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# ***International Business Communications***

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## **Introduction**

British business communication is known for its strategic and polished approach, characterized by subtlety, politeness, and an emphasis on building trustful relationships. This distinct style has contributed to the success of numerous UK-based companies, both domestically and globally. One such company is Next plc, a leading retailer in the UK with a significant global presence. As the company considers further expansion within the European Union, Spain and France emerge as potential markets. This essay explores the opportunities and challenges Next plc may face in these countries, particularly focusing on communication barriers, cultural differences, and the broader business environment. Through a detailed analysis, this essay will recommend the most suitable market for Next plc's expansion, ensuring alignment with its strategic goals and British business practices.

## **Body**

### **Discussion**

Next plc is one of the leading retailers in the market in the United Kingdom and it trades globally. Generally, this organisation is famous for its fashion impact through its clothing collections, however, it sells footwear, home appliances and other accessories too. It was established in the year 1864 in Leeds, UK and its headquarters is located in Enderby, England (Nextplc, 2024). It has a good hold in the retail sector and produces fresh fashion stuff for men, women and children. This company has a vast network of physical stores in different nations, such as the UK, the Middle East, and Asia. They have around 700 offline stores among which the maximum numbers of them are present in the UK. They have stretched their trading range in other countries that come under the European Union through online services (Nextplc, 2024). Stating its business proposition in the origin nation, the online presence of Next plc is appreciable as the services are extraordinary considering the e-commerce framework and customer care services. It has a diversified product range other than fashion which is why one can witness its acquisition and merging activities towards this purpose (Londonstockexchange, 2022). They have acquired Made.com which is a furniture manufacturing company to add charm to the home products range of Next. Another organisation related to lifestyle products such as apparel, homeware and many more, named The Joules Group has merged with this company. These shows the dynamic nature of Next plc which efficiently carries the British business tactics in their trade pattern. Taking this company in this essay is justified as the multinational activities of this company are appreciable and it is associated with a bunch of expansion possibilities (Londonstockexchange, 2022). This should be mentioned that the

financial track record of this entity is balanced in a positive and upward curve. Apart from that, the elements of technological integrations also can be seen in this entity, like their omnichannel, marketing measures, building strong brand equity and many more.

There is a pile of countries in the European Union among which France and Spain are taken to be considered for expansion strategies. If Next plc decides to enlarge its business in this country, then it will produce some challenges and some opportunities too (Forbes, 2024). The positive facts should be the alignment of the fashion sense in the cultures of the targeted country and the aesthetics of Next plc. The French people have a good sense of fashion which can be fulfilled by this retail company. Another fact is the business etiquette of France which is quite different from that of in the UK (Forbes, 2024). They prefer more polite and respectful business propositions which can be met by Next. Staffing and recruitment are among the crucial facts of business expansion where entities think of engaging indigenous people in the companies to elevate productivity and customer service. If Next plc enters France by operating physical business there, staffing needs to be executed by the organisation. This company is wise enough to employ local people from that region on a large scale to ensure the success of this venture (Forbes, 2024). The crucial fact is that the sides of the employees and the frontline workers should be tamed by the organisation as well. The general work culture of France focuses on a healthy work-life balance which is again satisfied with the corporate culture and internal work environment of this chosen company (BBC, 2024). Moving further into the topic, language is a major thing which can make or break the extensional proposition of a firm. It is a fact that English is the language that is used in a global frame in business communications as well. Hence, the regulatory tasks that are associated with the boards of directors and higher authority individuals can be carried out in English. However, while solving customer issues, marketing and business activities at the core levels need the component of the French language (BBC, 2024).

