

BEFORE YOU COMMIT CAPITAL TO A NEW MARKET

Fifteen questions across the dimensions that determine whether an international expansion creates lasting value.

K O N R A D G R Ü S S

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Nearly 30 years of running businesses — international retail, franchise, expansion & global product portfolio leadership in a franchise system with presence in over 60 markets

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These questions draw on the author's professional experience evaluating, entering, and operating international markets — including partner search, franchise architecture, and value chain integration — across multiple organisations, industries, and continents over nearly three decades.

Your products solve real problems. Your concept is strong. Your company is resilient. Despite the current geopolitical uncertainty and shifting market conditions, the opportunity is real — new markets, new partners, new revenue streams that strengthen the business for the next decade.

International expansion creates strategic advantage that single-market companies cannot match. The question is whether now is the right time — and if it is, these are some questions to start with.

S T R A T E G I C F I T

1. Do you have a differentiated offer that solves a problem in the target market — one that local competitors are not already solving as well or better?
2. Is your business model proven and repeatable — or would entering a new market require rebuilding it?
3. Is your domestic business healthy enough to sustain the attention and capital that international expansion demands?

M A R K E T S E L E C T I O N

4. Was your target market selected based on operational fit — or because someone on the board has a contact there?
5. Do you know the regulatory, customs, and compliance requirements of that market — and can your current operations meet them?
6. Have you assessed the competitive intensity — and do you have a credible reason to win?

O P E R A T I O N A L R E A D I N E S S

7. Can your supply chain — sourcing, production, logistics, fulfilment — extend to serve the new market at acceptable cost and speed?
8. Can your IT and business systems support international operations — multi-currency, multi-language, cross-border reporting?
9. Is your product or service range compliant with the target market's standards — or does it need adaptation before you can sell?

F I N A N C I A L R E S I L I E N C E

- 10.** Have you modelled the full cash-flow impact — not just the investment, but the ramp-up to profitability under a realistic downside scenario?
- 11.** Can the company fund the expansion without endangering the core business — including if results take 12–18 months longer than planned?
- 12.** Do you know the impact on existing debt covenants, credit lines, and shareholder commitments?

L E A D E R S H I P & O R G A N I S A T I O N

- 13.** Does your leadership team have the bandwidth to launch a new market without degrading domestic performance?
- 14.** Do you have — or can you hire — people with direct international operating experience to lead the expansion?
- 15.** Can your organisation decide fast enough for a new-market environment — where conditions change weekly and local teams need room to act?

If several of these gave you pause — that's useful information. These questions help you see where you stand before the capital is committed.

These questions are drawn from the International Market Entry Readiness Assessment — a structured 4–6 week diagnostic that answers one question: can your company extend into a new market without breaking?

In a first conversation, we look at where your company stands and what would need to be true before committing to a new market. 60–90 minutes, no cost.

A B O U T T H E A U T H O R

Konrad Grüss — Former CEO, Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

Nearly 30 years of running businesses — international retail, franchise, expansion, and global product portfolio leadership spreading over more than 60 markets.

Now helping companies decide and act — whether that means preparing for a first international market, scaling across borders, or building the partnership model that carries the concept further.

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