



ASSIGNMENT 2

International Business (SBMA7122D)



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Executive Summary

Germany is a powerhouse in industrial manufacturing as well as having a leading role in the European Union alongside a solid fiscal economy. Its economic standing globally is recognised as being in the top ten richest economies in the world making it a real option for foreign investment.

With Germany being a world leader in manufacturing training the engineers, designers and manual shop floor workers of tomorrow is key in continuing this trend and maintaining this global reputation. Practical hands on technical training is key to not only carrying on this trend but helping to develop a bigger and better industries surpassing all over competitors. The way we can achieve this is to produce and implement an international business plan that consists of the various elements that allows us entry into the German market with a recipe for success.

This business plan must tackle areas such as investment, structure, marketing and implementation strategies. The aspect of risk is important and so is addressed from the different perspectives initially incorporated from assignment 1 so as to build on management models for strategy development and management structures. Using the Hofstede model of cultural detailing we have mapped out the landscape that has provided us with the rich detail needed to put these actions in motion.

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1 - Corporate Global Vision and Goals

Alder Training prides itself on developing minds, ambition and passion for all that walk through these doors. Anyone, given the right guidance or training, can develop into the person they have only dreamed about through a new found confidence provided through gaining skills that will elevate them above the crowds.

Age is no barrier to learning and developing as progress transcends all social demographics and geographical locations. We, at Alder Training, not only encourage you to dream big we provide a focused training methodology to get the best out of you and realise your goals both personally and to further benefit the industry you belong too. In order to achieve these visions and goals Alder Training works to four keystone areas;

1. **Client Focus;** The training we provide is developed to the needs of our client as we aim to provide specific training reliant on the needs of the client and not just a generic training plan
2. **Targeted Training;** We listen, understand and work with our clients to produce the best training solutions for you and industry
3. **Global Outlook;** The only way to develop and strengthen our market position is be outward looking in expanding into markets that we see as having a need for our specific brand of training.
4. **An Environment For All;** A company's biggest asset are its employees and we value all members of Alder Training so we can provide and realise a shared goal of success.

“The leaders of tomorrow are not born they are manufactured”

2 - International Organisational Structure

With the expansion into the German market on the horizon organisational structure, transition and incorporation is key to forming a solid international base of which to build from. The topic of International Human Resources Management (IHRM) is paramount in developing the HRM system currently used to aide in a smooth transition for both the employees and the organisation. IHRM is the progression of HRM coping with the rigors of supporting organisational requirements regardless of borders providing a platform to achieve a competitive advantage at the international stage. Morgan (1986) explains the structure of IHRM as a collective, interchangeable sum of three parts;

1. HR Activities
2. Types of employees
3. Types of countries

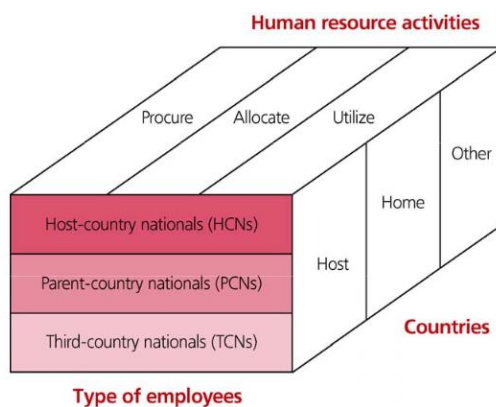


Diagram 2.1 – Morgans Dimension Model of IHRM

Diagram 3.1 shows how complex matters become as IHRM requires an increase in Human Resource activities across a broader scope compared to HRM. A challenge of adopting an IHRM approach at a strategic level is by looking at the choice of deciding whether to implement either global or localised strategies when they are conflicting (Prahalad & Doz, 1999). In order for organisational structure to be successful a wider view of the granular processes are needed.

2.1 - Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) takes a view of looking at the overall management of human resources from an organisational view unlike HRM that handles the more granular element of employee management. SHRM and HRM are interlinked in their outlook and objectives as one works hand in hand with the other focusing on the adaption and integration of HRM into the business strategy at the various organisational levels (Guest, 1987; Jackson & Schuler, 1995).

