"In 2023, 4 billion dollars worth of sexual wellness products were sold on Amazon within the EU."

Finding success on Amazon as a sexual wellness company - GlobalAMZ can make it happen

GlobalAMZ offers companies from the erotic industry a better shot at being successful on Amazon with their products and brands, after all, the activities of this agency are specifically centred around the big online marketplace. In our EAN interview with Linda Laakes, General Manager of GlobalAMZ, and Fiona Schmid, Head of Marketing & Business Development, we learn how they help their clients unlock the huge (and growing) potential that Amazon holds for sexual wellness companies.



Fiona Schmid (Head of Marketing & Business Development GlobalAMZ) and Linda Laakes (General Manager GlobalAMZ)

We've all ordered from Amazon, at least a few times, but do you have some stats to clarify the dominating market position of the company? Some figures to put the reach and power of Amazon into context?

Fiona Schmid: Sure. Amazon is not merely an online shop and hasn't been for a long time. It is the most dominant e-commerce platform in the world. In 2023 alone, Amazon generated 570 billion US dollars in revenue - in Germany it was 37 billion euros. Amazon's market share is north of 40% in many western countries, and in the United States it's even more, roughly 50%. Simply put, if you're shopping online, Amazon is pretty much the be all and end all.

Linda Laakes: To understand what this means, let's take a look at online product searches. 60% of consumers globally don't start their search for a product at Google, no, they go straight to Amazon. And Amazon's power becomes all the more apparent when you look at sensitive product categories such as sexual wellness products, i.e. categories where discretion, availability, and trust are particularly valued. In Germany, 35% of consumers (this data is from 2023) buy their sexual wellness products online, and Amazon is the first place most of them turn to.

Many of our readers are members of the sexual wellness industry, so it would be interesting to know how popular vibrators, dildos, etc. are on Amazon nowadays. Do you have some data on that as well?

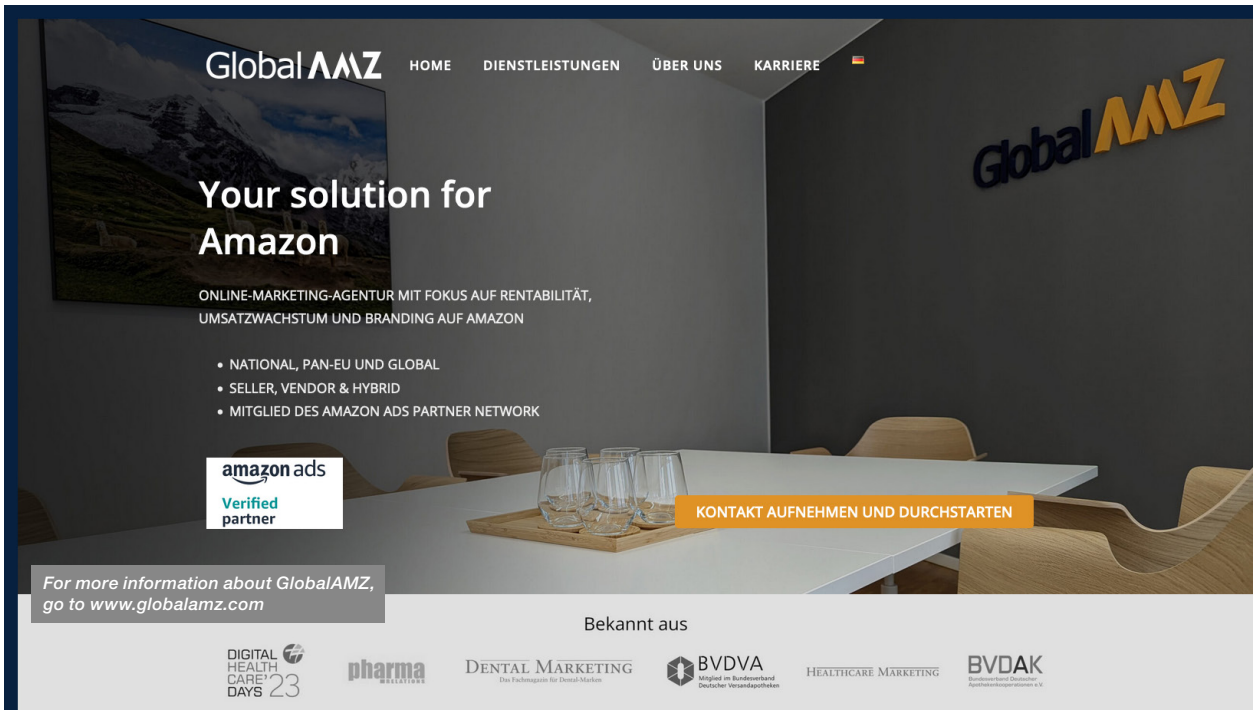
Linda: The data is unequivocal: In 2023, 4 billion US dollars worth of sexual wellness products were sold on Amazon within the EU, which is equivalent to a market share of 8% of the entire European sexual wellness market. The growth rate is even more impressive: The sales volume on Amazon in this segment has doubled since 2019, and predictions are that it will double again before the year 2030, meaning the sales volume would be 8 billion US dollars at that point.

