Let's Go to CEE!

*Playbook by Proficio



proficio

Looking to expand into the CEE region?

You've come to the right place!

Since the inception of the Proficio Group we've striven to connect. For ten years we have been successfully establishing a direct link between marketing and business consultancy. And right now we are building a bridge between the DACH and CEE regions.

How do we do it? By utilising peak performance with a focus on efficiency and data we bring evidence-based and results-driven marketing to the table. We help companies grow through establishing and executing strategies and expanding into new markets.

That's where the playbook you are reading right now comes into play. We've written it as a tour guide for your journey towards success in a region you may not have much experience with. That may seem daunting and too difficult to access... so let us make this task easier for you and show you the specifics of the CEE region and its countries!

So let's dive in!

Contents

Introduction		Czechia	
The First Step on Our Journey	— 5	Market Specifics	— 24
Getting Started with CEE	– 7	Shopping Habits	— 25
Let's Talk Demographics	— 8	Device Preferences	— 26
Some E-com Insights	— 9	Online Sales Channels	— 27
And Even More Demographics	— 10	Price Comparison Platforms	— 28
prolnsight for the CEE Region	— 11	prolnsight for Czechia	_ 29
Poland		Slovakia	
	44		0.0
Market Specifics	— 14	Market Specifics	— 32
Shopping Habits	— 15	Shopping Habits	— 33
Payment Methods	— 16	Online Sales Channels	— 34
Polish Shopping Baskets		Price Comparison Platforms	— 35
and Basket Values	— 17	prolnsight for Slovakia	— 36
Selection of E-stores in Poland	— 18	p. c., c., g., c., c., c., c., c., c., c., c., c., c	
Online Sales Channels	— 19		
Price Comparison Platforms	— 20		
prolnsight for Poland	— 21		

Proficio Group

That's Us — 40
What Numbers We Bring to the Table — 41
Who Are Our Clients — 44
How Can We Help You Expand to CEE — 45
How Do We Define Success? — 50

Proficio Case Study

Sanitino's Entry into the
European Market with Proficio — 51

Get in Touch! — 55

Compiled and analysed by the Proficio team. Rights of third parties are preserved.













The First Step on Our Journey

As you probably know from any trip you've ever taken, a key part of preparing for a journey is knowing the country as a whole. Before you start planning out the specific hotspots you will be visiting, it's always good to look at the bigger picture.

And what does the bigger picture entail in this case?

Go CEE for yourself!













Let's Talk Demographics

Population, GDP in PPS

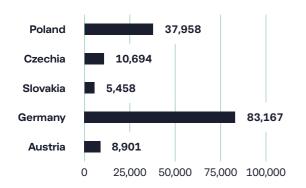
Let's be honest, the three countries together are about 65% of the size of the German market.

Average annual GDP per capita is also lower in the Central European region in comparison to Germany and Austria.

However, prices in advertising systems are also lower and this can be reflected in the cost per new customer.

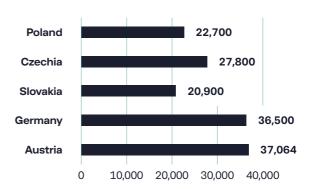
Population

(in thousands)



GDP per capita (PPS)

(in EUR)



Source: Eurostat

8 Introduction

Some E-com Insights

E-commerce share in retail sales

Poland and the Czech Republic have a 9.5% and 17% share of e-commerce compared to total retail and Slovak e-commerce is at 8.8%.

With e-commerce shares still trending upwards, there is still room to increase market share.



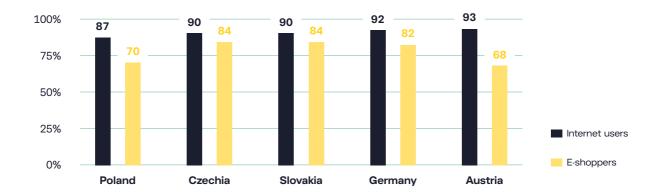
And Even More Demographics

Share of active internet users and e-shoppers

Especially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, there is a large proportion of active internet users who shop online primarily – which is on the same level as in Germany and remarkably higher than in Austria.

In Poland, 70% of users shop online, ahead of the Austrian market.

As the shares have an increasing tendency the market becomes ever more relevant for e-commerce players.



