**Otterbox Enters Brazil**

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December 12, 2013

**Executive Summary**

This marketing plan was created to provide Otter Products, LLC with a successful method for introducing Otterbox products into Brazil. The plan discusses Otterbox as a company, our products, our proposed growth strategy, identification and justification for entering Brazil, positioning and competition, the entry strategy, and marketing strategy.

Entering Brazil makes sense for Otterbox at this time due to Brazil’s growing economy, expanding smartphone market, and the low economic and political risk associated with the country. The upcoming 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic games in Brazil are also attractive incentives for entering the country sooner rather than later. These events will draw thousands of tourists and provide a surge for the local economy.

We plan to introduce Otterbox to the Brazilian market through direct exporting to Brazilian retail stores like Ricardo Electro and Insinuante and the specialty stores of the major Brazilian mobile providers. We also recommend that Otterbox engage in e-commerce in Brazil by setting up a Portuguese version of the North American website.

Currently, Otterbox only has one major competitor in Brazil; another American company called Case Logic. By entering Brazil before other competitors, Otterbox will be able to build a large market share in the protective case industry and enjoy the first-mover advantages associated with entering an emerging industry while it is still young in a country.

Our analysis found that Otterbox will be successful by targeting the middle and upper class, entering before competition, positioning by attribute or benefit, exporting directly, adopting multiple distribution channels, adapted packaging, and a selective distribution strategy.

**Otterbox**

Located in Fort Collins, Colorado, Otterbox was created in 1998 by founder and chairman, Curt Richardson. Otterbox was “built upon fundamentals of hard work, creativity, and perseverance” (*About Otterbox: Our Story*, 2013). In North America, Otterbox cases are sold in retail stores such as Best Buy, Walmart, RadioShack, Target, Verizon stores, Sprint stores, and more. In addition to being located in North America, Otterbox is also sold online in Ireland, Sweden, France, Germany, Italy, Hong Kong, and Asia (*North Colorado Business Report*, Lynn, 2013). These websites are tailored to each country to offer a more local experience (*North Colorado Business Report*, Lynn, 2013). Besides Colorado, Otterbox has offices located in Ireland and Hong Kong (*About Otterbox: International*, 2013). In 2012, Otterbox reported a revenue of $573.9 million (*North Colorado Business Report*, Lynn, 2013.)

The company currently employs 650 people worldwide, including about 600 employees in Colorado (*North Colorado Business Report*, Lynn, 2013). Otterbox’s team-oriented culture preaches that if you work hard, you must also play hard. They encourage their employees to take a little break from work to enjoy activities, such as ping pong, foosball, and pinball (*About Otterbox: Our Story*, 2013). Through diligent, creative teamwork, Otterbox has become “an innovator of protective solutions for the leading global handheld manufacturers, wireless carriers, and distributors” (*About Otterbox: Our Story*, 2013).

**What is Otterbox?**

Otterbox offers protective cases for Amazon, Apple, Blackberry, HTC, LG, Motorola, Nokia, and Samsung products (*Otterbox*, 2013). There are seven different series: armor, defender, preserver, commuter, reflex, prefix, and pursuit (*Otterbox*, 2013). In addition to protective cases, Otterbox offers screen protectors for iPhones and iPads, as well as dry boxes (*Otterbox*, 2013). The following chart (Figure 1) lists and describes the series of protective cases that Otterbox offers.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Series:** | **Protects Against:** |
| Armor  | Water, drop, dust, crush  |
| Defender  | Drop, dust, scratches |
| Preserver | Water, dust |
| Commuter  | Drop, dust, scratches |
| Reflex  | Drop, scratches |
| Prefix  | Drop, scratches |
| Pursuit  | Water, dust, scratches, drop |

**Figure 1.** Description of Series (*Otterbox*, 2013)

Otterbox caters to all the “klutzy, spontaneous, chaotic, graceless individuals who have broken a device or valuable due to their active lifestyle” (*About Otterbox: Our Story*, 2013.) Considering the growing market for smartphones and tablets in Brazil (Heim, 2011), Otterbox must develop a strategy to enter the country successfully.

