

JAN BUIS

GLOBAL GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGIES

FOR
BUSINESS STUDENTS

Theoretical and practical contribution to global marketing



Global Go-to-Market Strategies for Business Students

Jan Buis

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Colophon

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Preface

Let's start with a familiar analogy: "Once you get your driver's license, the real learning begins." Without foundational knowledge and support, diving in without a solid grasp of the available tools can lead to a costly and risky process of trial and error. This book—along with many other learning experiences—is fundamentally similar. Through the upcoming modules, you'll gain insights and a toolkit as the first step in your Global Marketing learning journey. The practical realities, however, will unfold in your future experiences.

I recognize that, for some, this material is simply a required part of the curriculum and may not align with your career aspirations. For others, it may become a daily practice, whether in a corporate role, as a consultant, or as part of a private equity fund, to name a few examples. And for those who may not have clear goals yet, as was once the case for me, the future may simply evolve as opportunities arise. I'm grateful that I received essential tools during my own educational journey, so I wasn't "driving blind" but was well-prepared with the fundamentals.

This book will guide you in developing an optimal global Go-to-Market strategy, helping you ask the right questions to make sound decisions. Most importantly, it aims to help avoiding costly mistakes, such as pursuing markets that may not deliver the initial success required for international growth. Believe me—these types of errors remain all too common!

The content of this book serves as a comprehensive toolkit designed to support your future success in global marketing.

Global Expansion Go-to-Market Strategies for Scale-Ups

Following each module in the given order is highly recommended, even if it seems overwhelming at first. By understanding the core concepts in their structured order, you will significantly improve your ability to identify a strategic direction, instead of relying solely on traditional or obvious approaches. That said, each curriculum is unique, and your educational institution may prefer a different sequence. If this is the case, remember that the modules were designed with a specific flow in mind, and it might be helpful to revisit this flow when putting these principles into practice in the future.

I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who has been part of my journey. This includes former colleagues, business partners, my educational experiences, and the friends and family who continue to offer insights and reflections on my work. Collaborating with each of them has provided invaluable perspectives on the varied paths expansion strategies can take—both in success and in lessons learned.

Wishing you a rewarding journey—not only through the courses related to this book but, more importantly, in the times ahead. Embrace each challenge with a smile and enjoy the experience!

January 2025

Jan

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Introduction

This book is an adaptation of the 2024 released series and comprehensive book titled *Global Expansion Go-to-Market Strategies for Scale-Ups*. While it has been modified to serve as a more educationally sound resource, the majority of the content remains consistent with the original. The original book primarily targeted Business-to-Business (B2B) scale-up companies, and although this adaptation has broadened to include Business-to-Consumer (B2C) elements, it maintains a strong B2B orientation. Additionally, Business-to-Business-to-Consumer (B2B2C) approaches largely align with the B2B methodologies discussed.

Expanding a business internationally can be challenging, particularly if it's the first attempt or if previous efforts fell short. However, it's no more challenging than launching a new business or introducing a new product line into the market. Like those ventures, going abroad requires a series of strategic considerations, all summarized in a Go-to-Market plan.

This book guides through four distinct modules, with each module concluding with a critical decision on how to proceed. That decision will then carry over into the next module. By the end of the fourth module, a comprehensive Go-to-Market strategy has been developed, with clearly defined activities for the implementation.

The most compelling Go-to-Market Strategy will naturally emerge by progressing through each of the outlined modules.

The following modules will be part of this book:

- **Module A:** Feasibility Study
- **Module B:** Sales
- **Module C:** Human Resource Management
- **Module D:** Marketing

Each module in this book is equally weighted in size and importance and, as noted, should ideally be followed in the order presented. At the beginning of each module, there is an initial consideration of the “why” and the “how.” If the purpose behind an activity isn’t clear, developing an effective “how” becomes challenging. The “how” then guides the main content that follows, and each module concludes with key takeaways. After all modules are completed, a “Final Word” offers an overall reflection.

Before starting the modules, an assignment is provided, designed to carry through the modules and culminate in a comprehensive Go-to-Market strategy. However, each module can also be taken as an individual course or in a different order, with assignments adapted to cover the respective module independently.

Each chapter within the modules concludes with a set of questions, which act as a high-level self-assessment to ensure that the material covered has been understood and internalized. The educational institution may decide how to incorporate assignments and whether the questions should be answered formally.