Source: © 2022 European E-commerce Report Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences & Ecommerce Europe

10 Introduction

prolnsight for the CEE Region



Even though
the CEE
representatives
cannot compare to
Germany in terms
of market size,
the advertising
costs can more
than make up for it.



Internet coverage for the three countries is very similar to Austria or Germany, going from 90% upwards.



Almost everyone who uses the internet is shopping online with ratios comparable or even higher than the one in Austria.

Do you want to get more proinsights?





Poland

Traditional yet thriving and dynamic!

Market Specifics

36.7 million internet users (YoY +8.5%)

In Poland, users search almost exclusively on Google, followed by Bing with a 2.9% share.

YouTube has the most users, with 27.5 million users, almost 3/4 of the population, that can be potentially reached by advertising. Facebook is the second largest with 17.8 million users, most of whom also use Messenger, followed by Instagram and TikTok.

Users are still more likely to use computers and laptops than mobile devices for online shopping, but the share of mobile devices is growing. Compared to other markets, users use tablets for online shopping to a relatively high extent.

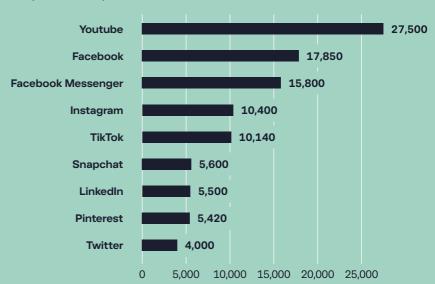
10.5% of people use voice assistants like Siri or Google Assistant to search the internet.

Search engines



Social media users 2023

(in thousands)



Source: Datereportal.com, Kepios

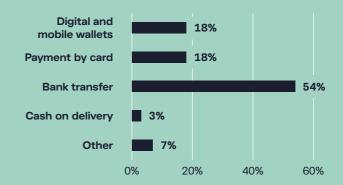
Shopping Habits

When shopping online, customers most often pay by bank transfer (54%). Direct card payment and mobile digital wallets have the same share of 18%.

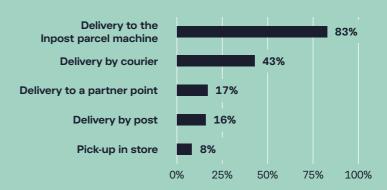
Customers prefer to pick up goods from Inpost parcel machines, which have the largest share among these boxes. 83% of people use this option.

43% of customers have goods delivered to their address by a courier.

The most common payment methods



The most common shipping options



15

Sources: ecommercenews.eu / research by Gemius, www.ppro.com (2022), © StatCounter 2023

Payment Methods

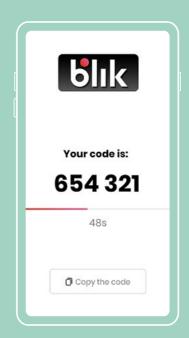
Blik is a purely Polish alternative to mobile phone payments via NFC technology with more than 14 million active users.

It works similarly to Google and Apple Pay, payments are confirmed by a Blik code.

Number of transactions

(in millions)





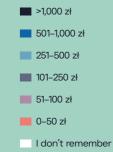
Sources: Statista.com (2022), Blik.com (2023)

Polish Shopping Baskets and Basket Values

Customers spend the largest amounts (more than EUR 108 / PLN 500 per order) on electronics.

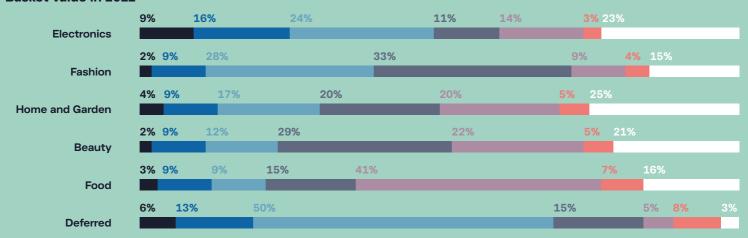
The most frequent spenders in the category are from 101 to 500 PLN (EUR 22–108), it is the largest share among all categories.

Deferred payment option increases potential order size.



