

International Operations: Consultancy Report Regarding the Potential Expansion of Griffiths & Hughes Ltd.

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Overview

This report considers the manufacturing, transportation and business engagement capabilities as well as the political and cultural implications of regions within South America, Asia and Africa with the view of recommending three suitable locations to be explored further for the future expansion of Griffiths and Hughes Ltd. The report also considers the benefits of implementing innovation management standards such as ISO 56000 series for growing businesses such as Griffiths and Hughes Ltd.

1. Global Regions

a) South America

Porto Alegre (Brazil)

With a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1.87 trillion, Brazil is the world's ninth-largest economy and the largest economy in Latin America (Bajpai, 2022). Although Brazil previously had one of the world's fastest growing economies prior to 2012, multiple issues have resulted in a recent declining growth rate for the Brazilian economy. The abundance of natural resources in Brazil, puts them in a strong position for manufacturing, allowing them to lead in alternative energy sources, producing more ethanol than the combined production of Asia and Europe (Singh, 2022). Manufacturing in Brazil accounts for approximately 20% of the GDP and more than 10% of the labour force, they are major world suppliers of automobiles and have strong manufacturing facilities for electrical machinery and metals (Martins et al, 2023). Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande do Sul is one of the major manufacturing sectors of Southern Brazil (Martins et al, 2023)., making it a strategic location for controlling manufacturing on a global scale for Griffiths and Hughes (G&H). However, many political scandals and political corruption over the years has resulted in a loss of trust from Brazilian citizens, in particular the recent prosecutions of the former Brazilian President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has caused election uncertainty as well as halting economic activity (Ross, 2021). The potential for political upheaval in Brazil to affect the marketing and distribution of G&H products should be considered further. With the 8.5 thousand kilometres navigable coastline, resulting in the movement of 1,104 billion tonnes of imported and exported goods in 2019 in Brazilian ports and road transportation being responsible for 60% of cargo handling (SantanderTrade, 2023), it is evident that transportation links are well established in Brazil, particularly Porto Alegre. However, air transportation is not very well developed due to high costs (SantanderTrade, 2023) possibly causing logistic issues for G&H.

Montevideo (Uruguay)

Unlike Brazil, citizens of Uruguay have trust in their government due to low corruption, the consensus-based political approach and the government's strong commitment to strengthening institutional arrangements (The World Bank Group (WBG), 2021). Further strengths of Uruguay are; it's high income per capita, low levels of inequality and poverty (WBG, 2021) as well as their strong trade relationships with China, Brazil, Argentina and the US (Alisky et al, 2022), giving it a firm foundation for economic growth. Uruguay has strong logistics and transportation links and in 2021, they imported plastics with a value of \$448 million and \$420 million worth of technology imports (TWB, 2022), therefore, sourcing raw materials for G&H products, should not be a problem. The port of Montevideo handles most of Uruguay's foreign trade with majority of factories and ANCAP (Administración Nacional de Combustibles, Alcohol y Portland) enterprises located throughout the city of Montevideo (Alisky et al, 2022). The government largely encourage domestic manufacturing

to make the economy more dynamic and less dependent on external trade (Alisky et al, 2022). Uruguay has a relatively high standard of living, with GDP per capita being the highest in Latin America (Alisky et al, 2022). Due to their historical background of agricultural exports, the locals of Montevideo are skilled workers, predominantly of European origin, with Spanish being their principal language (Alisky et al, 2022). Montevideo evidently has a strong industrial presence, with positive trade relationships and skilled workers, proving to be a strategic location for global distribution of G&H products.

Buenos Aires (Argentina)

Like Montevideo, Buenos Aires are highly dependent on the production and export of agricultural commodities (Keeling et al, 2022). The port of Buenos Aires is the largest in South America and receives ships from all over the world for import and exports (Keeling et al, 2022), demonstrating their transportation abilities. Buenos Aires is the most industrialised area of Argentina and although their main industries are related to food processing, they have many factories focussing on metalwork and automobile assembly (Keeling et al, 2022), displaying the capabilities of the local workforce. Although Buenos Aires has many similar attributes to Montevideo, the political and economic aspects are much more complicated, with Argentina being highly affected by rising inflation (Silver, 2022). With the current inflation in Argentina sitting at 70%, and rising at a rate of roughly 1% every week, money is becoming worth less every week (Silver, 2022), putting them at risk of economic instability (full explanation in appendix 1).