This is why the company is required to employ more local people and multilingual people from the global field. French is the widely spoken language in that aimed country and Next plc must use marketing tactics inclining with this. It is necessary to cast a strong impact on the customers and aggravate brand loyalty (BBC, 2024). Before planning to enter this nation to expand business, the potential risks should be identified. The economic condition of France can effectively impact the financial growth of this organisation and tackle its productivity portfolio. Another thing is the political influence, which is quite stable in this country. However, any dispute in this domain can hinder the way of Next both in active and passive manners (Greenberg, 2023). The French fashion domain is already crowded with so many popular brands of different categories like standard or luxe. The targeting and segmentation of this company should be bold and flawless to beat this tough competition and get the desired position in the market. The state of labour and workforce creation needed to be verified to get

into this trading field (Greenberg, 2023). France has some appreciable labour laws to protect the rights of the workers which are required to be studied articulately by Next plc before plotting these strategies. The work hours in that place are comparatively shorter, which facilitates the employees to get more vacations and holidays. Hence it needs to be idealised by the firm how they can manage the productivity levels by obeying the labour rules and norms. The packages, salaries and employee well-being should be revised and framed in the format of this country to make it a successful venture (Greenberg, 2023). The supply chain plays a major role in this category to give production and functional operations a different dimension. Next needs to ensure a cost-effective yet highly functional system to ensure supplies and deliveries in the EU. The abstractions of real estate are a challenging factor in finding places to set up physical stores and offices are quite expensive in the cities of France. Then, examining the consumer preferences in this country is not a piece of cake and should be addressed critically.

Another preferable option to stretch the organisation of Next plc is Spain which is also an EU nation (Robson, 2023). There are various cultural differences in the mindset of work culture norms like the leisure-oriented approach. It is a social feature of Spain that the citizens are not used to having a hectic schedule of professional life, rather they get enough holidays. In the case of business communications Spaniards are more into linking personal relationships and trust. They are not as completely professional as the British traders. Spaniards are more expressive and direct while negotiating and follow the nature of being assertive (Robson, 2023). On the other hand, the British format that is followed by Next pls is focused on consensus-creating tactics. These are the common differences in the negotiation skills of both of these categories which can be problematic if these are not aligned positively. Like the facts mentioned in the case of France, it is the same again in the case of this country too (Robson, 2023). The English language can help with these things still the local language Spanish needs to be incorporated into the organisation. Marketing communications and handling the local people such as the customers, suppliers and many more needed to be commenced in the Spanish language. The conviction of Spanish dialects should be also kept in mind as the accents and pronunciation change in different locations in that nation (Forbes, 2022). Disruptions in the economy of Spain can be spotted in the recent past when the nation faced issues due to increased unemployment. Hence, the general financial trend and political stability there would impact the company at fiscal and operational levels. Moreover, the fashion market of Spain is already competitive with the presence of international and indigenous brands (Forbes, 2022). The labour rules in Spain are firm and ensure the components of productivity and employee welfare at the same time. The justified benefits of the workers are protected by minimum wage standards, overtime and work hour regulations. The affluence of talents can be explored by Next plc if it broadens its business there which will give a chance to integrate adroit employees into the entity (Forbes, 2022).

Hofstede's Cultural Dimension theory is one of the appropriate ones that can explain this situation well considering business trading in a global field. It was developed by Geert Hofstede and covers six dimensions to reflect the cultural contrast. The Power Distance Index (PDI) is the first fact that states how a less powerful participant in a society accepts and expects an unequal distribution of power (Wale, 2024). The second element of this model is individualism and collectivism (IDV) which articulate the notions why people prioritise discrete interest over collective welfare. The next domain is for masculinity and femininity (MAS) which is significant to consider as both of them form a workforce. The nature and mindset of male and female employees are lucidified in this portion. The male employees get inspired by achievements, materialistic gains and heroism whereas the females seek cooperation, value of life and work satisfaction (Wale, 2024). Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) is the fourth pillar of this postulate which measures the tolerance in a specific social range against diverse things. The component of short-term orientations and long-term orientations (LTO) describes the intent of a society if it values traditional opinions or follows future-oriented approaches. The last dimension is for indulgence and restraint (IVR) which states if the social trend is to manage the impulses or indulge in those in a free manner. This theory is quite relevant to inspecting the social and cultural layers of the countries chosen for Next plc for its diversification (Wale, 2024). Other crucial facts like logistic services, real estate and understanding consumer behaviour in Spain which are needed to be tailored strategically. It is clear from this discussion that both countries have certain factors that can hinder the expansion process of Next plc. These elements could be addressed potentially to transform the challenges into possibilities (Nickerson, 2023).