17

Basket value in 2022

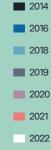


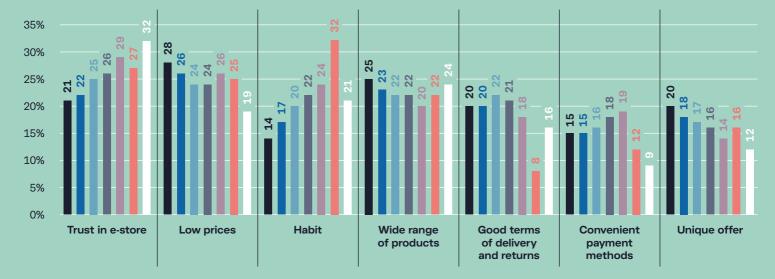
Source: Decade of Polish e-commerce (2013-2023, e-Chamber Report)

Selection of E-stores in Poland

The motivation to buy from a particular e-shop changes over time, as customer trust is becoming ever more important and so does the product range.

Conversely, prices or special offers are becoming less important.





Source: Decade of Polish e-commerce (2013-2023, e-Chamber Report)

Online Sales Channels

Monthly visits

220.4 M

Allegro.pl

- The largest online marketplace in Poland, 9th biggest marketplace in the world
- Offers a wide range of products, including electronics, fashion, home and garden, beauty, and more

Monthly visits

8,596

eMAG.pl

- A fast-growing online marketplace in Poland
- Offers a wide range of products, including electronics, fashion, home and garden, and more

Marketplaces

One of the world's largest marketplaces is Poland's Allegro. The website has over 200 million visits every month. 14 million people in Poland shop on Allegro at least once a year.

OLX.pl is the second largest marketplace with around 100 million users per month.

In the list we see the largest marketplaces in specific markets.

Monthly visits

100.0 M

OLX.pl

- A classified ads website and online marketplace
- Offers a wide range of products, including cars, real estate, electronics, fashion, and more
- Provides users with a messaging system to communicate with sellers

Monthly visits

4.4 M

Morele.net

- An online marketplace specialising in electronics and IT products
- Offers a wide range of products, including computers, laptops, smartphones, and more
- Allows both individuals and businesses to sell products

19

Source: Similarweb (2023)

Price Comparison Platforms

In Poland, the most used is Ceneo.pl, Skapiec. pl or Nokaut.pl with 23 million users shopping on Ceneo in 2022.

Skapiec and Nokaut can be considered relevant for product sales, Radar.pl and others have a very low share.

Monthly visits 51.1 M

Ceneo.pl

- 72% traffic share in the segment
- A price comparison website and online marketplace
- Offers a wide range of products, including electronics, home and garden, fashion, and more
- Allows users to compare prices and features of products from different sellers
- Provides user reviews and ratings to help buyers make informed decisions

Monthly visits

3.7 M

Skapiec.pl Second biggest

- price comparison platforms in Poland
- A wide portfolio of products from all major product categories

Monthly visits 178.849 nokaut.pl

Smaller price comparison platforms

Other relevant comparison sites, such as Nokaut.pl, operate with a smaller market share

Source: Similarweb (2023)

prolnsight for Poland

Let's be honest here – Poland should play a pivotal role in your expansion into the CEE region. You should make the entry into this ever growing market your top priority. Even though
the stereotype
states that Poles
value low prices
above everything,
their commercial
behavior is
slowly getting
more customer
experience
focused.

Poland is the home of Allegro as the marketplace has a set-intostone position with its 20 million customers making it a surefire option for your e-commerce.

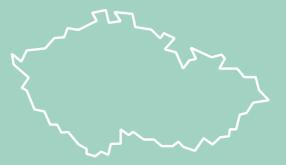
Do you want to get more proinsights?





Czechia

Progressive and entrepreneurial



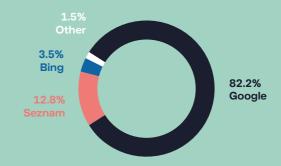
Market Specifics

Czechs primarily search on Google (82.2%), but Seznam (12.8%) with its Sklik advertising system (search and exclusive display network) still has a large, yet declining presence.

Bing has a growing share, with its Ads being one of the high-converting channels.