South America Conclusion

Taking into consideration the political aspects, logistic and transportation capabilities, the skills of the local workforce as well as the established industrial presence of each region, Montevideo appears to be the best suited region within South America for G&H to explore further. Although all regions have strong trade relationships and manufacturing experience, Porto Alegre is still experiencing political instability and likewise, Buenos Aires has economic instability related to inflation, therefore Montevideo has the most stable environment for distribution of products globally.

b) Asia

Shenzhen (China)

Shenzhen has the highest GDP per capita of any city in China (Upton and Huld, 2022). Although their economy is mainly service-driven (63% of the economy), manufacturing remains an important industry, accounting for almost the remaining 37% of the economy (Upton and Huld, 2022). The local government in Shenzhen have introduced many business incentives for companies seeking to set up business in the area, benefitting them with reduced tax rates and rewards for contribution to key industries (Upton and Huld, 2022), helping to promote business engagement and foreign investment. The Shenzhen government is one of the most efficient local governments in China, having introduced many reformative policies to optimise business processes. For example; the commercial registration system has now been revised, and the time required to now register a company has been shortened from 20 working days to only 1 (Shenzhen Government Online (SGO), 2023), demonstrating a focus on providing an easy environment for businesses. Shenzhen's

technology industry leads the country in the digital economy, with the tech and digital industries being major employers of a large number of highly skilled workers. Shenzhen is China's largest exporting city, with their port being the fourth-largest in the world, with annual throughput reaching 28.77 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) in 2021 (Upton and Huld, 2022), proving to have a substantial export capacity. Although Shenzhen has positive local policies, a skilled workforce and is a growing hub for exporting, relations between Taiwan and China appear to have deteriorated sharply as China try to regain control of Taiwan (Brown, 2022). With the future prospects of politics in China remaining uncertain and possibly problematic to the economy, care should be taken by G&H when exploring Shenzhen as a possible location for the future.

Mumbai (India)

Mumbai is the financial centre, economic powerhouse, and industrial hub of India (Shira, 2019). India's sea trade is responsible for majority of exports, with Mumbai having the largest port facilities in India, handling more than 60% of India's sea trade (Shira, 2019). Although most famous for its textile industry, in recent years, Mumbai has developed a highly diversified manufacturing sector with a strong focus on information technology components (Raghavan, 2022). Financial services are also responsible for a large section of the Mumbai economy with a number of commercial banks being highly concentrated in this region of India. Public transportation is well established in Mumbai with road, rail and air transport conveying hundreds of thousands of commuters into the region daily (Raghavan, 2022), therefore providing good transport links not only for import and exports but potentially for international travel of G&H employees and clients. Marathi is the official language of Mumbai, however, with it being a cosmopolitan city, Hindi, Gujarati and English are also widely spoken, reducing the language barrier for English speaking G&H employees. Similar to China and Taiwan, India are still experiencing friction with Pakistan, resulting in Pakistan banning Indian imports outright in 2019, but later allowing entry of Indian pharmaceuticals during the pandemic, paving the way for additional access (Grossman, 2022). Furthermore, the Indian Prime Minister's refusal to condemn Moscow and join Western-led sanctions, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has put India at the political forefront (Grossman, 2022). Although political moves in India may be questionable, India's most important strategic partner is the US, as well as their unprecedentedly strong relationships with many countries across Europe, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific, which if sustained, will contribute to India's rise to great-power status (Grossman, 2022).

Taipei (Taiwan)

Unlike the regions in South America, Taiwan lacks natural resources and developing trade and exports has always been essential in order to cover the cost of imports required (Copper, 2023). Their main exports are electronics, basic metals and metal products, plastics, chemicals, and machinery, with their principal export trading partners being based in the US and Asia. In recent years, Taiwanese firms have become world leaders in high-tech manufacturing sectors such as semiconductors, laptops, servers, and smartphone components (Department for International Trade (DIT), (2023). Business taxes are low in Taiwan with the aim of keeping their products competitive in the global marketplace (Copper, 2023). The workforce in Taiwan is highly skilled with roughly one-fourth of the labour force working in manufacturing, and three-fifths in services, local people of Taipei are also well-educated, with 45% of people aged 25 to 64 holding a bachelor's degree or higher (DIT, 2023). In close likeness to Mumbai, Taiwan also relies heavily on maritime transportation, having four major seaports (Copper, 2023). However, the control of the Taiwan Strait has become an increasingly worrying situation for many years, with conflicting views between US and China on whether it is considered international waters (Varley, 2022). With almost half of the global container fleet passing via this waterway, the Taiwan Strait is the primary route for ships

passing from China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, exporting goods from Asian factory hubs to markets in Europe, the US and all points in between (Varley, 2022). Mandarin is the business language which is widely spoken here, meaning a translator is likely to be required for G&H Ltd.