**Growth Strategy for Entering Brazil**

Otterbox’s entry into Brazil will follow a market development strategy. Otterbox will be introducing it’s current smartphone and tablet cases into a new market where smartphone use is emerging and increasing in popularity. According to Marcelo Ballve from Business Insider, smartphone growth has slowed in the developed nations of Europe and North America (Mobile in Brazil, 2013.) While Otterbox will still enjoy strong sales in these markets as consumers upgrade their devices, smartphones and tablets are almost reaching the maturity stages of their respective product lifecycles. Most of the consumers that want smartphones in these markets already have them.

Brazil, however, represents a relatively untapped market for smartphones and tablets and  presents an opportunity for Otterbox to gain a foothold in the market by appealing to early-adopters of these growing new technologies. If Otterbox is able to capitalize on the first-mover advantages of tapping the protective case market in Brazil early on, it can secure a large market share and reap the benefits as smartphone sales blossom in Brazil in the coming years. Research firm IDC predicts that by 2017 Brazil will be the fourth-largest market for smartphone sales (Investor’s Business Daily, 2012).

**Justification for Entering Brazil**

Several factors lead to our decision to introduce Otterbox into Brazil. The first thing to consider is that Brazil is one of the rapidly developing BRIC nations, showing strong economic growth and urbanization. The unemployment rates are at an all-time low and the income inequality has also gone down tremendously over the years. In terms of GDP, Brazil is ranked eighth considering purchasing power parity with $2.394 trillion (The World Factbook, 2013). High GDP lowers economic risk for Otterbox doing business in Brazil. Brazil’s population is ranked fifth in the world with over 190 million residents, making for an extremely large un-tapped potential customer base (Index Mundi, 2012).

Unemployment rates are another metric used to determine economic risk in a country. When unemployment rates are high, there is less disposable income to spend on luxury goods. Brazil’s unemployment rate is declining, with a 2012 low of 5.5% (Brazil, Country Profile, 2013). This is encouraging for Otterbox, as smartphones and the protective cases made for them, are luxury goods.

Another key factor to look at is the literacy rate and the education status of the country. Brazil’s literacy rate is 90.4%, with a school life expectancy of 14 years. High literacy rates and a solid education system are key indicators for sustained growth and profitability in a country.

AMB Country Risk Report analyzed Brazil on three categories of risk including political, financial, and economic risk. Brazil is in a very stable position with a rapidly growing economy and low economic risk. The financial and political risk in Brazil is medium due to a “moderate amount of corruption and a need for improved transparency” (AMB Country risk report, 2013). Protest outbreaks across the country concerning the political corruption and unfair healthcare and education also contributed to Brazil’s medium political risk. Financial risk is medium due to the legal and regulatory environment, which is improving since the reinsurance market has been opened from the government to other competitors.

Culture also plays a role in companies entering countries with a new business. According to the Kwintessentials on Brazil, the people are accepting of new ideas and a “melting pot” of cultures. Brazilians are willing to accept new ideas and new businesses (Brazil - Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette, 2012). Kwintessential’s also stated that Brazilian companies prefer face-to-face interactions and like to know exactly who they are working with; an important factor in Otterbox forging business deals in Brazil. Brazilian companies typically have hierarchical corporate structures, meaning highest ranking officials make major decisions.  Understanding the mixture of cultures, business structure, and negotiation practices will allow Otterbox to enter Brazil more smoothly.

Brazilians have an active culture, and government initiatives further encourage increasingly active lifestyles. Government policies promote health and fitness throughout the country.  According to the public health journal, “The main goal of the new policy is essentially to promote, protect and support eating practices and lifestyles conducive to optimum nutritional and health status for all” (Coitiniho, Monterio, & Popkin, 2002). Otterbox can cater it’s promotion to appeal to active individuals and stress the benefits that Otterbox cases can bring to these consumers.

The final risk factor for Otterbox to consider in entering Brazil is communications infrastructure. Since Otterbox makes cases for mobile devices, it is important that Brazil has the existing infrastructure to support growth of these devices. Brazil is ranked fifth in the world with total cell phone units of 244.358 million. According to a documentary from TNW news titled “Smartphone Usage in Brazil: Why You’ll Be Surprised,” “[there] are 19 million smartphones in Brazil ... almost 9% of the total mobile phone market...Among the study sample, 19% of the interviewees who belong to the lower middle class own one”  (Heim, 2011). Smartphone growth encourages growth in the sales of protective cases for those devices. With Brazil’s promising economy, low unemployment rates, high literacy rate, and developing smartphone market, entering the country appears to be a very promising move for Otterbox.