Fiona: Germany is Amazon's biggest market in Europe. In the sexual wellness category, more than 2.38 million individual products were sold on Amazon, which translates to an annual turnover in excess of 46 million euros. The top-sellers in this category range from traditional vibrators to cock rings to lubricants for anal intercourse. All of this shows that demand is clearly there, and if a brand can present itself on the platform in a trustworthy, professional fashion, there's no reason why it shouldn't benefit from this development.

Linda: The growth trajectory is also quite telling. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is 11.2%, much higher than the growth rate of the market as a whole (6.5%) or the rest of online sales (8%). In plain terms, this means that Amazon is growing quicker than the sexual wellness market, and that its market share will keep ballooning as a result.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to the consumers. What do Amazon shoppers value most? Which trends affect their purchasing decisions?

Fiona: More than anything, Amazon shoppers are used to everything going smoothly and quickly. Speedy delivery, simple order process, favourable prices – these are the three big USPs the consumers expect. "I want to find what I'm looking for quickly, I want to order it without any hassle, and I want it to be at my doorstep tomorrow." Obviously, these expectations also apply to sensitive product categories such as vibrators and lubricants.



Linda: The big change we are seeing right now has to do with shopping inspiration. Consumers often base their purchasing decisions on what they see on TikTok or Instagram – and then they go and buy it on Amazon. There is definitely a strong connection between social media and online marketplace. Brands that know how to exploit this connection – for instance by way of influencer campaigns that draw consumers to their Amazon landing pages – stand to benefit greatly from this trend.

Fiona: Amazon itself is fostering these developments. They have a new AI shopping assistant called 'Rufus', and when customers ask Rufus questions like "What type of vibrator should first-time users buy?", they get personalized recommendations. Not only does this change the shopping experience, but it also redefines what product descriptions and content need to sound like.

Linda: Today's consumers are demanding, and they are also curious, self-determined, and they love to explore. They don't buy products, they buy experiences and trustworthy solutions for their individual needs. If you understand that, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to win them over.

For a long time, members of the sexual wellness industry considered Amazon the enemy because of the site's disruptive effect on traditional sales channels. But it has become apparent that the gravitational pull of Amazon cannot be denied. How easy or hard is it to be successful selling sex toys on the platform today?



Linda: We know the kinds of arguments you are talking about. Many brands were very sceptical of Amazon, and some points of criticism were well-founded. But Amazon has changed since those days. Today, it is a very exciting platform, especially if you are looking to sell sexual wellness products. The visibility, the reach, the growth potential ... By using strong content, storytelling, and scalable ad setups, brands can position their products at the digital point of sale with maximum impact. And there are none of the entry barriers that are so typical of traditional sales channels.

Fiona: Data shows that the volume of sexual wellness products sold via Amazon in Europe exceeded 4 billion dollars in 2023, and the annual growth rate is about 11.2%. So, what we have here is a very dynamic marketplace that is far from saturated. And there are lots of new opportunities arising in niches such as LGBTQ+, designer brands or barrier-free sexual wellness products. If you plan strategically and take this platform seriously, you can be very successful on Amazon, even today, no matter how big your business is or where you are located.

Linda: To put it in a nutshell: Amazon is the perfect stage to strategically position your sexual wellness products – you get all the data you need, you are close to your target audience, and the risk is comparatively low.

Social media marketplaces are becoming more and more popular. At present, the TikTok Shop is making waves ... Could this become serious competition for Amazon?