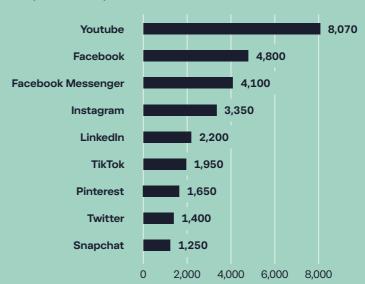
YouTube is the largest social network in terms of users. More than 8 million people use it and advertising can reach up to 77% of the population. The second largest is Facebook, which is used by almost 5 million Czechs and most of them also have Messenger. The professional network LinkedIn is used by 2.2 million people, which is above average in the region, and offers the opportunity to run successful HR and B2B campaigns.

Search engines



Social media users 2023

(in thousands)



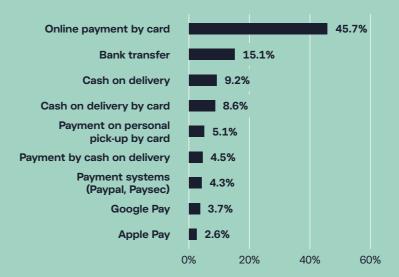
Source: Datereportal.com, Kepios

Shopping Habits

Customers most often pay by credit card (45.7%) and use bank transfer in 15% of cases. Cash on delivery is still relatively strongly represented, but the share is decreasing. On the other hand, payments via Apple pay and Google pay are growing.

Delivery services to partner stores are very popular in the Czech Republic, with a 42% share. Private delivery services are the second most common delivery method with 28%. In 6% of cases, customers pick up their goods at the store and the physical location of the retailer is also important to them.

The most common payment methods



The most common shipping options



25

Sources: www.ceska-ecommerce.cz, APEK: Přínosy e-commerce v ČR (2023)

Device Preferences

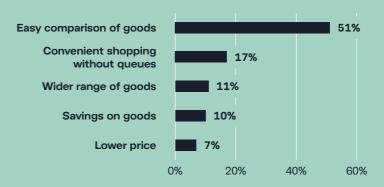
In 2021, 51% of people shopped via a mobile device (mobile phone or tablet).

What customers appreciate most about online shopping is the ability to easily compare items. A positive change is the decreasing motivation to buy online because of low prices.

Devices used for online shopping



Motivation to shop online



Source: www.ceska-ecommerce.cz

Online Sales Channels

Marketplaces

According to the survey on spontaneous knowledge of online stores, respondents most often mentioned Alza.cz, second Mall.cz.

These stores are considered:

Alza.cz

Monthly visits

- The largest Czech online store
- Specialises in electronics, computers, mobile phones, and home appliances
- Offers fast delivery, assembly, and installation of products

Monthly visits

8.7 M

Monthly

1.3 M

visits

Mall.cz

- Online store with a wide range of products
- Offers clothing, cosmetics, electronics, and home appliances
- Possibility to compare products and purchase from different sellers

Monthly visits

3.3 M

Glami.cz

- Fashion online marketplace
- Connects customers with a range of fashion brands
- Offers clothing, shoes, accessories, and cosmetics from over
 1,000 different brands

Monthly visits

2.5 M

Favi.cz

- Czech online store with a wide range of products
- Specialises in electronics, home appliances, sports equipment, and toys

Kaufland.cz

- New marketplace, since 4/2023, potential for big growth
- For example, it has 32 million customers in the German market. Operates in a total of 8 markets where it can expand further
- Wide range of products

Allegro.cz

- One of the largest marketplaces was launched in the Czech Republic in May 2023
- This is an opportunity for sellers to be among the first on Allegro

27

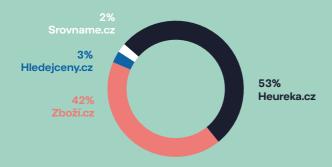
Source: Similarweb (2023)

Price Comparison Platforms

The biggest price comparison engine is Heureka, closely followed by Zboží with the two of them basically splitting the market in half. Other competitors have a negligible share.

Customers like to compare not only individual products online, but also prices. E-shopping is less and less often about the lowest price with customer experience becoming even more important over time.

Popularity of price coparison sites



Heureka.cz

- 53% share, operates in 9 European countries
- The largest Czech price comparison engine, which also functions as a market-place with the ability to buy goods directly through the platform

Zboží.cz

Platform operated by Seznam.cz, with a 42% share

Others

- There are also smaller price comparison platforms, e.g. Srovname.cz and Hledejceny.cz
- Together they have only 5% of the market

Source: www.ceska-ecommerce.cz (2023)

prolnsight for Czechia

Seznam's not dead yet and remains a viable search engine for not only SEO purposes. Cash on delivery is still king but payments via credit card or mobile applications are steadily growing.