**Target Markets**

In 2012, Brazilian research firm Cetelem BGN released its annual Observador report based on interviews with consumers in 70 cities throughout Brazil (Kligin, 2012). Sergio Kligin, a reporter from US Media Consulting, condensed this 100 page report into a breakdown of the key findings (Kligin, 2012). According to the report, the middle class has become the majority in Brazil with 54% of the population (Kligin, 2012). When the middle class consumers were asked what they intended to buy over the next few months, the top categories were: furniture, appliances, travel, TV/video products, cell phones, and computers (Kligin, 2012). In comparison, Brazil’s upper class spent the most money on travel, furniture, and appliances (Kligin, 2012). This does not, however, mean that the upper class will not spend money on electronics. In fact, the upper class will probably spend more money on electronics since they have more disposable income. Therefore, Otterbox will be targeting Brazil’s middle class and upper class because these particular consumer segments are most likely to purchase electronics that need protective cases from Otterbox.

**Psychographic, Geographic Profile of Target Market**

When targeting the Brazilians that are spending the most on electronics, it will be important for Otterbox to stress the benefit that Otterbox products give those customers. Otterbox’s appeal to these consumers is providing protective cases that will keep their devices running and allow them to stay on top of things without worrying about their mobile devices failing them when dropped or exposed to moisture. Active, busy, urban professionals are the segment that both have the money for high-tech goods and have the need to protect those devices; but within this segment are several smaller groups that can be divided based on their interests and lifestyles. To meet the specific needs of different consumers, Otterbox has developed seven distinct product lines that offer different levels of protection.

Otterbox’s toughest case, the Armor series, is built to withstand nearly any abuse a phone can be subjected to. This waterproof, drop-proof, crush-proof case is built for consumers that constantly subject their phones to extreme conditions (Our Series, 2013.) This case appeals to individuals with the most active of lifestyles that either work or play in environments that most smartphones can’t survive in. Examples of consumers that Otterbox is targeting with this case would include: farmers, construction workers, scientists working in the field, rock climbers, or white-water rafters. While this case is ideal for protecting devices in any scenario, it also adds significant bulk to a device, making it less attractive to consumers that are less likely to encounter situations that require it’s robust design.

Otterbox’s Defender series prevents damage from drops, dust, and scratches. This case offers some of the same benefits to consumers as the Armor series, but also adds more everyday usability by offering a slimmer design and a built-in belt clip (Our Series, 2013.) The Defender series appeals to a target market that still subjects their phone to abuse, but does not need the extreme protection offered by the Armor series. This market could include athletes, hunters (the case is offered in Realtree camouflage patterns in a co-branding effort), or the chronically clumsy.

Because the Defender series lacks waterproofing, Otterbox also has the Preserver series. Like the Defender series, this case is built to offer some of the benefits of the Armor series with more everyday usability (Our Series, 2013.) The target market for this case includes swimmers, anglers, watersports enthusiasts, and anyone else that spends a great deal of time around the water.

Otterbox’s next three case series, the Commuter, Reflex, and Prefix, offer diminishing levels of protection in favor of slimmer, more ergonomic cases (Our Series, 2013). These cases are designed for people that want protection, but also want a phone that will fit in their pocket. According to the CIA World Factbook, 87% of Brazilians live in urban areas, with 71% of the population employed in service-sector careers (CIA World Factbook, 2013). These consumers rely on their smartphones and tablets to stay connected and work from anywhere while going about their routines in the city. While these consumers need protection from drops and scratches, they are less likely to encounter the extreme conditions that would require a case like the Armor series. Otterbox also offers standalone screen protectors for the consumer that only wants to protect the most delicate part of their device.

By creating a diverse product line, Otterbox is able to market their products to the entire spectrum of consumers buying mobile devices. In this way, Otterbox cases have become a companion product to the mobile device. Anyone that has a smartphone or tablet can find an Otterbox case for that device that fits their lifestyle and needs. This means that as demand for smartphones and tablets rises in Brazil, derived demand for Otterbox cases will increase as well.

