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**International Business Communication: Role in enabling British
clothing retailer expand business into Asian Market**

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Executive Summary

The main objective of this report is to provide British clothing retail group with communication methods for international business communication, the importance of effective communication, and the skills required to establish and maintain business relationships, enabling it to expand from the British market to the Asian market. Through an analysis that integrates theory and practice, it delves into the differences between Asian and British cultures. Additionally, the report explores factors that may lead to failures in business communication and their potential impact on business operations, and offers strategic recommendations for building professional relationships with the Asian market. Before engaging in cooperation with Asian enterprises, British clothing retailer should gain an in-depth understanding of the communication culture and business practices of various Asian countries to develop strategies that are adapted to the Asian market, thereby facilitating the smooth entry of British clothing retailers into the Asian market.

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1.0 Introduction

As globalisation continues to advance, transnational business operations have become a key strategy for enhancing growth potential and market competitiveness. For large British clothing retail groups, expanding into Asian markets and building solid partnerships provides enterprises with vast opportunities for development. For instance, this company can build solid business relationships with partners in the Asian region and achieve market expansion. However, the company also faces a series of challenges, including but not limited to cultural differences between countries, the diversity of laws and regulations, and the instability of the political environment. So international business communication plays a crucial role in transnational trade, not only promoting international trade and cultural exchange but also being essential for the success of multinational business operations.

The main objective of this study is to provide strategic support for a large British clothing retail group to effectively expand its business into Asian markets and build solid partnerships in the process. This report details the concept, advantages, and disadvantages of international business communication and delves into cultural differences in cross-border communication, identifying key skills necessary for building good cooperative relationships and trust. It also analyses the reasons that could lead to cooperation failure and their potential impacts. Based on the above analysis,

the report summarises the implementation of strategies and offers targeted recommendations.

2.0 International Business Communication

2.1 The Significance of IBC

International business communication refers to the process of information exchange, thought transmission, emotional interaction and business relationship coordination between organizations and individuals in different countries or regions in transnational business activities (Yang , 2022) .

International business communication plays a crucial role in cross-border trade. The inaccuracy of information transmission between countries can affect the effectiveness of communication. Only efficient business communication can meet the needs of both parties and achieve their goals. Through international business exchanges, countries can not only achieve trade cooperation but also expand markets.

2.2 Skills Required for International Business Communication

2.2.1 Language Ability

Language proficiency is key to understanding national cultures and

international business communication (Yue&Bai, 2022). Multilingual abilities enhance the understanding of different cultural communication patterns, and especially in Asia, knowledge of the local languages is crucial for establishing international relations. Even if one cannot master multiple languages, understanding business terminology is also a sign of respect towards Asian partners (Griffin &Pustay,2020). For instance, using Chinese for basic greetings and during the initial stages of business communication is generally seen as a sign of respect towards partners in China (Fan, 2024) .

2.2.2 Cross-cultural Understanding Ability

Cross-cultural understanding constitutes one of the key skills for effectivecommunication to promote business cooperation.In international communication , the cultural differences between different countries are significant (Chen, 2024). Epecially when interacting with Asian regions and misunderstandings are inevitable. Therefore, British retailers must have a profound understanding of cultural differences and be able to provide appropriate explanations at the right time. For large British clothing retail groups, it is crucial to deeply grasp the cultural customs, religious beliefs, and social values of Asian countries. The group should implement a tailored strategy to meet the specific needs of its Asian partners (Rohmah, 2021).

2.2.3 Listening Ability and Understanding Ability

Listening and understanding are the core of successful business communication. By actively listening to understand the needs of the other party, this can effectively convey information and lay the foundation for efficient communication. Studies have shown that companies with good listening and understanding skills are more likely to build trust and cooperative relationships, significantly improving the success rate of business communication (Stein, 2021). This not only helps to accurately meet needs and solve problems efficiently but also promotes the stability and growth of long-term cooperation. When communicating with Asian countries, one should maintain a positive listening attitude, respect the other party, and successful listening is not just about hearing but also includes understanding and timely feedback.

2.2.4 Adaptability

Adaptability is a key component of communication skills. For high-performing individuals or enterprises, they are able to actively adjust their mental states and behavioral patterns (Covey, 2020). For instance, H&M has actively adapted to the Chinese business environment and communication styles by implementing effective business communication strategies. In the process of business cooperation in China, the company has successfully established a solid foundation of trust, thereby accessing abundant business opportunities and information resources (Guo, 2020). Currently, the Chinese market has gradually developed into H&M's largest clothing retail market globally (Di Vaio

et al, 2024) .

British clothing retailer can draw on H&M's strategy to actively build connections with Asian markets to expand their customer base.

2.3 Effective Communication in International Business Communication

2.3.1 Communication Method

Communication skills refer to the ability to effectively convey information and viewpoints, interact with others, and establish relationships. Communication methods include both verbal and non-verbal communication (Guo,2023). There are various means of communication, such as verbal communication through emails, letters, face-to-face conversations, and non-verbal communication which includes gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and other elements (Burgoon *et al*, 2021) .

