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## **FEATURES OF THE WILDBERRIES MARKETPLACE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONS OF RUSSIA**

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*The popularity of buying and selling goods online using marketplaces has become widespread in recent years, especially in the context of the COVID–19 pandemic. The majority of the population has found out that using marketplaces is very simple and convenient for both sellers and buyers, and buying something online is now much easier than going to a regular store. The article is devoted to the peculiarities of the development and functioning of such a marketplace as Wildberries, one of the largest online stores in the regions of Russia and some CIS countries.*

**Keywords:** regions of Russia, marketplace, e–commerce, online store, supplier, online sales of goods, digitalization of business processes.

## **ОСОБЕННОСТИ РАЗВИТИЯ МАРКЕТПЛЕЙСА WILDBERRIES В РЕГИОНАХ РОССИИ**

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*Популярность купли–продажи товаров онлайн с помощью маркетплейсов получила широкое распространение в последние годы, особенно в условиях пандемии COVID–19.*

*Большинство населения выяснило, что использование маркетплейсов очень просто и удобно, как для продавцов, так и для покупателей, и купить что-либо онлайн теперь намного проще, чем сходить в обычный магазин. Статья посвящена особенностям развития и функционирования такого маркетплейса как Wildberries, одного из крупнейших интернет-магазинов в регионах России и некоторых странах СНГ.*

***Ключевые слова:** регионы России, маркетплейс, электронная коммерция, интернет-магазин, поставщик, онлайн продажи товаров, цифровизация бизнес-процессов.*

E-commerce is an economic sphere that carries out all trade and financial transactions using computer and innovative technologies. This concept is similar to the definition of "Electronic commerce". But in the second option, the delivery of goods, the provision of services and payments can be carried out both online and offline. And the purchase itself on the Internet is the conclusion of a contract and its subsequent execution between the seller and the consumer [1]. The store appeared on the market in 2004, and during this time it has gone from one of the many online stores to a competitor of such giants as Ozon and Lamoda and even the Chinese AliExpress. The range of Wildberries is huge and includes clothes, shoes, children's goods, electronics, home accessories, etc. even today. It is an international online marketplace. The history of the business began with the fact that the current owner T. Bakalchuk thought about her own business via the Internet.

In the beginning, she was engaged in the resale of goods of the German brands Otto and Quelle, at that time the products of these companies were poorly distributed on the Internet due to the fact that the founders took a high agency fee and worked on an advance payment of 10% of the cost of the goods. Tatiana decided to change her strategy – she refused prepayment, reduced the amount of commission fees, created a website and began to buy clothes for him on her own, without intermediaries. Six months have passed, and an advertisement for her resource appeared on a popular women's website Passions.ru [7]. This brought results – the number of applications for the purchase of goods gradually increased. At the first stages, T. Bakalchuk did everything on her own: she ordered the goods, picked them up at the post office, brought them to the apartment, which was used as a warehouse. But a year later, the company expanded, and T. Bakalchuk rented an office and warehouse, hired programmers responsible for the operation of the site, couriers for the delivery of goods and operators to work with customers by phone.

The business began to gain momentum. It should be noted that the growth of the company is progressive, there is a systematic capture of the market share, both in the regions of Russia and in the countries of the near abroad, and access to leading positions. In 2012, Wildberries entered the Belarusian market, and in 2014 began accepting orders and delivering to Kazakhstan. Wildberries became the most popular domestic online store among the Russian audience in 2015. And in the first half of 2016, Wildberries came out on top in online sales among Russian companies, which was associated with an increase in the number of its own pick-up points [7]. In 2022, Wildberries launched sales in Uzbekistan, the first logistics centers were launched in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

The Wildberries business model is characterized as an online hypermarket of a universal format. Recall that the company directly interacts with clothing manufacturers and official distributors [4]. They independently form the assortment of their products in the online store and retail prices, and Wildberries earns a commission based on sales results. In March 2019, the company decides to reduce the commission for suppliers from 38% to 19%, thereby increasing retail turnover by 88% with an indicator of 223.5 billion rubles. The number of suppliers increases to 19 thousand suppliers, brands – up to 30 thousand manufacturers, the assortment – up to 3.6 million items [3]. In February 2021, the value of Wildberries was estimated at \$14.52 billion, which made it the second most expensive company in the Runet, after Yandex. Today, Wildberries sells products of more than 50 thousand brands, and the site is visited by more than 7 million people a day, making more than 780 thousand orders. Over 100 million goods are stored in the company's central warehouse [3]. In 2022, buyers purchased 1.9 billion products through

Wildberries, which is 81% more than in 2021. Of these, 96% are socially significant essential goods. The number of orders reached 1.5 billion (+88% year-on-year), the turnover from sales of goods and services on Wildberries increased by 98% to 1,669 trillion rubles [11].