We would expect that if a firms HRM system is to be a source of sustained competitive advantage, it must be difficult to imitate (Wright & McMahon, 1992). This suggests HPWS are highly idiosyncratic and must be tailored to each firms individual needs for optimum impact.

2.2 - High Performance Work Systems (HPWS)

HPWS are a group of management practices that are aimed at creating an environment within an organisation allowing employees to have greater involvement and responsibility. Patel et al (2013) explained the process as “a system of horizontally and vertically aligned employment practices designed to affect both the ability and the motivation of employees”. HPWS practices are varied depending on the type of implementation required, some of the more common practices utilised are self-managed teams, continued supported education, employee involvement in organisational strategy and incentivised team performance based pay (Timmers et al, 2013).

Conceptual literature raises the question about the methodology required in order for a HPWS to influence the performance of a company. Jackson et al (1989) answer this question by

pointing the focus on the reliance of employees tapping into their productive behaviours so as to implement the strategies required. It is suggested that the fundamental source of this productive behaviour originates from the internal Human Resource Management System (Bailey, 1993). A study carried out in the European Journal of Business and Management (Mohammed et al, 2015) links an employee's outlook to HR practices and reliability translated as a commitment from the organisation to the employee as a reward for providing a high job performance. This in turn makes the employee respond in a suitable manner providing attitudes and actions that establish and maintain high performance (Wallner & Menrad 2012).

Intellectual capital (investment in staff) has come to represent an increasing fraction of many firms' total assets (Becker et al, 1997). Hendry & Pettigrew (1986) emphasise the need for people to be seen as a strategic resource utilised to achieve competitive advantage. The strategic role of the HRM (Human Resource Management) has also become more critical. Ulrich and Lake (1990) point to such HRM systems as the source of organizational capabilities that allow firms to learn and capitalize on new opportunities.

2.3 – Organisational Design & Management

The principle position of SHRM is to deal with the macro concerns of an organisation ranging from performance and culture to management development. Organisational requirements are ever changing for a number of reasons forced by external elements such as the sector it belongs to or fitting into a transitioning economy. David Ulrich created the three-legged model of HR management in response to the need for HR to become more business-focused and strategic so it could add value.

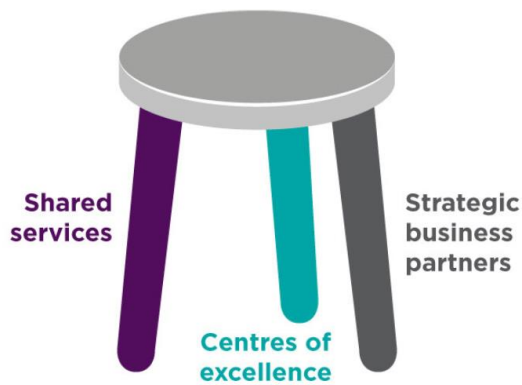


Diagram 2.2 – Ulrichs Three-legged Model

Ulrich (1997) explained the growing focus of strategic management in an increasingly changing business environment leads HR functions to gain greater influence within organisations as its influence grows. This advancement seems to have outgrown Ulrich's own model replaced by his 2012 competency model that focuses more on the relationship based competency qualities over a rigid pre-defined HR structure.



Diagram 2.3 – Ulrichs Competency Model

The three legged model places emphasis on the need for centres of excellence to drive policy change but this method restricts the capability of HR personnel to be exposed to other specialisms in order to provide flexibility and choice. With such prominence given to a specialism based structure it is important to note that the link between HRM and organisational

sustainability has been considered insufficient (Jackson & Seo, 2010) so it is important to state that micro organisational intervention provides a more stronger argument to infer causal stakeholder relationships (Grant & Wall, 2009).

3 - Foreign Market Research (from Task 1)

- Germany is a Co-ordinated (CME) market economy
- PEST Analysis
- SWOT Analysis

4 - Risk Assessment (from Task 1)

- Feelings of insecurity have risen after the German Chancellor welcomed in refugees from war torn countries
- 1,200 women who were victims of sexual assault on New Year's Eve in 2015/16
- Berlin 2016 when a lorry was used to crush people in a Christmas market
- German attacked three immigrants with a knife citing "Merkel's refugee policy" as the main reason for his actions.
- The breaking of the union between the EU and the UK
- The decline of the Euro currency

5 - International Business Strategy

Due to plans to expand operations in Germany the strategy of how a successful implementation can be managed will need us to look at several areas in order to provide a rounded perspective of what is required. In order to gain greater insight into what may be required to develop and implement this business strategy a greater holistic understanding of Germany is needed.