Effective communication requires the organic integration of these two modes of interaction. First, it is essential to clarify the objectives of communication, choose the appropriate method, and determine the channels of communication. During the process, one should focus on listening to what the other person is expressing, avoid interrupting while they are speaking, and provide timely feedback. When expressing one's own views, one should maintain logical

coherence to ensure that the client understands their needs. At the same time, businesses should also pay attention to the use of non-verbal communication, such as using smiles to convey a friendly and positive attitude (Pan,2024) .

2.3.2 The Importance of Effective Communication

The effectiveness of communication skills plays a crucial role in business cooperation (Szkudlarek et al,2020) . First, effective communication skills can clearly communicate your intentions, reduce the misunderstanding between your collaborators, and thus improve the work efficiency of the team. Secondly, efficient communication skills can help to shorten the psychological distance with customers, build a trust foundation, and even promote a stable cooperative relationship (Braslauskas,2020) .

2.4 International Culture

Culture is an important symbol of a country. The cultures of different countries are different, including knowledge, customs, religion, values, morality and law (White,2022).

The analysis shows that there are great differences between British culture and Asian culture, which brings challenges to the large clothing retailers in the UK, which can be analyzed in detail through Hall's High Low Context, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory and Trompenaars' 7 dimensions to

culture (Jasurbek *et al* 2023).

2.4.1 Hall's High-Low Context

Hall's High-Low context is an important theory in the study of intercultural communication.

In high-context cultures , information transmission relies heavily on the physical context or the internal cognition of communicators, with information being closely related to the social and cultural environment and the specific communicative situation. For instance, in high-context countries such as China, Japan, and South Korea, family culture is highly valued, and individual identity is closely linked to the family (Li,2021). In business activities, trust relationships are gradually formed through long-term interactions.

In low-context cultures, a significant amount of information is conveyed explicitly during communication, with less reliance on environmental cues, and communicators tend to rely on the expressive power of language itself for interaction. For instance, in low-context countries such as Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom, the content of contracts is taken seriously in business activities, with a particular emphasis on the terms of contracts during the signing process (Babbitt,2023) .

When communicating with Asian partners, British clothing retailer should adopt a cautious communication strategy, valuing their communication habits, especially the differences in non-verbal aspects. For example, silence in Asia may represent deep thought, whereas in the UK it might be misunderstood as impoliteness. Therefore, before communicating with Asian partners, British clothing retailer must first understand their communication style.

2.4.2 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

The following dimensions are used to describe the differences between Asian culture and British culture (Lin&Lou 2024).

1. Power Distance Index

Countries have varying views on the Power Distance Index (PDI), The PDI of most Asian countries is higher than that of the UK. For instance, in India, the caste system still contributes to a significant power distance. The caste system affects both society and business management, with higher castes dominating and lower castes engaging in service work (Sengupta& Guchhait 2021). In contrast, UK company management styles are more egalitarian, with free communication between employees and management, emphasizing equality. When businesses from the UK interact with Asian companies, they need to be aware of the differences in power distance to avoid misunderstandings.

2. Individualism vs. Collectivism

Most countries in Asia tend to Collectivism and business and social interests are highly valued. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies donated supplies to enhance team cohesion and loyalty among employees (Lin et al, 2023).

In contrast, British society tends to be more individualistic, emphasizing the pursuit of personal development and interests, with employees focusing more on career advancement and personal benefits in their professional activities (Zhang *et al*,2020).

Against the backdrop of business cooperation, Asian enterprises prioritize collective and corporate interests, hence it is necessary to respect their collective decision-making mechanisms and adapt to the unique business cooperation strategies of Asia when collaborating with Asian enterprises.

3. Long-term Orientation vs. Short-term Orientation

In most Asian countries focus on long-term Orientation. Such as South Korean enterprises will pay more attention to long-term goals. They will build trust with customers or partners and may attract more resources to achieve a long-term benefit (Jung et al,2020). But in the UK business more focused on Short-term Orientation, they are more focused on short-term interests, timely satisfaction

(Gerlich, 2023).

When communicating with Asian partners, clothes retail group should be honest and trustworthy with Asian partners that makes it easy to build long-term relationships with Asian companies in the future.

2.4.3 Trompenaar's 7 dimensions to culture

It can analyze Asian culture and British culture in the following aspects.

1. Universalism - Particularism

Universalism posits the existence of universal truths, such as the strict adherence to rules and regulations by British enterprises, valuing the terms of contracts, which must be observed once signed.

Particularism emphasizes individual particularities and cultural contexts. In Asian countries like China, commercial activities place more emphasis on building trust, and contract terms can be flexibly handled (Scalise et al, 2019).

To establish long-term cooperation with Asian enterprises, the British retailer should communicate and appropriately manage contract conditions, giving trust within the bounds of legality, to lay the foundation for long-term cooperation.

2. Specific - Diffuse

In specific cultures, work and personal life are closely intertwined, such as in Chinese business collaborations where work relationships may involve personal aspects.