Global Marketing

Before delving into the modules, it’s important to recognize that it falls within the academic field of **Global Marketing**. Global Marketing involves the planning, production, positioning, and

promotion of products or services across multiple countries and regions.

This discipline requires the development of Go-to-Market strategies that account for the cultural, economic, and regulatory differences between international markets, all while striving to maintain a consistent brand identity worldwide.

The outcome of an effective Global Go-to-Market strategy often necessitates adapting products, messaging, and marketing campaigns to suit local tastes, cultural nuances, and legal requirements—a process commonly referred to as localization. Hence, localization involves much more than simple translation; it encompasses the full customization of offerings to align with the unique characteristics of each market.

At the end of the book, there is a list of resources that have informed the content, blending real-world experience with academic insights. Where academia offers theories and frameworks, real-life experience informs the tailoring of these to specific circumstances. This synergy is demonstrated throughout the book.

Note: Each of the modules is available as an independent eBook.

Global Go-to-Market Strategy: Why?

Growing companies often face the challenge of determining how best to sustain their growth momentum. While international expansion is a common consideration, there are alternative strategies for scaling without venturing abroad. The most straightforward approach is expanding the portfolio within the current industry, allowing the company to deepen its market penetration. However, this strategy is limited by the scope of the current product or service offerings.

Another effective alternative is introducing the current portfolio to a new vertical market. For example, a company primarily serving the healthcare sector could adapt its portfolio to target the hospitality industry. While this approach may require some modifications to the offering, they are often minimal and manageable. This strategy is particularly successful in large domestic markets, such as the United States, Germany, or India, where some vendors achieve significant growth without ever entering international markets.

Regardless of the chosen direction, many companies underestimate the complexities involved in establishing a presence in any new market. Success in one market does not guarantee the same outcomes in another, whether domestic or international. A well-defined and carefully executed Go-to-Market strategy is essential for identifying opportunities and mitigating potential risks, ensuring sustainable growth across all ventures.

Establishing a presence in any market poses one of the most challenging tasks, which is often underestimated.

There are several compelling reasons for developing a global strategy:

1. **Belief in Portfolio Potential:** A strong conviction that the existing product portfolio can meet demand in new markets.
2. **Leveraging Technology Momentum:** The technology is gaining global attention, prompting strategic discussions.
3. **Stagnation in the Current Market:** Growth has plateaued in the current market, causing the exploration of new opportunities.
4. **New Investment:** Recent capital has been secured to expand market presence and capitalize on growth potential.
5. **Avoiding Decline:** Maintaining the status quo will lead to decline, making the pursuit of new markets critical for sustaining growth.

Beyond these compelling reasons, there may still be factors indicating that going abroad might not be the right step—at least not at this time. For instance, a single opportunistic win does not provide sufficient insight into the market itself. Therefore, understanding the “why” behind international expansion is essential, as it directly shapes the “how” of the strategy.

The Obvious will become a Pitfall

It is relatively easy for companies to select what they perceive as the “obvious” international markets. This decision is often driven by factors such as a shared language or the sheer size of the market. While these factors are undoubtedly important, they

are far from the only considerations. By focusing solely on these elements, companies risk overlooking numerous challenges that are likely to emerge once they enter the market.

Another common pitfall is simply replicating the sales strategy used in the home market. While this existing strategy may serve as a sound foundation to go abroad, requiring only minor adjustments, it's important to remember that each market comes with its own unique challenges. What worked domestically may not directly apply abroad, as entering new markets often involves limited resources and a lack of local customer examples. Each market entry requires its own process of adaptation and refinement to ensure success.

There are too many cases where companies enthusiastically entered a new market, only to conclude after a year or two that withdrawing was their only viable option. Such experiences can leave lasting scars, often leading to reluctance and hesitation when considering future international plans.

A painful market withdrawal can be avoided by taking the extra time to adopt a unique approach to assessing market potential.

Is there a way to avoid the obvious?

Taking time to gain a broader perspective on the potential of each market can yield valuable insights and fresh perspectives. Rather than rushing into the obvious choices and confronting challenges head-on, consider exploring smaller or less apparent opportunities where it may be easier to establish foundational knowledge about conducting business in a new market, country, or territory.