With the still fresh launch of Allegro in the Czech Republic sellers can use the opportunity to be among the first who utilise the marketplace.

Do you want to get more proinsights?





Slovakia

Resilient and emerging



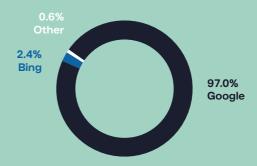
Market Specifics

Market with more than 3.9 million active internet users and fast growth of e-commerce turnover.

Google has an exclusive position in Slovakia with almost 97% of the market share.

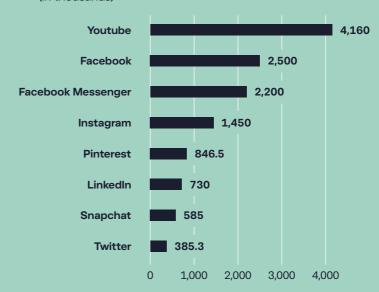
As in other countries in the region, YouTube has the largest number of users (4.16 million users), followed by Facebook (2.5 million) with its Messenger, then Instagram. On these platforms, advertising can be targeted to the vast majority of internet users in Slovakia. The other social networks have a significantly smaller user base, but allow reaching specific target groups.

Search engines



Social media users 2023

(in thousands)



Source: Datereportal.com, Kepios

32 Slovakia

Shopping Habits

Slovaks pay by card for online purchases (38%), in 19% of cases they pay by bank transfer.

The cash on delivery payment option is very important in Slovakia, used by 30% of customers.

Delivery of goods is most often via Slovak Post.

Shipping options

- Slovak Post the most frequently used
- Courier companies (DPD, Geis, Parcel, GLS, DHL)
- Personal pickup of shipment
- Packeta and Uloženka (network of drop-off points at independent retailers)

The most common payment methods



33

Slovakia

Online Sales Channels

Marketplaces

The largest in Slovakia is Mall.sk, with the greatest potential for growth is Kaufland, which is new to the market.

In the list we see the largest marketplaces in specific markets.

Monthly visits

1.2 M

Mall.sk

- The largest online shopping mall in Slovakia, offering a massive selection of products from electronics and home appliances to fashion and sports equipment
- Features a mix of local and international sellers and offers various payment and delivery options

Monthly visits

183,175

Favi.sk

- Search engine for furniture and decorations for interior and garden
- It has more than 13 million visits per month and more than 4.7 million products
- Operates in 5 countries

Monthly visits

408,520

Kaufland.sk

- New marketplace with potential for big growth
- Wide range of products

Monthly visits

268,856

Glami.sk

- Specialised search engine for clothing and fashion
- It gathers the offer of fashion e-shops in one place

Source: Similarweb

34 Slovakia

Price Comparison Platforms

The largest price comparison site is Heureka with a monthly traffic of over 3.36 million visits.

Smaller comparison sites have significantly lower traffic, yet they offer a very wide portfolio of products.

Monthly visits

3.4 M

Heureka.sk

- The most popular price comparator
- Over 18 million monthly visits
- Operates in 8 other countries

Monthly visits

41,398

VISILS

It is the smallest among the three relevant price comparison platforms, with nearly 0.5 million visits a month

Pricemania.sk

Over a million products across categories

Monthly visits

129,496

Najnakup.sk

- Second largest comparison site
- Over 1.6 million visitors a month with over 1 million products

Source: Similarweb

Slovakia 35

prolnsight for Slovakia

Similar to Czechs,
Slovaks like to
pay via cash on
delivery and are
getting their goods
shipped by the
postal services.
Given their historic
closeness it Czechs
out.

Facebook
maintains a pretty
dominant position
in the social media
field, ensuring its
place in your future
marketing mix.

Do you want to get more proinsights?



36 Slovakia

Now you got some key insights about Poland, Czechia and Slovakia.

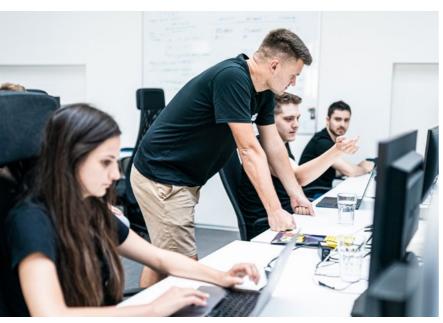
But knowing the specifics of where you are going is still just the first step on your journey towards success in the CEE region.