5.1 - Hofstede – Cultural Comparison

To do this I have used the Hofstede Country Comparison analyser that compares, in scores, the cultural differences between two countries. Looking at the analysis may help us understand the differences between the home country (UK) and the host country (Germany) to factor in the differences that may hinder the international transition of Alder Training. The results of the comparison system is displayed in the chart below;

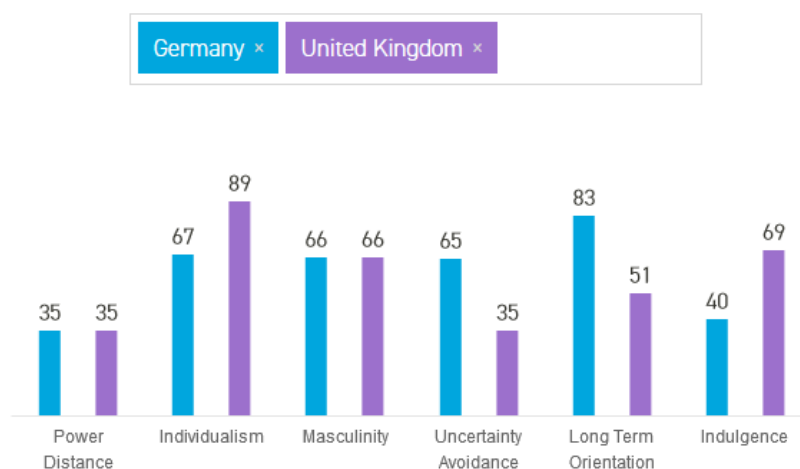


Diagram 5.1 – Hofstede Cultural Comparison – UK & Germany

A general breakdown of the analysed areas show the major differences, relative to business strategy, between these two countries as ‘Uncertainty Avoidance’ and ‘Long Term Orientation’.

‘Uncertainty Avoidance’ from a German perspective is handled in deductive manner where certainty is created and managed over all areas. The opposite of the UK where people are happy to take one day at a time and see what the future holds. Alder training can benefit from this German outlook as it means training could be a major area of development that could be seen to remove future uncertainty.

‘Long Term Orientation’ shows Germany with a score of 83 compared to the UK at 51, higher scores show a propensity to push efforts to engage in modern education unlike the UK which is more aligned to traditional methods such as school, sixth form and university. This shows good potential for the company to gain traction in the German market based on these results.

5.2 – TOWS Matrix

In order to pick the right strategy we must first understand and use the correct variables, the TOWS analysis tool (Weihrich, 1982) is method that issued to generate, compare and select strategies. Although similar it is not the same as SWOT, which is used at the beginning of a planned process, and is used later on in the planning process in order to find a method to progress. This is achieved by using the SWOT findings to produce interrelated theories of potential strategies with the goal being to provide varied analysis and therefore choices.

INTERNAL FACTORS			
EXTERNAL FACTORS		Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
	Opportunities (O)	Strengths/ Opportunities (SO)	Weaknesses/ Opportunities (WO)
	Threats (T)	Strengths/ Threats (ST)	Weaknesses/ Threats (WT)

Diagram 5.2 – TOWS Analysis Model

This tool is subjective as it is only as accurate and useful as the data that is fed into it and it should not be used alone but supported by other models and frameworks to analyse strategy.

Within TOWS the four strategies are;

1. **Strength/Opportunity (SO);** Strengths would exploit opportunities
2. **Weakness/Opportunity (WO);** Find options that overcome weaknesses and then use these to take advantage of opportunities
3. **Strength/Threat (ST);** Overcome potential threats by exploiting strengths
4. **Weakness/Threat (WT);** The least favoured option where weakness is minimised to avoid possible threats.
- 5.