Global Go-to-Market Strategy: How?

The “how” of entering international markets comes with its own set of complexities, and there is no universal approach. This underscores the importance of conducting a thorough analysis of the current sales strategy and the rationale behind it when developing an expansion plan. Recognizing and adapting to these key factors is critical for the success of any market entry initiative.

Successful selling in the home market does not guarantee the same results in other markets.

By keeping these factors in mind, the creation of a robust and adaptable Go-to-Market strategy that effectively addresses the complexities and opportunities of expanding into new markets will not be difficult. The following key questions are the fundament of the ‘how’ of this book and will reflect the modules to come:

- In which country should the presence be established first, and which countries should be avoided?
- What makes sense in the short term, and what is to be addressed later?

To answer these questions, it is essential to evaluate the feasibility of each country in relation to the home market, the business plan, and the available product portfolio.

Numerous constructs, models, and frameworks have been developed in the field of Go-to-Market strategies to assess potential markets and determine the most effective approach for establishing a presence. Over time, researchers and industry experts tested many of these methodologies.

This book introduces a selection of these frameworks, which are deeply rooted in real-world experience and have consistently aligned with market realities. While other models are not inherently flawed, the approach presented here stands out for its practical application and proven reliability. These concepts also emphasize areas where initial efforts may not yield the desired outcomes, helping organizations prioritize effectively.

The order of the modules has already been outlined; here it will be reiterated and further explained. This includes the reasoning behind the sequence and the importance of following the modules in the prescribed order.

1. **Feasibility Study:** The global journey begins by identifying regions or countries with the highest potential for success while also highlighting areas that should be avoided initially. The chosen framework for this feasibility study is called **CPA-CAGE-PMA**, which is explored in detail in Module A. Unlike other models this framework uses a three-stage process: starting with evaluating initial market potential, progressing to define market attractiveness, and concluding with an assessment of market fit. While most feasibility studies focus primarily on market size and related technologies, with some acknowledgment of potential barriers, this framework goes a step further by examining whether there is a cultural alignment between the potential new market and the headquarters.

2. **Sales:** After identifying the new markets to target, it is essential to define the approach for reaching potential customers. Various Route-to-Market options exist, and it is likely that one or two are already in use in the home market. However, a key decision must be made: will the strategy simply replicate the existing approach, or will the new markets require a different method? The organization must also consider the potential impact. Module B offers a thorough exploration of each major Route-to-Market option, explaining how to effectively manage customer connections using these approaches.
3. **Human Resource Management:** Once the approach to serving the market has been determined, it is crucial to build a local presence that can drive and sustain success. The capabilities of these resources should align with the activities they will support, considering whether the focus is on achieving short-term success or fostering long-term sustainable growth. Integrating human resources into the Go-to-Market strategy is often the most expensive step. This decision depends significantly on the organization's stage of development and its level of risk mitigation. At one extreme, it might involve establishing a full local entity with dedicated resources; at the other, it could mean adopting a leaner approach to minimize costs and risks.
4. **Marketing:** Efforts to become visible in the market must support all previous activities and decisions. Certain visibility initiatives are essential for short-term impact, while others should focus on fostering long-term growth in visibility, where consistency is key. Beyond establishing market visibility, outreach to potential customers can be sped up by initiating lead-generation activities. It's important to carefully choose these efforts to align with cultural expectations and market nuances. Few things are more counterproductive than investing significant resources into marketing activities that fail to resonate, ultimately reducing the willingness of potential customers to engage with the solution.

Global Expansion Go-to-Market Strategies for Scale-Ups

The modules represent stages within the Go-to-Market strategy, with each module building upon the outcomes of the preceding one. Developing a marketing strategy for a remote market without first understanding the market itself is an inefficient use of time and resources. Ensuring alignment in decisions across the stages simplifies the process of constructing and managing the Go-to-Market strategy over time, ultimately enhancing its effectiveness and coherence.

Assignment

This link provides access to the assignments designed to reflect the knowledge shared in this book:

<https://www.jbtd.nl/education/>

There will be at least four assignments available to choose from. These assignments are designed to be versatile, allowing students to work through the entire sequence of modules or focus specifically on Module A if desired.

For those starting with a later module or concentrating on a specific module, please pay attention to the advisory text and corresponding guidance button provided on the portal. These will ensure clarity and alignment with the intended use of the assignments.