In a culture of diffusion, employees strictly separate work from personal life, as seen with British employees who adhere strictly to company rules and regulations (Koyuncu & Denise Chipindu 2020).

When collaborating with Asian companies, the apparel retail group strengthens relationships through cultural exchanges while also paying attention to business differences to adapt to the working styles of their partners.

3. Achievement - Ascription

In achievement cultures, status is based on individual accomplishments and abilities. British employees develop regardless of family background, solely based on performance and effort.

In ascription cultures, status is determined by birth, gender, and family background. In China family businesses, family status may dictate important positions, rather than individual competence (Li *et al*,2024).

Before collaborating with Asian companies, the clothing retail groups need to understand family relationships and respect each other. When cooperating with family businesses, British groups have more resources and information

4. Relationship to Nature

Inner-directed emphasizes controlling outcomes, with Asian countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, and Japan focusing on using technology to change the environment.

Outer-directed emphasizes harmony between humans and nature, with most Asian countries like China focusing on sustainable development (Fu&Zhang,2024).

British clothing retail group should develop plans that align with the values of the countries they are cooperating with, such as communicating and integrating ideas in advance when cooperating with Asian countries to develop the best cooperative plans.

2.5 Build Relationship and Trust

2.5.1 Build relationships within Asia

It is very important for British retailers to establish relationships with Asia, as the Asian market has a large population, which can increase the company's

visibility and sales, attracting more customers. Moreover, the diversity of Asian culture provides retailers with abundant opportunities for product customization. Retailer can design products that better meet local market demands by studying and understanding the consumption habits and preferences of different Asian countries. This can increase the success rate of relationship building.

2.5.2 Build trust within Asia

Establishing trust with Asian partners is crucial for cooperation. Enterprise can gain local market insights and form long-term partnerships through trust. To win the trust of the Asian market, British retailer need to comply with local regulations, respect indigenous cultures, meet consumer expectations, and attract partners. Participating in charity and community services also helps to shape a good corporate image (Zhang, *et al*, 2024).

2.6 Failure Relationships

2.6.1 Reasons

Cultural differences are barriers to the establishment of new customer relationships. Differences in business practices, cultural backgrounds, and political factors can lead to misunderstandings and mistrust. Differences in communication styles can also affect communication efficiency. For example, British clothing retailers lack brand awareness in the Asian market, lacking

information to judge their credibility (Ghadani *et al*,2022).

2.6.2 Effects

Firstly, failure to establish relationships will increase the costs for British clothing retailers, requiring additional time and resources to resolve issues with Asian customers. This could lead to stockpiling of products, obsolescence, forcing sales at low prices, and reducing income.

Moreover, this will affect the satisfaction of Asian customers, leading to potential customer loss, damaging the reputation and competitiveness of British clothing retailers in the Asian market.

2.6.3 Solution

1. Firstly, the apparel retail group needs to reflect on the reasons for failure and respect Asian customers.
2. Secondly, they can consider appropriate price reductions to attract Asian partners while ensuring product quality and profit margins.
3. Lastly, if trust has been broken, they need to rebuild trust and assure customers that the issue will not happen again. This shall help to forge a strong relationship between the Asian business and the British Colthes retailer

and will be a long term profitable proposition.

3.0 Recommendations

Firstly, the clothing retailer should thoroughly understand the communication culture of Asian countries before establishing cooperation with Asian enterprises, which includes communication etiquette, habits, and the way of business communication. The retailer can better understand the Asian market, choose an Asian enterprise that matches the company, reach consensus on values, so that a long-term and stable cooperative relationship can be established in the future. Make the Firstly, secondly etc bold

Secondly, it is important to recognize that most Asian enterprises advocate for long-term benefits and collective interests; they focus more on the long-term development and benefits of the enterprise. This requires the British retailer to appropriately change its business strategy, being flexible and adaptable. Before cooperating with Asian enterprises, we must deeply understand the characteristics and needs of the Asian market and develop cooperation strategies that align with the local culture and business environment. By establishing mutual trust and long-term cooperative relationships, both parties can effectively promote mutual development.

Thirdly, the British retailer should pre-plan policies for the failure to establish

relationships with the Asian market, to avoid losses from failure, and also plan strategies for successful relationship establishment, to secure a solid position in the Asian market and achieve long-term development. At the same time, the retailer needs to pay attention to the cultural differences and consumer behavior in the Asian market, to develop marketing strategies that better meet local needs.

Lastly, the British retailer can consider adopting digital marketing tools, using big data analysis to better understand the behavior and preferences of Asian consumers. Through channels such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and mobile applications, the target market can be more accurately positioned, increasing the brand's visibility and influence in the Asian market.

4.0 Conclusion

When communicating with Asian companies, enterprises need to focus on developing communication strategies and skills. At the same time, they should deeply understand and develop cooperation strategies based on cultural differences between the UK and Asia. In addition, it is important to recognize the importance of building trust and relationships, and to develop strategies to deal with the failure of these relationships.

(2750 words)

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