Using the findings from assignment 1 below I have listed the results of the SWOT analysis;

Strength (Internal);

Good transport

Largest European economy

Committed financial investment

Weakness (Internal);

Income taxes

Labour costs

Slow negotiations

Opportunities (External);

Access to alternative industries

Open market

Large market

Threats (External);

Euro currency

Debt

Competition

Applying the SWOT Analysis results to TOWS we have found the following;

1. *Strength/Opportunity (SO);*

The logistic and financial benefits can be enhanced by utilising the large stable economy that will allow foreign investments providing access to world leading industries.

2. *Weakness/Opportunity (WO);*

The socio-political obstacles have been sighted as a weakness but if we see these as reinvestments into supporting a stable economy then we can angle ourselves to benefit from the opportunities using a long term plan of marginal gains.

3. *Strength/Threat (ST);*

The instability of the Euro has limited investment over the past 10 years in Germany and therefore restricted the market creating more completion. If we use the government backing of fiscal support to the German economy we can still produce a successful investment with the backing of state sponsored support and its infrastructures.

4. *Weakness/Threat (WT);*

This is a difficult analysis as it is not something a progressive company like ours would realistically look to do. The best form of action here would be to limit organisational overhead so as to limit risk exposure on the fiscal front. Although not a deal breaker this option goes against the ethos of what we are trying to achieve by expanding operations on an international stage.

I feel, based on the options outlined, Strength/Threat (ST) is the best option to build our strategy on as we can use a wider framework of understanding to manipulate and improve our chances of success in Germany. Although the Euro is in a weakened position at present we can use that to lower our implementation costs whilst receiving stability and assurances from a country that has a globally leading economy in and of itself.

5.3 - Porter's Generic Strategies

Based upon the findings from the TOWS model I have decided to further define the strategic analysis to refine what business strategy will be needed to make this international transition a success. Porters Generic Strategies provide four generic business strategies that can be adopted in order to establish a competitive advantage. Porters Generic Strategy has played a dominant role in regards to corporate competitive strategy for over 30 years (Pretorius, 2008).

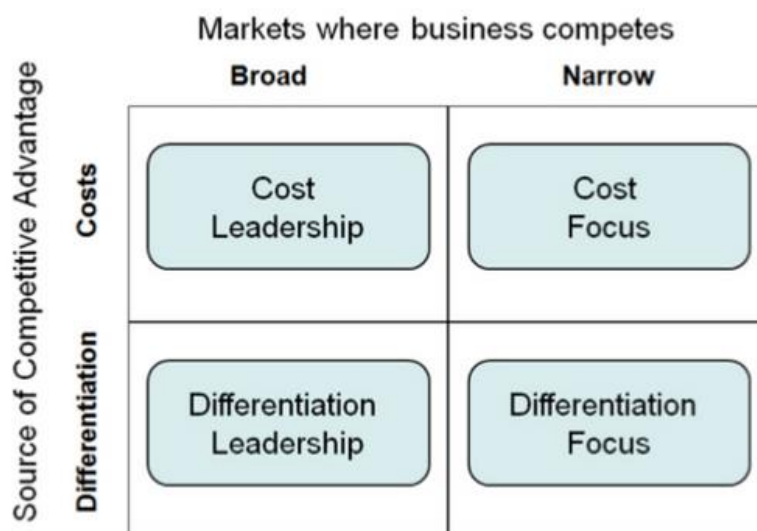


Diagram 5.3 – Porter's Generic Strategies

The results of the TOWS method showed that cost, in the current climate, is a big factor in establishing an effective strategy. The training we are looking to provide, as well as the financial capabilities of the company, shows that our business competition is narrow with the

source of the competitive advantage being cost focus. Porters matrix allows us to be able to decide on how we compete using the type of competitive advantage and the target market as the key determinants of choice (Akan et al, 2006).

6 – Strategic Analysis

At this stage we have established what is needed and where we can target in order to provide a successful plan of implementing the different areas of this investment. Now we need to look at the ‘how’ and the best way to do that is to understand the environment we are planning to operate in. In order to do this I have researched the area of international business strategy and found it can be broken down into three key philosophies;

- **Industry-based;** The conditions within a particular industry determine strategy (Porter, 1980)
- **Resource-based;** Strategy is determined by the ethos of individual organisations (Barney, 1991)
- **Institution-based;** A combination of the first two philosophies orientated by societal differences (Peng et al., 2009)

The field of strategic management has settled on the overarching school of thought that lies within the institution-based strategy. Applying this more flexible concept will help Alder Training further understand the ways that can be utilised to create a planned strategy that is manageable for success. Zou and Cavusgil (1996) explain the theory behind International business strategy as a way companies can utilise sustainable competitive advantages by developing and sustaining superior performances over their competitors. This ties in closely with the ethos of the organisation as stated in section 2 where the companies vision and goals were explained in detail.