If the portal is unavailable and access has been tested multiple times within a 12-hour period, please reach out to postmaster@jbtd.nl to bring the issue to attention.

Portal & Credential Requirements

To access one of the assignments via the portal, students will be required to provide a small set of credentials. This process ensures transparency with the educational institution and helps monitor the utilization of the assignments.

The requested credentials are:

- Full name
- Educational Institution
- Email address
- Free Text Field: for sharing any thoughts, ideas, or concerns

All personal data will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Policy of the publisher, JB Telecom & Data, which complies with the EU GDPR regulations to ensure data protection and privacy: <https://www.jbtd.nl/sustainable-growth/privacy-policy/>

Disclaimer on used assignments

The assignments created without reference to any specific company. These assignments are designed to mirror a particular market and reflect an average vendor or manufacturer operating within that market.

Any close resemblance to existing companies is purely coincidental and unintentional. If any assignment seems to closely resemble an actual company or situation, please inform the publisher so that the assignment can be reviewed, adapted, or removed as necessary.

For such inquiries or concerns, please contact the publisher at postmaster@jbtd.nl

Format of answering

There is no pre-developed or mandatory format for any of the assignments. This applies both to tools such as a potential spreadsheet for conducting the CPA-CAGE-PMA feasibility study and to how the final outcomes are presented.

The approach to completing the assignments is intentionally left open-ended to encourage creativity among students or to align with the specific guidelines provided by the educational institution.

It is also acknowledged that today's (and future) students may exceed the author's expectations by utilizing innovative tools and techniques. Prescribing a predefined format could, therefore, hinder flexibility and productivity, working against the preferred methods of the students.

For any guidance or clarification, please consult the educational institute or the assignment guidelines.

Refreshment rate

As previously mentioned, the minimum number of assignments will be four. Each year, the collection will grow by at least two new assignments, ensuring a diverse range of options.

However, if the outcome of a particular assignment becomes publicly available or if it is observed that an assignment is being overused, it will gradually be phased out to maintain the integrity and freshness of the curriculum.

Team versus individual

The completion of assignments may vary depending on the weight of the related course and can be undertaken individually or as a team. It's important to remember that these assignments are challenging, and adjustments to the expected outcomes may be necessary when done individually. Conversely, when the assignment is approached as a team or project-driven activity, a more in-depth and comprehensive result is expected.

Students who already intend to work—or are currently working—in this field are encouraged to take on the assignment independently, as it will provide valuable, hands-on insights and experience.

Ultimately, the method of completing the assignment—whether using the suggested guidelines or adapting it to align with course-specific objectives—remains at the discretion of the educational institution. The role of the author is to provide guidance and potential directions, leaving the final decisions regarding the approach to the institution and students.

Working Professionals

Individuals or teams participating in postgraduate courses, whether as part of continuous education or an executive program, are encouraged to use their own company or employer as the basis for assignments. This approach allows the learning outcomes to be directly reflected in current business activities or serve as a foundation for future strategic planning.

Familiarity with the company's portfolio and market dynamics adds depth to the Go-to-Market strategy, making the results more aligned with real-world scenarios. However, participants should exercise caution if competitors are also enrolled in the course or if the assignment outcomes are shared within the educational institute. It is advisable to establish a mutual agreement to ensure that sensitive information remains confidential and is not disclosed to a broader audience.

Involvement

Creating assignments is both an enjoyable and creatively challenging process. The author eagerly anticipates receiving well-crafted new assignments from those who have engaged with the book and applied its models. Approved assignments that are made available for download will include proper acknowledgment of the contributors by name, as a gesture of gratitude.

Submissions can be sent to student@jbtd.nl

Module A: Feasibility Study

A proven framework for identifying the most
promising countries to go abroad

Final Words

By reaching the end of this book, you should now have all the necessary information in place to support a successful global go-to-market strategy. The journey started by evaluating various attributes to determine which markets offer the highest attractiveness for success and to identify those that should be avoided in the initial phases.

The international journey begins with carefully selecting the most suitable regions or countries to enter.