The communication barriers would be evaluated and studied to find suitable solutions for those. The first on the list is the language barrier, both France and Spain have their regional languages. For example, Catalan in Spain, and Breton in different regions of France (Nickerson, 2023). These local languages may make the marketing procedures difficult for Next plc. Then, the translational issues should also be addressed here, as accurate translations of various things related to business conduct is a complicated process to commence (Hill, 2022). It covers product descriptions, brochures, jingles and other marketing stuff that would be more impactful in the regional languages. Apart from this, cultural differences can prove to be a potential hindrance when stepping into these countries. The dissimilarities in business negotiations, and etiquette while parenting with other authorities for this aim can be complicated if not handled carefully (Hill, 2022). Technological barriers are some constraints which can delay the process or diminish the pace of trading, which is directly related to productivity. These two selected nations from the EU are advanced enough in terms of technological means. Still, some regions in these domains can have the differences of this advancement. For instance, some places may not have desired internet connectivity or can

slack in e-commerce infrastructure (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2020). These voids may lead to interruptions in online operations, connections in different offices around the countries and many business activities. According to a different analysis and statistical data it can be seen that Spain precedes France in terms of technological and overall advancement. Organisational contrasts can be another drawback in this criterion due to the diversity of the employees of the company (Gillespie and Swan, 2021). Managing cross-cultural teams is a tricky thing as there would be disparities in opinions, cultural beliefs and other abstract things too. Furthermore, alignment among the various locations of the entity and sharing of updates should be commenced in the global range. This factor of coordination becomes complicated sometimes due to these key constraints (Morrison-Smith and Ruiz, 2020). The work environment of Spain could be handled by Next plc better than that of France according to this study. This inspection suggests that Spain would be a pertinent choice to go with the expansion campaign of Next plc. Despite unemployment-related issues in the past Spain has managed to revive its economy and the extent of disposable income in the micro levels has increased (Sorrells, 2020). It has boosted the purchasing power of the customers and the relevancy of the fashion market there. Then, the shifts in the fashion trend in Spain could be beneficial for Next to set up physical stores there. Spaniards are always interested in the extraordinary and aesthetic design of home interiors and the diverse product range of this company would fit properly (Sutrisno et al., 2023). The country has plenty of technological amenities to be explored by Next and set up the tangible business there. Here are some doable things for this venture to overcome the identified barriers to business expansion in Spain. Localisation and comprehending the market at deeper levels are the foremost things to perform (Palm and Backman, 2020). The shopping habits and general preferences of the target customers are necessary to apprehend along with making the appearance of the business in the style of the local market. It is extremely important to resonate with the typical trading mindset of the people there while conveying its uniqueness (Briguglio et al., 2021). Next can carry out alliances with local traders, suppliers and distributors to smoothen the operational functions in that foreign region. The formation of joint ventures with Spanish businesses also can mitigate the chances of risks and adversities (Ketels and Porter, 2021). The flow of communication in the working bodies located in various locations needed to be streamlined along with handling the potential risks.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the strategic expansion of Next plc into the European Union necessitates a careful examination of potential markets, particularly in France and Spain. Through an analysis of cultural differences, business environments, and communication barriers, this essay has identified Spain as the more advantageous option for Next plc's expansion. The alignment of Spain's market dynamics with Next's business strategy, along with the country's technological infrastructure and consumer behaviour, presents a promising opportunity for growth. By localizing its approach and forging strategic partnerships, Next plc can successfully navigate the challenges and maximize the benefits of entering the Spanish market. Ultimately, this expansion not only holds potential for business success but also aligns with Next plc's commitment to maintaining its distinct British business identity while embracing global opportunities.

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