**Competitive Climate**

The cell phone accessory industry is still fairly new to Brazil. Cell phone use has just recently started to grow in Brazil, and the competition for protective cases is fairly weak compared to the United States. When researching cell phone cases in Brazil, establishing the top electronic retail stores in Brazil was crucial to locating competition.  Brazil’s number one home appliance and electronics store is Ricardo Electro, with 290 retail stores (History of Ricardo Electro). The second largest retail store was Insinuante with 231 retail stores located over nine states of Brazil (History of Insinuante). So far, these retail stores only carry Case Logic cell phone cases in their inventories.

Case Logic was established in 1984 in Boulder, Colorado and provides a wide variety of cases to various electronic devices (Our Story, 2013). The Case Logic company provides standard cases for smartphones and offers a one year warranty with the purchase of a case. Pricing for Case Logic is rather inexpensive, ranging from $9.99 to $20.00 in USD or $23.00 to $48.00 in BRL, depending on the design of the case.

Compared to Case Logic, Otterbox offers a wider variety of protective cases and gives the consumer a choice in a case that will fit their lifestyle.  Otterbox offers seven series of cases, each with a different level of protection, as shown in Figure 1 above. Case Logic only offers one case style with a variety of color and design choices, and is not known for offering quality protection for smartphones. In order to offer superior protection, Otterbox charges significantly more than Case Logic for their products; with cases ranging anywhere from $24.95 to $89.99 depending on the series (Our Series, 2013).

**Positioning**

As Case Logic is the only major competitor in Brazil, Otterbox will employ positioning by competition and positioning by attribute or benefit strategies. Emphasizing how Otterbox is better than its leading competitor, Case Logic, its important in gaining market share in Brazil.  Advertising the specific benefits of owning an Otterbox case over a Case Logic product will help to win market share in the emerging protective case industry in Brazil.

To differentiate between Otterbox and Case Logic, Otterbox will need to stress the superior protection that their cases offer. Focusing on the benefits that each case series will add to Brazilians’ active lifestyles and advertising the cases based on the protection that they can provide will solidify Otterbox’s position in Brazil early on.

**Entry Strategy**

Otterbox will use direct exporting to enter Brazil. Direct exporting means that Otterbox will handle its exporting function using its own in-house export department, compared to indirect exporting when the company uses home country intermediaries who, in turn, sell the products overseas.

According to Dario Gomez, associate administrator at the Office of International Trade for the U.S. Small Business Administration in Washington D.C., “These intermediaries can get a company into an international market without a lot of risk, and can explore the growth opportunities. But that company has a lot less control” (Western Union, n.d.). Although direct exporting does have slightly higher risks, it provides more control over the marketing mix than indirect exporting. These risks include miscommunication and offensiveness. For example, a U.S. advertisement translated into Portuguese, Brazil’s dominant language, may be translated incorrectly and contain errors. Not only will this cause confusion, but it may also cause an offensive reaction depending on what the error is. To prevent this from happening, Otterbox should use back translation or parallel translation techniques with help of native Portuguese speakers to ensure that their message is clear and correctly interpreted.

As stated before, Brazil is a “melting pot” of cultures. They are willing to accept new ideas and companies to the country, which should be expected with their growing economy (Brazil - Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette, 2012) Since there is a mixture of cultures, and people are willing to accept new businesses in Brazil, Otterbox will be able to successfully and directly enter Brazil based on the similarities of the U.S. culture. According to Dennis Csizmadia, manager of the Greenville S.C., U.S. Export Assistance Center of the U.S. Department of Commerce, “Direct exporting allows the U.S. firm to communicate directly with the customer so as to provide a quality product and service, and the managerial commitment necessary to ensure long-term growth and success” (Western Union, n.d.).

**Distribution Channels**

In order to create a presence in Brazil, Otterbox will need to pursue multiple distribution channels to access the entire Brazilian population. Otterbox will introduce its products in category killers like Ricardo Electro and Insinuante, specialty stores, as well as e-commerce markets like Amazon and Otterbox’s own website.

As stated earlier, Brazil’s two largest electronics retail stores, Ricardo Electro and Insinuante, already carry Case Logic products. In order to compete with Case Logic and make their products widely available to the Brazilian public, Otterbox must introduce its products into these stores. Later we will discuss Brazil’s growing e-commerce presence, but for now, suffice it to say that in order to compete with and steal market share from Case Logic, Otterbox will need to distribute its products in the same brick-and-mortar category killers that Case Logic does.