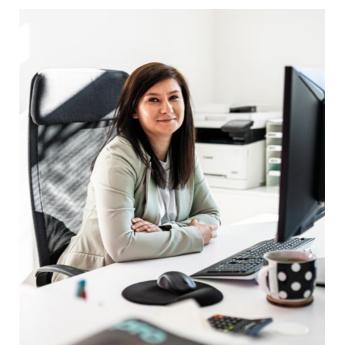
What you really need is an effective strategy. Or a reliable partner who can establish one. Ideally a proficient one at that.

Someone like the Proficio Group.



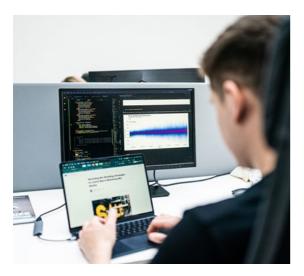














That's Us

We are the Proficio Group and we like to connect.

For ten years we have been successfully establishing a direct link between marketing and business. And right now we are building a bridge between the DACH and CEE regions.

Praque

Č. Buděiovice

Wien •

Ostrava

Bratislava

Plzeň

Munich

What Numbers We Bring to the Table

professionals in our team

countries where we have 9 branch offices

million EUR in marketing spends we manage

clients have been with us for over 5 years



We'll help with your expansion through

- ▶ analysing & identifying your opportunities in the CEE region
- helping with the localisation and logistics
- setting up your marketing activities from establishing the strategy to executing and evaluating

Who Are Our Clients

SANITINO

YTONG



|| REGIOJET







Sportega

ALCINA



O ataccama



























How Can We Help You Expand to CEE

In order to achieve the international success our clients strive for, we have to utilise a strategic approach. The process involves:

Market Analysis

We analyse target international markets, including culture, economy, and competition. This helps us identify opportunities and challenges, enabling tailored strategies.

Localization and Adaptation

We collaborate with clients to adapt products/services for target markets. We conduct market research, localise marketing messages, adjust pricing, and ensure compliance with local regulations.

Strategic Partnerships

We help clients establish partnerships with local businesses, distributors, or resellers to expand their reach in international markets. These partnerships facilitate market entry, distribution, and customer acquisition for scalable international expansion.

Digital Expansion

We leverage digital platforms to efficiently drive international business outcomes. This includes optimising websites for international SEO, developing multilingual content, localised digital advertising, and utilising social media and influencer marketing strategies.

Logistics

Through strategic partnerships, we methodically coordinate precise delivery schedules, optimise supply chains, and strengthen operations against potential disruptions. This ensures a seamless and efficient flow of goods and services, promoting reliability and customer satisfaction as we navigate the complexities of international markets, mitigating risks and enhancing the overall resilience of your expansion endeavours.

Cross-Cultural Communication

We provide guidance on culturally appropriate messaging, marketing materials, and customer support to build trust and resonate with target audiences.

Performance Tracking and Analytics

We implement tracking and analytics systems to measure the effectiveness of international marketing efforts. This enables monitoring of KPIs, tracking ROI, and making data-driven adjustments to optimise results.

Scalable Systems and Processes

We establish efficient systems and processes for managing international operations. This includes implementing marketing automation tools, standardized reporting frameworks, and project management systems to streamline workflows and ensure consistent service delivery across markets.

Google Support

We use exclusive tools and services provided by Google to evaluate expansion opportunities and cover the expansion process.

After aligning with the client on the international growth strategy for the specific market(s), we choose the best mix of Google products and other state-of-the-art digital products.

The choice of the right product of course depends always on the client's situation and goals.

In the context of this, when we are preparing a media strategy, we analyse the market, the target group, the size of demand, the competition, etc. For the analysis we also use Google tools – reach planner, ads planner and of course insights from google analytics.

Generally, we're using a mixed portfolio of Google Ads products, mainly search, shopping, display and video campaigns. In addition we're using other Google products such as SA360 and DV360.