Asia Conclusion

It is evident that Asia as a whole is an 'economic powerhouse' with established manufacturing facilities and highly-skilled and well-educated workforces across all shortlisted regions. However, it is also apparent that the political instabilities between China, Taiwan and the US and India and Pakistan have the potential to cause major logistic and supply chain issues, as well as economical implications. Having considered the potential impacts on global distribution that each region has, it is recommended that Mumbai is explored further as a possible business location for G&H Ltd as the political aspects are not as turbulent as those in China and Taiwan and India has made many strategic trade relationships which puts them in a strong economic position.

c) Africa

Durban (South Africa)

In 2021, Durban's GDP growth rate was 4.5%, the highest in over 13 years with 73% of this growth coming from manufacturing, finance and trade (Singh, 2021). In addition to diamonds and gold, South Africa is rich in a variety of mineral reserves such as iron ore, platinum, manganese, chromium, copper, uranium, silver, beryllium, and titanium, with the main exports for Durban being precious metals, agricultural goods and military equipment, and the main imports being chemicals and automotives (Hall et al, 2023). South Africa's main trading partners are China, the US, Germany, and Japan. The core of the South African economy is the mining sector, even though the manufacturing sector has higher employment rates and produces a greater proportion of GDP than mining (Hall et al, 2023). Although Durban is a major contributor to the overall South African Economy, unemployment rates are high and there is a high rate of income inequality (Global Future Cities Programme (GFCP), 2023), which may cause employment problems for G&H. Due to South Africa being heavily dependent on foreign trade, their economy is sensitive to global economic conditions. The port of Durban is the main container port on the South African coastline, handling approximately 60 percent of South Africa's container traffic (International Trade Administration (ITA), 2021). The South African Government views the country's ports and terminals as key engines for economic growth as it is situated on one of the busiest international sea routes, with plans in place for investment into a diversified maritime market (ITA, 2021). With English being the main language spoken in South Africa as well as 11 other languages being widely used, G&H will not require a translator within the business. Historically, there has been a complex relationship between the UK and South Africa and for the first time in six years, a UK-South Africa bilateral forum was held in 2021, with the aim of improving relations (Vandome, 2022).

Bulawayo (Zimbabwe)

Mining in Bulawayo is of similar significance as South Africa, with it accounting for less than 10 percent of the GDP and providing work for roughly 5 percent of the employed labour force, nevertheless its significance in the economy is considerable as a major earner of foreign exchange (Bradley, 2023). Zimbabwe's major exports are gold, tobacco, metal alloys, cotton, and sugar with the principal imports being fuels and petroleum products, electricity, machinery and transport equipment, food, and other miscellaneous manufactured goods (Bradley, 2023). Zimbabwe have developed good trade relationships with South Africa, the US, China, and some countries within the EU, however they have previously struggled to attract significant foreign investment due to concerns over foreign currency rules and policy uncertainty (Banya and Hardcastle, 2023). In December 2022, inflation in Zimbabwe peaked at 280 percent, one of the highest rates globally, the Zimbabwean Dollar has also weakened, leading to decreased living standards in the country (Muronzi, 2022). The surge in inflation is not the only external shock affecting the economy of Zimbabwe, erratic rainfall, electricity shortages, and Russia's war in Ukraine have all had adverse effects on economic and social conditions (Muronzi, 2022).

Tunis (Tunisia)

The Tunisian economy depends heavily on mineral exports, especially petroleum and phosphates, the manufacturing sector and agricultural products (Murphy et al, 2022). Manufacturing contributes roughly 16 percent of GDP and employs an equal proportion of the population, although the textile sector accounts for a large proportion, recent investments have resulted in a much more diversified manufacturing sector, with increased production and export of mechanical and electromechanical equipment, petroleum products, and chemicals (Murphy et al, 2022). More than a third of Tunisia's manufacturing facilities are located in Tunis (Murphy et al, 2022), making it the most logical location for G&H to be based within the country. Tunisia has concentrated on building trade relations for many years and they now rely heavily on their trade with Europe, accounting for the bulk of their imports and exports, with France being the most important trading partner, followed by Italy, Germany, and China (Murphy et al, 2022). According to the ITA (2022), Tunisia also relies heavily on imports from the US, with US exports to Tunisia totalling \$454.1 million in 2021, Tunisia also exports many electronics and electrical components to the US, proving their ability to manufacture, market and distribute products similar to those produced by G&H on a global scale. Tunisia is a further country experiencing political unrest, as their transition to democracy remains incomplete and under stress, and as a result, socioeconomic conditions have continued to deteriorate, and risks of unrest have increased. (United States Institute of Peace (USIP), 2022).

