JK Julia Kallas
ADVISORY

FREE MARKET-ENTRY GUIDE / 03

Before you enter a *new market.*

Six questions to answer before you choose a country, a route and a partner, and a checklist to use before the first order.

A new market can bring new customers, new partners and a stronger brand. It can also take a season of money and attention before it pays back. The difference is usually decided before the first meeting, not after the first delivery.

For luxury and premium fashion brands, manufacturers and independent boutiques that want to sell beyond their home market.

The best next market is rarely the biggest one. It is the one where your product, your price and your partners make sense together.

01

Why this market, and why now?

Look for evidence you already have: online orders and website visits by country, social media followers abroad, wholesale enquiries, tourists buying in your store. Then check whether your positioning means the same thing to a customer there.

Ask: what evidence do we already have that customers here want us?

02

Who already sells there, and at what price?

Find the brands you would sit next to, where they are stocked and what they cost on the shelf. Add duties, VAT, shipping and the retailer's margin to your own price, and see if it is still credible.

Ask: at the local retail price, which brands would we sit beside?

03

Which route to market fits?

Department stores, multibrand boutiques, an agent, a distributor, your own e-commerce, a showroom or pop-up, a marketplace. Owned, partnered or rented: each route trades margin, control and speed differently, and the strongest entries often combine two.

Ask: how much control and margin are we willing to trade for speed?

Partners judge you in the first meeting. Be ready for the questions they will ask.

04

Which partners, and what will they expect?

Buyers expect line sheets, prices in their currency, delivery windows, minimums and sell-out support. Agents ask about commission and territory; distributors about exclusivity and margin. Shortlist the partners whose customers match yours, and know why each one.

Ask: could we answer a good buyer's first ten questions today?

05

Do the numbers work after every cost?

Count everything: wholesale or partner margin, commissions, duties, logistics, translations, local customer service, marketing, trade fairs and travel. A first season is an investment; know its size before you start.

Ask: what does one season here cost, and when does it pay back?

06

Who will make it work?

Markets are built by people who visit, call and follow up. Name one owner, agree how often they will be there, and decide in advance how you will judge the first seasons: sell-through, reorders, new doors, full-price sales.

Ask: what would make us stay after the first season, and what would make us stop?

PUT IT TO WORK / YOUR MARKET-ENTRY CHECKLIST

Tick what is true today. Every “not yet” is work to do before the first order.

- [ ] COMMERCIAL
  We know why this market, and what success looks like after two seasons.
- [ ] MARKET
  We have evidence of demand: orders, visits, followers or enquiries from this market.
- [ ] MARKET
  We know our local retail price and the brands we would sit beside.
- [ ] ROUTE
  We have chosen a route to market, and know what it costs in margin and control.
- [ ] PARTNERS
  We have a shortlist of partners, with a reason for each one.
- [ ] PARTNERS
  Line sheets, local-currency prices and trading terms are ready.
- [ ] OPERATIONS
  Shipping, duties, returns and customer service for this market are planned.
- [ ] NUMBERS
  We know what one season costs and when it should pay back.
- [ ] PEOPLE
  One named person owns this market, with time to visit it.

EXPANSION IS A SEQUENCE, NOT A LEAP

Enter one market *well.*

Brands that grow internationally rarely open everywhere at once. They choose one market, enter it through the right route, learn from the first seasons, then move to the next. Sometimes the right answer is a different market first, or a different route, or not yet. The goal is to decide with the full picture: the market, the channel mix, the customer and the numbers.

WANT AN OUTSIDE VIEW BEFORE YOU CHOOSE?

I am Julia Kallas, founder of Julia Kallas Advisory in Milan. I spent six years in international wholesale for an Italian premium brand, with around one hundred doors across Austria, Poland, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Spain and Portugal, and four years building retailer partnerships at a major European fashion marketplace. I can help you choose your next market and the route into it.

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A decision aid, not financial, legal or tax advice. Check duties, contracts and the numbers for your own business.