The choice of specific products is therefore always based on the specific goal we want to achieve:

- Performance Campaigns suitable to generate transactions or leads. We're using mainly Google Ads search and remarketing campaigns as well as Performance Max and PLA campaigns.
- ➤ Consideration Campaigns suitable to reach people already considering products / solutions and increase website visits. Here we work mainly with display ads (Google Ads, DV360) and video ads (mainly YouTube).
- Awareness Campaigns suitable to increase brand awareness, get reach and visibility within a target group. Based on these goals we're using mainly visible banners formats and videos, both served via Google Ads and DV360.

In order to improve the campaign performance we also use Google and our own automation technology solutions.

We leverage multiple tools from the GCP ecosystem to scale our campaigns and analytics solutions.

- We use Google BigQuery as a data warehouse that serves as a backend for business and marketing reporting. We can easily add data from new markets to our datasets and expand our reporting. Thanks to this we can have real time business reporting that combines data from advertising platforms, web analytics and CRM/ ERP of our clients.
- 2. We also run a **server-side Google Tag Manager** that runs on Cloud run instances in GCP. Cloud run as a scalable service allows us to add new markets on demand and thanks to server-side GTM we can improve precision of our marketing data and do things such as optimise our marketing budget based on margin (instead of revenue). We do it with Firestore integration, which is also part of GCP.
- Lastly, we run our own automation platform named Logos, completely on GCP using App Engine, Cloud Run and Cloud SQL. We are scaling our campaign automation tasks for all of our clients and their markets.

How Do We Define Success?

Simply put – a successful international campaign is the one that reaches the client's goals.

Usually the clients are expecting a long run performance so the main KPIs are turnover, number of transactions or lead generation.

To be able to evaluate the results, we're combining data from various systems in our BI solution. We're using data not only from advertising systems and Google Analytics, but we're connecting them as well with various business data (business plans, transaction costs, shipping costs etc.) and market development data (brand share of search, number of relevant searches for products or services etc.).

To optimise the campaigns we're also evaluating micro data and signals, such as the quality of user behavior on the website, and actions performed.

Sanitino's Entry into the European Market with Proficio

Proficio case study

To face the incoming challenges and possible barriers that come with entering into a new market we knew that we had to build on a carefully selected marketing mix, accommodating individual needs of new markets.

Let us show you how we did it and the results we achieved.

Our results



From €16 million to over €70 million

Tenfold increase in revenue in 5 years



72% increase in ROAS

with 30% cost reduction in Google Ads and the value of conversions increasing by 22%



At least 20% increase in revenue efficiency

across ten European Markets

Proficio case study 51

The approach

As part of the International Growth Agency Program (IGAP) we were able to use tools that would help us to provide not just insight but a long-term solution for the growth issues of the entire business.

- An expansion analysis was performed by Proficio, detailing all the local particularities of each market, together with a plan on how to wrap the entire strategy around these. With our partner we set a strategy to launch 1–2 new markets per year, successively Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Austria, Spain, Germany, Romania.
- 2. The introduction of **customized BI reporting** showed the company new possibilities for growth. Financial and data analysts, team leaders and senior management have obtained a top-notch and simple tool with which they could implement strategic changes eliminate inefficiency, put an end to loss-making products or orders, optimise the way of working in the warehouse and identify changes in the market and respond to them in a short time frame.
- Additionally, the team changed the campaign
 optimisation paradigm from revenue evaluation to
 margin evaluation to achieve higher precision and
 profitability. We implemented enhanced conversion
 tracking into the optimisation process and started
 to use automated strategies for bidding on the
 margin.

The results

Not only did Proficio achieve Sanitino's goal, but they surpassed it by almost 300% and grew the revenue tenfold.

Costs were reduced by ~€17k a month thanks to the optimization of transport costs, €6.5k a month as a result of streamlining processes in the warehouse and more accurate margin calculation down to the level of individual products and across all markets, and revenue grew from €8M at the beginning of the cooperation in 2017 to reaching over €80M in 2022.

SANITINO

52 Proficio case study

"We pushed boundaries, built a stellar team, and the results speak for themselves. Sanitino's success is proof that going the extra mile pays off in the fiercely competitive international arena."

Jiří Novák, Partner in the Proficio Group

proficio Google

Proficio case study 53



Now you know us. And we'd love to get to know you and help you with your expansion plans.

So let's get in touch!



stefan.drah@proficio.de proficio.de













