

C714.v2 Case Study

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A U.S. fishing boat manufacturer is known throughout the United States for its innovative approach to product design, lean manufacturing, and responsive customer service since its start three years ago. The mission statement of the company is “We will provide the most innovative customer-driven design and growth in the industry.” The founders’ ideals for the company are described in the vision statement: “We will be the most sustainable company in the industry.” The company’s ethical statement that guides all conduct and decision-making is “We will make decisions that are sustainable for customers and the environment.”

The company’s founders have created an organizational culture of innovation. They have provided incentives for employees’ creative ideas and created testing laboratories where customers use the products and provide design feedback. The founders have also invited innovators in other industries, such as gaming and information technology, to improve on the designs. The founders have cultivated a company culture in which employees and founders are considered equal partners. The company structure is decentralized, and all employees can access the founders at any time for collaboration, shared decision-making, or relationship building. All company decisions are evaluated by all employees to ensure that everyone is committed to the decisions.

The company has identified an emerging global market opportunity in India for its products. Successful sales in India could represent a critical moment for the company if the company establishes strategic partnerships that will increase the likelihood of product success. The founders hope to capture profits and market share and expand into other parts of Asia within the first year of selling products in India.

Research indicates market potential for the company’s sales in India because of the importance of the fishing industry in the country. Fishing and aquaculture are primary industries in the coastal regions of India. Economic zones have been established to support the over 14 million people who are an important part of the fishing industry. This industry makes up 1% of the nation’s gross domestic product and 7% of global fish exports (Hanko Hackberry Group, n.d.).

The company’s goal of the market expansion into India is to be the first foldable fishing boat manufacturer reaching the country. An origami-inspired foldable fishing boat is the company’s most popular product. This boat comes designed as a plastic carrying case that unfolds into the

water like an origami paper boat. This boat is suitable for uses in calm water, and the boat can be recycled. The product retails for U.S.\$200.

Traditional fishers use nonmechanized boats, which would be ideal for the foldable boat's entry into the market. Laws and regulations surrounding the use of nonmechanized boats favor importing foldable boats, which would be easy for fishers to carry from home to the water. The business climate in India is open to new partnerships to improve the fishing experience for those who preserve the natural ecosystem with nonmotorized boats. The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) promotes the use of natural fishing equipment to reduce disruption to the fishing ecosystem in India (National Fisheries Development Board, n.d.).

The U.S. boat manufacturer's founders met with the NFDB to request an endorsement for their foldable boats because of the product's sustainable design and net-zero environmental impact. The founders discovered that the NFDB would only endorse the boat if it was made of plastics used in India, in order to reduce the waste products in the nation's landfills.

This endeavor would require the U.S. company to make a significant investment in India. The company would need to purchase or build a manufacturing facility, or it would need to contract with a facility owner to secure a manufacturing location. It would need to employ Indian workers. Lastly, the company would have to manufacture a new foldable boat made from used plastics in India with an environmentally friendly waterproof coating.

The new foldable boat could be designed in several ways, and the company would need to test a series of paper products and waterproof coatings to determine which would be suitable for fishers in India. The fishers range in age from 13 to 70, so the design would need to be comfortable and portable enough for all fishers in this target group.

The company decides to hire Indian fishers to help design the product to reach this market. These fishers will provide qualitative, open-ended conversations and data that will be valuable in communicating the product's features and benefits to other fishers. The product will be tested by a variety of fishers that represent different sectors of the fishing industry, different regions, and different cultural segments. Testing will provide generalizable, qualitative data about the product use and effectiveness.

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