Africa Conclusion

It is evident that the regions investigated within Africa depend heavily on mining and mineral exports and are not as dependent on manufacturing as South American and Asian countries. Due to the high inflation and exchange rate instability within Zimbabwe, Bulawayo does not seem the most logical location for G&H at this moment in time. Similarly, the political instability within Tunisia has led to many foreign investors pulling out of Tunisia as well as rising inflation (Surk, 2022). South Africa seems to be a more stable environment for setting up a business with the improved transportation on the horizon, therefore this region should be explored further by G&H as a possible location.

2. ISO56000

Many sources suggest that innovation is now widely recognised as a key growth stimulator for the economy. Product and process organisations can drive their innovation through the implementation of ISO 56000, which provides guidance for the development, implementation, and utilization of innovation management systems (Rezak and Kherbachi, 2022). When operating on a global scale, businesses can become vulnerable due to changes in markets and operating conditions, affecting their innovation strategy. A systematic approach to innovation such as the implementation of an Innovation Management System (IMS) helps to promote, facilitate and manage innovation, allowing businesses to become more responsive to changes in external factors and therefore more competitive with their innovations. The ISO 56002 IMS provides a common language and structure for developing an innovation capacity (Rezak and Kherbachi, 2022), which would be beneficial to businesses such as G&H Ltd who are intending to grow their business and distribution on a global scale. The overall aim of the ISO 56000 series is to provide internationally standardised terminology, a common vocabulary, and a framework to assist businesses and policymakers in organising their innovation initiatives (Rezak and Kherbachi, 2022). The standardisation of terminology and a common vocabulary is a key initiative for multinational businesses as it ensures consistency and conformity throughout the organisation.

A study conducted by Idris and Durmusoglu (2021) concluded that the implementation of 'IMS can boost various types of innovation, and can increase innovation capabilities and value creation through innovation activities, thus eventually creating more value for the organization'. This study also explored the parallel implementation of IMS with other management systems such as ISO 9001 and their ability to reinforce each other. The ISO 56000 series can be adapted across any sector regardless of the size of the business (Mulcahy, 2021), making it a useful tool for a growing business such as G&H. It is recommended that G&H incorporate the IMS into their existing operating facilities within Wales prior to the expansion of the business overseas, the IMS can then be established within the business and utilised as a foundation in any future facilities. It is also evident that IMS can help develop and scale businesses, allowing them to successfully access competitive global markets (Mulcahy, 2021). Therefore, the implementation of the ISO 56000 series prior to expansion, may influence the decision of G&H with regards to their new overseas location, as many ideas and innovations stem from these standards, altering their business perspective.

It is evident that the ISO 56000 series has many benefits to businesses of all scales, and provides a foundation for innovation management within the organisation. However, it will only prove to be successful through ownership of the IMS by the business and its employees. Ultimately, the ISO standards provide guidance and a framework which must be implemented by the business' employees and is only effective through regular monitoring and measuring via internal audits and management reviews. The ISO 56000 standard emphasises how 'the IMS should improve continuously in order to keep on developing the innovation capabilities of the organisation', therefore the system will need to be adopted by all employees at G&H and will need to be driven and monitored by middle and higher management in order to maximise its potential.

Appendix

- 1. Statement from Juan Cruz Díaz, Founder and Managing Director of the Cefeidas Group and the Co-director of the Corporate Governance Programme at the Universidad de San Andrés (Silver, 2022).**

"Centre-to-left, or I would say more a state centre, governments tends to finance the fiscal deficit, basically through printing more money and through inflation, and that leads eventually to inflation crises that are recurrent in Argentina. Centre-to-right governments tend to finance that deficit problem to external debt, and that leads also to the recurrent external debt crisis in Argentina. And if you explore our past decades, we've been going like a pendulum from debt crisis to inflation crisis."

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