Once the regions or countries were chosen, the next step was to decide how to reach out to potential buyers. As provided in Module B, there are multiple Route-to-Market options available. Selecting the right one will depend on how the home market is currently served and what will be most efficient in these remote markets. While they don't need to be identical, alignment is beneficial. Avoid creating multiple Route-to-Market strategies simultaneously in new markets, as this can lead to confusion and divert resources from customer engagement.

After establishing how to serve potential customers, the next decision is who will support this process—whether it be headquarters or a local team. Setting up a local structure requires careful consideration, as it is often one of the most costly elements of the global Go-to-Market strategy. Rushing this step or failing to understand local legislation can severely impact success.

The costs become especially apparent when bringing local resources on board—a step that requires careful consideration.

Even with resources dedicated to serving remote regions, their presence alone won't be sufficient. It's essential to make the

brand and solution attractive to new customers; this requires a well-thought-out visibility plan. Staying visible builds trust and supports customers' purchasing decisions. There are numerous ways to achieve visibility, but costs can quickly add up, so it's important to make sustainable choices. Lead-generation activities should work in conjunction with visibility to reach the intended goals.

This book and related modules intentionally highlight cultural considerations. Many global journeys fail, often with cultural differences as a contributing factor. Therefore, the book aims to build awareness of what it means to do business in different markets. The goal is not to adapt completely to another culture but to understand what is required to succeed in diverse environments.

Successful global Go-to-Market strategy is achieved through a strong understanding of cultural differences.

While going through all these steps should involve the leadership team of the company, it's wise to have one person leading the implementation. This individual will develop a traditional project plan that includes all deliverables along a timeline. This approach will not only aid in day-to-day operations but also support financial planning. It should be ensured that each step is well documented, coordinated with internal resources, and may even establish a virtual team responsible for the operational side of the project. This individual will also take the lead in setting up a dashboard with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), making sure everyone in the organization interprets these KPIs the same way.

If working with external agencies or consultants, coordinating through this dedicated lead will help align efforts. Ideally, this person will dedicate a significant portion of their time to the project over the next 1.5 to 3 years. While the CEO should be

deeply involved in this strategic initiative, it is generally best for someone else to lead day-to-day operations, as the CEO's attention is often required for other critical activities.

The implementation should be established as a strategic project, led by a dedicated leader.

As an individual and organization, you should feel ready to embark on this new phase of growth, backed by thorough planning and strategic decisions. Regularly reviewing results against the strategy, at least annually, will be essential for adapting to new insights and challenges.

This book, titled ***Global Go-to-Market Strategies for Business Students***, is a comprehensive guide structured into four essential modules. These modules are designed to be followed sequentially, starting with an initial feasibility study, followed by selecting the appropriate Route-to-Market, evaluating local resources, and culminating in an effective visibility strategy for new regions.

The author has crafted this book specifically for college-based business students where theory and practice come together. It is suited for students in global technical, business, or marketing programs. In some cases, it may also be suitable for pre-master's students or as part of a Global Marketing course within an MBA program.

To optimize learning, the book provides an overarching assignment at the beginning, guiding students through each module. Additionally, each chapter contains its own set of questions to reinforce key concepts. Each of the four modules is also available as an individual eBook, allowing educators to share relevant sections as standalone courses without requiring the complete book.

JB Telecom & Data is an independent boutique management consultancy firm with a focus on supporting innovative technology start/scale-up's developing their global Go-to-Market strategies.

Jan Buis, founder of JB Telecom & Data, brings over 20 years of experience in global expansion. He has consistently demonstrated his talent at growing business and sales operations by swiftly implementing essential structures and processes, all while considering the cultural context. His expertise enables him to establish connections quickly with a diverse range of stakeholders, resulting in successful outcomes in various markets.

Jan's career path has led him through a diverse array of organizations, ranging from large public-listed corporates and mid-sized companies to start-ups. He worked in several technology sectors with global operations, primarily in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

He was privileged to be educated at several levels: In 2012, Jan attained Dual Executive Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a focus on "International Master's in Management" at Purdue University Daniels (Krannert) School of Business in West-Lafayette (IN), United States of America and at the TIAS School of Business and Society based in Tilburg, the Netherlands. Prior to that, from 1994 to 1997, he attended the Eindhoven University of Technology, earning a MSc in International Technical Development Science. The undergraduate studies took place from 1990 to 1994 at Windesheim in Zwolle, earning a BEng. in Industrial Management.