Linda: TikTok is definitely more than just a content platform; it is quickly becoming a big marketplace, especially for younger audiences. There is lots of potential there, especially for categories such as sexual wellness products. After all, TikTok offers a unique combination of immediacy, lifestyle, and community. We already have a number of pilot projects on the TikTok Shop, and so far, the results have been very promising.

Fiona: However, TikTok is not going to replace Amazon – it complements Amazon, more like. TikTok creates attention and curiosity, Amazon has the trust, the reviews, the quick and reliable delivery. Cleverly combine the strengths of both platforms, and you have a strong full funnel strategy, which is super valuable when you are dealing with sensitive product categories where discretion and reliability are paramount.



It is obvious why the consumers choose Amazon: You find a product, you place an order, and soon after you get your package. But things get trickier when you are the one trying to sell products on Amazon – that includes producers, brands, and also retailers. This is where your company comes into play. What services does GlobalAMZ offer to ensure that your clients are successful on Amazon?

Fiona: Your statement is very true. That is why we have specialized in this area. We want to be a strong partner for brands and producers as they sell their products on Amazon. We help them with everything, strategically and operationally, from content, advertising, and brand protection all the way to expanding into other European or international markets. The sexual wellness segment can prove very tricky in this regard. Obviously, you have things like keywords, product classification, and Amazon's strict content guidelines to think about, and advertising can be even more challenging; many products are subject to restrictions, so you can't just show them. We know how to navigate these waters and how to comply with Amazon's guidelines while still doing the brand justice and creating visibility for its products.

Linda: The thing that sets us apart is this: We don't cling to rigid models. Instead, we develop an individual set-up for each and every brand we work with. It is based on the client's goals, resources and on market conditions. To some clients, we are more or less their outsourced Amazon department, to others, we are their strategic sparring partner. What our experience has taught is that a professional, well-thought out presence on Amazon can make all the difference when it comes to performance, brand impact, and long-term success – also and especially in sensitive product categories.

If you had to name five things that producers, brands, and retailers absolutely need to do to be successful on Amazon, what would they be?

Linda: No doubt about it, you need a well-thought out Amazon strategy that complements your overall distribution model, online and offline. So, that's one. Two: Actively protect your brand, especially against fakes and copycats. Three: Your brand presence needs to be consistent, from the product descriptions to the brand store. Four: You

need to keep monitoring and optimizing your listings and keywords all the time. And five: Set realistic goals for each phase of your strategy. Being successful on Amazon is not a sprint, it is a marathon.

Given the dominant position of Amazon, many producers, brands, and retailers rely on professional support, and there is a number of agencies they can choose from. What makes GlobalAMZ stand out from this competition. Or, put differently: What makes GlobalAMZ unique?

Fiona: We specialize in sensitive and strongly regulated categories such as pharmaceutical, healthcare, and adult products as well as liquor – all of which are categories that many other agencies steer clear of because they don't know how to handle them. We, on the other hand, know the questions and challenges that can pop up in these complex product categories.

Linda: The founder of the company, Gregor Leopold, has a background in retailing himself. This real, hands-on experience has a big impact on our business philosophy. We approach a project with the mindset of an entrepreneur, not the typical mindset of a consulting agency. This also means that we will tell our clients if a certain strategy doesn't make a lot of sense. Short-term success is not the goal that we are after; we want to achieve lasting growth, trust. It's not about buzzwords, it's about substance. About real impact.

Fiona: Being a verified Amazon partner, we also have direct access to the Amazon support tools and programmes, which is a great help, especially when there are more complex issues to work through. Our clients benefit from this on a daily basis – they spend less time fine-tuning, things move along more quickly, and there is less uncertainty.

Amazon is populated by a wide variety of sellers (apart from Amazon itself, of course) – from middle-class businesses to global brands. And they all have their own challenges to deal with. Is it even possible to offer each client a custom-tailored business solution?

Fiona: There are as many different challenges as there are clients, true. But we know this and we are prepared for this, using a modular approach to offer individual solutions, from quick support for smaller sellers to fully integrated strategies for international brands. Whether we're shepherding projects along, providing long-term supervision or lending a helping hand when it comes to small details – the goal is always the same. To provide a solution that truly works and that will grow along with the client's business.