Alder Training falls into the institution-based category as the method in how we deliver training is based on internal decision making but we also align our training programs and content with what the industry demands. All of these factors can change based on societal requirements,

industry based demand for particular skillsets and environmental changes. The diversity of the moving parts can determine success or failure at any given point so understanding what these maybe will further enhance a strategy for international business and management.

Gelbuda, Meyer and Delios (2008) found that the difference (distance) between the home and host countries institutional norms can encounter institutional obstacles caused by political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects. A relative study by Hayden & Edwards (2001) found incompatibilities between the training methods between UK and German companies. Due to the limitation of institutions in the UK to directly adopt the host countries (Germany) training practices the effectiveness of upskilling could not be achieved to a satisfactory level. Such things as this, in reverse, could hinder the success of the project and so with the understanding we have of external obstacles\entities risk averse measures will need to be adopted moving forward.

6.1 – Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

With external factors now in play, as discussed in the previous chapter, that could potentially affect the foreign implementation plans we must look at a method of investment that limits the organisations exposure to risk. The best method in my opinion is Foreign Direct Investment as this will be less time consuming and more manageable for the process we envisage embarking on. The Santander Trade Portal (2018) gives Germany a positive rating as being an attractive country for foreign investment. It shows that Germany has signed agreements that protect foreign investors alongside being a strategic location at the centre of Europe, a positive upon the completion of Brexit.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is when a company that has business interests in one country invests in a business in another country. FDI is different from portfolio based investment as

the emphasis is grounded in physical business operations not equity\stock based. With Alder Training looking to provide the same sort of service in a foreign economy FDI is the best fit in the way of investment models as it lays the foundation for a method of associate company status to be applied. What this means essentially is holding a controlling percentage stake in the target investment so as to be able to operate within governmental guidelines in the target country.

This leads into the how, the most cost effective and least time consuming way of applying FDI to the foreign investment strategy is to invest in an already registered training\education company operating in Germany currently. This now allows the parent company (Alder Training) to establish operations seamlessly feeding off the local knowledge of the acquired entity further enhancing the implementation strategy. It is important to note that the investment into the target foreign company could be a minor stake but purchasing a controlling stake would make changes to operations and implementations of new ideas, at a management level, more streamlined.

6.2 - Ansoff Matrix

The Ansoff Matrix is a strategic planning tool that provides implementers with a method of developing strategies for future growth. The matrix diagram (7.1) shows the different combinations of development strategies dependent on the target market and product.

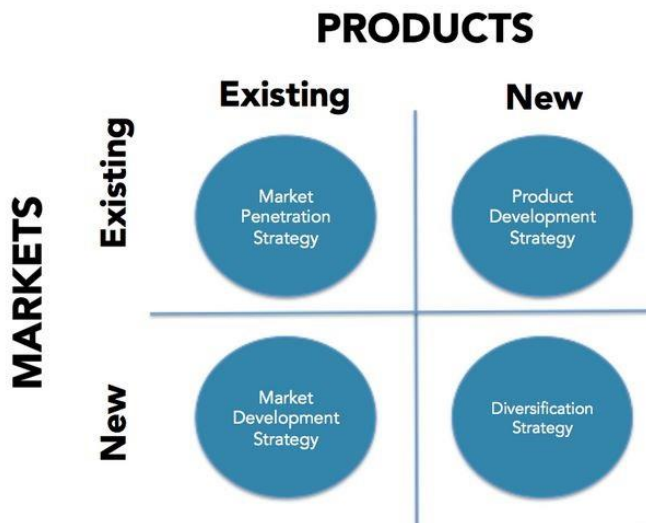


Diagram 6.1 – Ansoff Matrix

Mechanical manufacturing is established as a world leading industry within the German economy so expanding our current course catalogue to cater for these skills is a direct source of competitive advantage and future growth. Based on the Ansoff Matrix we can see that the market we are entering is existing but the product we are aiming to develop for this market is new, this gives us a 'Product Development Strategy'.