Let's analyze the features of the Wildberries business model, considering its positive and negative sides. Let's highlight a few positive features of the company:

1. "A simple store is for ordinary people." A feature of Wildberries' pricing policy is the establishment of different prices in it, taking into account the financial capabilities of customers. For example, Wildberries implements its own loyalty program for customers, providing additional discounts on goods at its own expense from the prices set by sellers. The volume of the platform's investments in discounts in 2022 amounted to 249 billion rubles, which is 38% more than in 2021 [11].

2. Providing loyal conditions for entrepreneurs [2]. For example, the company offered a new format of marketing campaigns to entrepreneurs: remuneration for participation by reducing the trading commission to 15%, which allowed attracting a record number of participants and providing customers with goods at low prices. A program has been launched to subsidize the opening of partner pick-up points: pick-up owners received increased payments up to 7.3% of the total turnover of the point. The total amount of payments to partner entrepreneurs in 2022 amounted to 22.3 billion rubles. In December 2022, the maximum volume of investments amounted to 46.6 billion rubles (+171% year-on-year). This program allows you to support entrepreneurs and additionally reduces prices for buyers [11].

3. Free and timely delivery of goods to consumers. The development of regional infrastructure made it possible to speed up the delivery of orders to customers. For example, the speed of delivery in 2022 increased most significantly compared to 2021 in the settlements of the North Caucasus District (15 hours faster), the North-Western District (12 hours faster), in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (11 hours faster), in the Siberian and Southern districts (10 hours faster) [11].

4. Attractive conditions for buyers. The possibility of fitting and returning the goods without prepayment. In this, Wildberries became the first, beating the competition.

5. Development of own logistics centers in all major cities of Russia [2]. The volume of investments in the construction of logistics centers amounted to 28,306 billion rubles. Wildberries has increased the area of warehouse infrastructure by 2 million square meters in most regions of Russia. The total area of all logistics facilities of the company exceeded 2.7 million sq. m. This increased the availability of distribution centers for entrepreneurs, allowed them to expand the range of local products on the online platform and increase their sales. About 850 thousand square meters of warehouse facilities in various regions of Russia are still under construction [11].

6. Creation of new jobs. Wildberries has created about 100 thousand new jobs in various professional areas of the e-commerce industry, most of them are in the regions of Russia [11].

7. Digitalization and IT. The main activities in the field of digitalization of business processes have become the development of proprietary software to improve the company's infrastructure and create unique technological services. The development of its own IT solutions and their implementation in the work of Wildberries allowed to create new jobs in various segments of trade, which allows Russians to increase their incomes and manage their free time. In 2022, compared to 2021, the number of IT specialists has almost doubled to 1300 people. The share of customer requests processed with the help of artificial intelligence increased from 51% in 2021 to 81% in 2022 [11], which made it possible to increase the speed of solving requests and the level of customer service.

8. International development. Wildberries continues to develop in the international online space: it expands sales markets for entrepreneurs and creates new services for customers and new jobs. Currently Wildberries operates in 7 countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia.

Of course, it is necessary to highlight the negative features of the company's work:

1. Great competition. Now there are a lot of entrepreneurs working at Wildberries, so you need to have a competitive product and seriously engage in promotion [2].

2. Necessary acceptance of Wildberries terms. Changes to the offer can only be made by the marketplace itself unilaterally: the supplier cannot change the terms of the contract, the order of cooperation, etc. Wildberries also has a system of penalties for violating the requirements of the marketplace, which the supplier should familiarize himself with in advance.

3. Technical bugs. Wildberries is constantly being updated, so servers and programmers do not keep up with everything, as a result, malfunctions occur and loss of control over the situation is possible [2].

4. Problems with the support service. The site is growing rapidly, new sellers and buyers are constantly appearing, and Wildberries sometimes simply does not have time to replenish the staff with qualified employees.

Thus, the history and features of the development of the Wildberries marketplace in the regions of Russia is a good example of a business model that in a short time was able to develop truly on a large scale. Today, this platform is compared with the Chinese marketplace Alibaba [5]. However, the domestic online retail did not just use the model, but adapted it to the mentality of residents of the regions of Russia and became an integral part of everyone's life [7]. In 2022, Wildberries was present in 7 countries, where the company continues to develop an online platform and infrastructure for small businesses, services for buyers and create new jobs.

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