Other important brick-and-mortar outlets in Brazil will be mobile provider stores. According to a report by Teleco, Vivo Brasil, TIM, Claro, and Oi are the nation’s four largest mobile phone providers, representing 28.67%, 27.11%, 25.16%, and 18.56% market share, respectively (*Market Share of Carriers,* 2013). Partnering with these providers to offer Otterbox products alongside smartphones will reinforce the notion that Otterbox cases are companion products necessary for every mobile device. Selling cases in these outlets would be an example of a push strategy. By selling to the retailers and allowing their salespeople to push the product to consumers, Otterbox will be able to increase sales volume and reach customers that would otherwise be unaware of the company’s products.

Finally, Otterbox will need to ramp up its online presence in Brazil. According to a Forbes article titled *What is Brazil's Most Promising Sector?*, “E-commerce has been skyrocketing in Brazil, [with] average growth of 32.5% in the last two [years]” (Geromel, 2013). Selling products online will allow Otterbox to reach customers without access to the brick-and-mortar outlets and will take advantage of the growing e-commerce trend in the country. In order to encourage customer traffic to e-commerce outlets, Otterbox will need to implement pull strategies like sales promotions, advertisements, and social media presence in Brazil. These pull strategies will encourage consumers to buy from both online retailers and the specialty stores and category killers where Otterbox products are sold.

**Marketing Strategy: Product**

To market to Brazilians, Otterbox’s packaging will need to be adapted. Nearly 100% of the Brazilian population speaks Portuguese, so literature will need to be translated from its current English (Brazil - Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette, 2013). Current packaging is bright yellow and describes case features. The warranty is also printed on the front of the packaging, which helps with any uncertainty that Brazilians may have about trying a new product. Figure 2 shows an example of the Commuter Series packaging.

Figure 2. Commuter Series Packaging (JMVDIGITAL, 2013)

**Marketing Strategy: Price**

Because Otterbox will be exporting to Brazil, costs will increase due to taxes and transportation. However, Otterbox will price products the same as the U.S. when entering the country to see how high or low the demand for the product will be. This is an example of a penetration pricing model. By introducing Otterbox products at an artificially low price and slowly raising them,, Otterbox can gain a large market share in its introduction and then re-coupe profits once the brand is established in Brazil. With Brazilians’ increasing smartphone use, active lifestyles, and growing economy, we can predict that the demand will start high and continue to grow. Using the Money Converter, $1.00 USD in America will be equivalent to $2.37505 BRL in Brazil (Convert United States Dollar to Brazilian Real ). With Otterbox being a diversified product entering Brazil, with major advantages over competition such as a warranty and protection, the current price used in America is a good initial starting point in the country of Brazil.

**Marketing Strategy: Place**

Otterbox will export products to major electronic retail stores to implement a selective distribution strategy. With Otterbox being new to Brazil, Otterbox needs to target the high volume stores that have a general focus dealing with smartphones and electronics. Otterbox will target Brazilian retailers Ricardo Electro and Insinuante. Selective distribution gives Otterbox the ability to target the right consumer base and meet the needs of the consumers looking to protect their smartphone.  This is a push strategy where Otterbox sells directly to the intermediaries, or in this case the retail stores, and then they are able to market to the end consumer.  Although selling in category killers will be important, Otterbox will also need to sell online and in specialty stores like Vivo, TIM, Claro, and Oi.

**Marketing Strategy: Promotion**

The promotion strategy will be similar to that in America. Sales promotions will increase demand and encourage consumers to try Otterbox.  Since Otterbox is mainly using a push marketing tactic, the retail stores are in charge of advertising the product and selling them to the end consumer. Since retailers will be extremely important for Otterbox’s strategy, trade promotions will be critical to Otterbox’s promotion strategy. Otterbox will want to push the product to the retail stores, so using trade promotions the company will be able to negotiate shelf space, exposure and the inventory quantity that each store will carry. Another form of promotion Otterbox will need to implement is social couponing via Groupon. According to Biz report, 16% or 6.7 million Brazilians are using Groupon, which happens to be the overall leader in social couponing sites (Knight, 2011).  Otterbox will use a discount code to use in the selected retail locations when buying from Groupon, allowing the company to track the effectiveness of the code in the given market. This pull strategy will increase demand for Otterbox’s products and raise awareness of the brand.

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