This strategy is focused on producing new products for an existing market on the basis that we seek to pursue growth. In order for us to develop the product range we currently offer it would be feasible to adopt and adapt what the training provider we acquire is already doing for the reason discussed in section '6.1 – FDI'. To further enhance the current capabilities acquired a

budget should be set aside for additional investment in R&D so as to make sure the newly designed product range is as upto date and relevant as possible.

7 - International Marketing Plan

Mercer (1997) defines marketing as “the one fundamental activity undertaken by all organisations. For most of them, it is also the most important contributor to their success or failure”. In order to devise an effective marketing plan the marketing team will need to have full integration within the organisations management structure so a full picture of what is needed, understood and produced is fully in line with the investment plans we have. This is the best way to produce a marketing strategy as explained by Hoyt (1912) who related effective management cooperation and control to high selling productivity. Narrowing down the process needed I have identified a practice called market segmentation that looks at a consumer market and simplifies its complexity to understand its diverse demographics. This is achieved by strategically identifying the needs of the consumer base and catering for these requirements (Saunders & Wong, 1993).

7.1 – Consumer Research

The most important part to the success of marketing is developing course packages that people and companies want and need. The only way to increase our chances of success in this area is to understand our consumer base in Germany, by doing this we can produce a training catalogue that is in demand and relevant to the industry in question. Receiving this feedback from the research will let us know whether, what, and how much to invest in our goals (Ashford et al, 2003). This will allow us to identify our target market specifically by finding out what people are looking for and how much they are willing to spend so we can create a budget that is cost effective to the product we will be marketing. Consumer research shouldn't be a one off just for the purpose our international expansion but should be continuous so as to keep our market share stable and keep us competitive in the long term.

7.2 – Customer Experience (CX)

A productive marketing campaign can be developed by the marketing department by designing in, as a primary driving force, the customer experience (CX) as shown below (Whitler, 2016);



Diagram 7.1 – Knowledge flow of creating a greater customer experience

To provide the firm direction and goals needed to achieve a credible CX a key technique called Marketing Performance Management (MPM) should be used. When this is applied to a campaign strategy the marketing team can then create and apply measurable quantifiable goals leading to a more productive campaign.

7.3 – Advertisement Channels

Advertisement is the key method to garner interest in our products so the most cost effective direct methods of advertising with consumers have been identified as the following;

1. **Social Media;** This can be fee based or free, with hundreds of millions of social media users this pool of potential consumers is virtually endless.
2. **Web Based Advertising;** Targeted methods of advertising are in full play, electronically, using predictive analysis to advertise to a vast user base in a cost effective instantaneous way.

8 – Conclusion & Recommendations

It is clear that the German economy is a strong and stable economy with additional legislation and government backing not only for its industries but also for foreign investment. Utilising such an established environment is not only a positive in my opinion but can also be seen as a lifeline now that separation from the European Union is now fully underway. Investing in Germany will give Alder Training unfettered access to EU member states without the difficulty of additional legislation, which is a potential reality for UK companies.

Establishing a well-defined HRM policy rooted in our internal (UK) system by allowing for adaptation and adoption of the target countries intricacies is the best way forward. Designing these different HR components within a HPWS will maximise the implementation focus building on stability and competitiveness. It is my suggestion to take a clear understanding of the Hofstede cultural comparison in order for us to achieve the aim of a successful IHRM function. There are a number of HR models that have been factored into this business plan mainly to establish structure of what is needed and how we are to build an effective employment basis. The element of risk has also been established as a factor that needs to be designed into all major aspects of this business plan so the pros and cons can be weighted accordingly.

The marketing portion of this plan has to be established from a cost perspective which is why FDI helps in providing additional resources that can aid the marketing campaign with real world data. FDI also opens up the opportunity to build a "strategic alliance" which is a legal agreement where both parties share access to intellectual property and other assets (Schlotbohm, 2018). This method is clearly more risk averse as we could share potential risk with an established German partner speeding up the settling process.

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