solutions are equally important to ensure accessibility and affordability for a broader audience. Competitive pricing strategies, such as tiered pricing or introductory offers, can help overcome cost-related barriers. Additionally, ensuring widespread product availability through multiple channels, including physical stores, online platforms, and partnerships with established retailers, will make it easier for the early majority to access the product. Offering convenient purchasing options such as subscriptions or bulk discounts can further incentivize adoption.

Community Engagement plays a pivotal role in fostering trust and long-term loyalty among users. Establishing an active, engaged community through interactive online forums, social media groups, and virtual or in-person events can create a sense of belonging among customers. These platforms provide opportunities for users to share their experiences, ask questions, and connect with brand representatives, strengthening their relationship with the product and brand. Hosting live Q&A sessions, webinars with experts, or user-generated content campaigns will further reinforce this sense of community and encourage participation.

By focusing on these steps – building trust, creating scalable solutions, and fostering community engagement – brands can effectively navigate the challenging transition from early adopters to the early majority. This approach not only ensures the product’s success in crossing the chasm but also establishes a strong foundation for long-term growth and market leadership.

As a marketing executive at Motorola once said, “Our biggest competitor isn’t IBM or Sony. It is the way in which people currently do things.” Successfully crossing the chasm means not only positioning the product as an innovative solution but also convincing the market to shift from established habits and embrace a new standard.

Practical application to Inter-Cosmetics

Using the theories outlined above, the introduction of plant-based exosome products will follow a carefully structured and phased approach to ensure successful market entry, address adoption challenges, and achieve sustained growth. This strategic framework leverages targeted engagement with different adopter categories to build momentum and overcome potential barriers to widespread acceptance.

The Initial Phase focuses on launching the products by targeting Innovators and Early Adopters, who are pivotal for creating early traction. Innovators, driven by their curiosity and willingness to experiment, will be engaged through exclusive professional networks, scientific conferences, and personalized outreach. Early Adopters, who value innovation and are influential within their social and professional circles, will be approached through targeted training sessions and

partnerships with beauty influencers, dermatologists, and cosmetologists. This phase emphasizes creating excitement around the product and fostering trust by demonstrating its cutting-edge benefits, sustainability, and effectiveness.

The Scaling Phase builds on the momentum generated by early users by leveraging their feedback and testimonials to appeal to the Early Majority. This group typically looks for observable and relatable proof of a product's success before adopting it. Compelling marketing content, including real-world case studies, before-and-after visuals, and user testimonials, will be developed to highlight the product's visible benefits and practical applications. Additionally, efforts will be made to ensure that the product is accessible through multiple channels, including e-commerce platforms and retail stores, making it convenient for the Early Majority to purchase and try the product.

The Mass Adoption Phase focuses on reaching the Late Majority and Laggards, who are typically more resistant to change and skeptical of new innovations. For these groups, the messaging will emphasize the product's proven effectiveness, safety, and widespread acceptance by earlier adopters. Marketing strategies will include large-scale educational campaigns, endorsements from trusted experts, and promotions highlighting the product's long-term benefits. The objective during this phase is to eliminate hesitation and encourage adoption by showcasing the product's reliability and success in meeting diverse customer needs.

This phased, strategic approach ensures that the plant-based exosome products not only achieve a successful market launch but also effectively bridge the critical adoption gaps between different consumer groups. By systematically addressing the motivations and concerns of each adopter category, the strategy paves the way for sustained growth, widespread market penetration, and long-term brand loyalty.

4.1.4 Digital Marketing: Leveraging E-Commerce For Brand Visibility

To successfully promote innovative products in the Polish market, leveraging local online platforms and marketplaces will be crucial. Popular platforms such as *allegro.pl* and *makeup.pl* will serve as key channels for introducing and promoting Inter-Cosmetics' professional product lines to end consumers directly. By strategically offering a limited selection of high-quality products, such as products based on plant exosomes, the company can build brand recognition and generate interest in its cutting-edge solutions.

This approach is closely aligned with the factor Observability from the Speed of Adoption of New Products model. By showcasing products on trusted and widely used e-commerce platforms, Inter-Cosmetics ensures that potential customers can easily see and evaluate product benefits through detailed descriptions, reviews, and ratings. Observability plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer decisions, as the visibility of positive results encourages adoption among a broader audience.

Furthermore, targeting end consumers through digital marketing campaigns has an indirect yet powerful impact on professionals. When customers are well-informed and demand specific innovative solutions, professionals are motivated to adopt these products in their own practices to meet client expectations. This creates a virtuous cycle where increased awareness among consumers drives professionals to choose Inter-Cosmetics as their trusted supplier of innovative products.

Additionally, targeted digital marketing campaigns on these platforms will emphasize the unique advantages of Inter-Cosmetics' products, such as non-invasive applications with advanced formulations. These efforts will help establish the brand's reputation as an innovator in the beauty and aesthetic medicine industry, while creating a compelling and accessible entry point in the Polish market. By simultaneously engaging end consumers and influencing professionals, Inter-Cosmetics builds a strong foundation for sustained market growth.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that innovative approaches to global marketing, grounded in theories of Disruptive Innovation, Diffusion of Innovation, and the Speed of Adoption of New Products, provide a powerful framework for successful international expansion. For "Inter-Cosmetics," entering the Polish market offers unique opportunities to introduce cutting-edge products, such as plant-based exosome treatments, that address unmet consumer needs and set new industry standards.

A key finding of the study is that differentiation through innovation—both in product offerings and business practices—enables companies to bypass direct competition with established market leaders. Strategic initiatives, including digital marketing, partnerships, and consumer education, are essential for building brand recognition and trust. The project also contributed to strengthening the company's image and enhancing profitability in both the short and long term by establishing a clear market entry strategy and focusing on targeted consumer needs.

The analysis of competitors revealed gaps in the Polish market, particularly in product portfolios and outdated formulations. By leveraging its innovative product line and expertise in professional education, "Inter-Cosmetics" can position itself as a disruptive force in the beauty industry.

This research holds significant relevance and novelty in the field of marketing, as it provides practical insights into the application of innovation theories for entering and establishing a foothold in competitive international markets. The focus on combining innovative products with disruptive business practices offers a fresh perspective for businesses aiming to navigate changing global trends.

The well-structured strategy that emphasizes innovation, consumer-focused education, and targeted marketing campaigns will allow "Inter-Cosmetics" to successfully cross market adoption barriers, achieve sustainable growth, and establish itself as a leader in the Polish beauty sector.

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