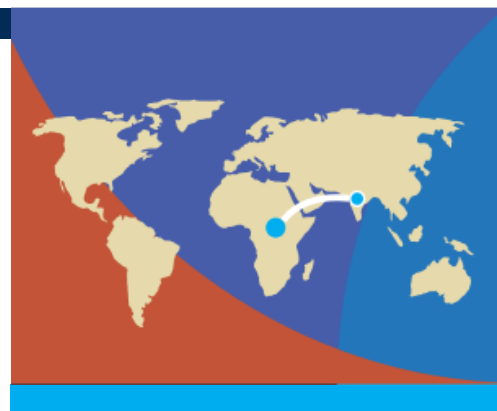
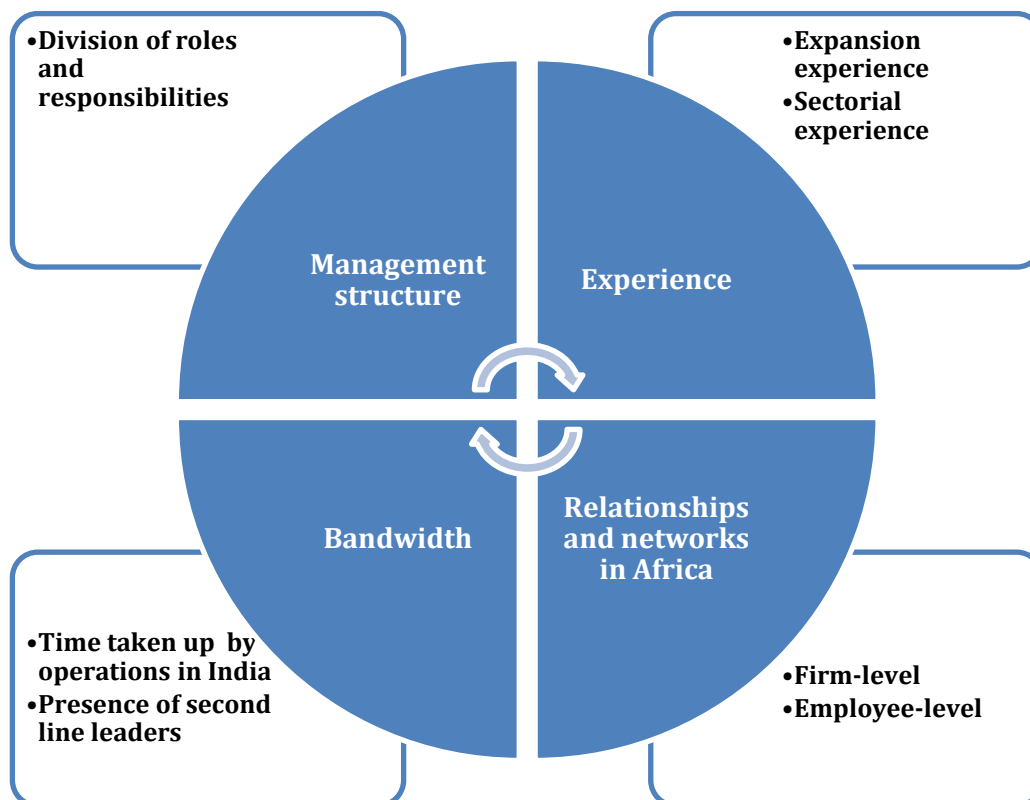


Checklist: Building Management Readiness Ahead of Expansion



Management-readiness to expand your inclusive business from India to Africa is a function of 4 key factors –



If any of these 4 drivers are an area of weakness for your firm, it is likely that you will face significant hurdles while expanding to Africa and also increase risk in both regions. Therefore, paying attention to these areas and building readiness early on is crucial. The following checklist includes a list of approaches you can follow to improve business strengths in each area.

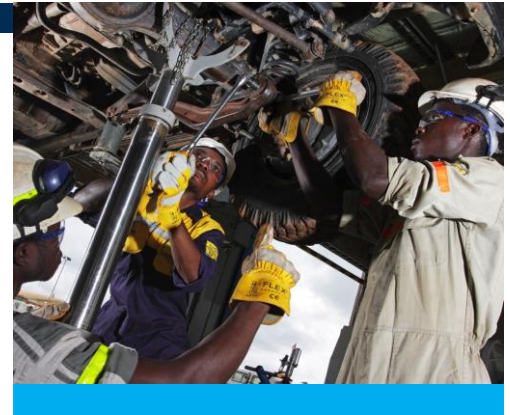
BUILD AN EFFICIENT TEAM STRUCTURE TO FREE UP SENIOR MANAGEMENT TIME:

While small and medium sized companies should ideally operate with lean teams; loading your senior leaders with responsibilities beyond a certain point will lead to inefficiency. Instead, try these approaches –

- Club different areas of responsibility that overlap with each other. E.g.: business development, marketing and global expansion
- Build a “middle-layer” of managers in your organization who can take on more operational responsibilities
- Identify and groom a second line of leadership within each core focus area of your organization
- Identify and outsource/hire personnel to manage non-strategic and operational responsibilities like administration and office management

IDENTIFY A SENIOR LEADER TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE AFRICA OPPORTUNITY:

Building a business in a new environment like Africa can be tough, and previous experience in the region can be a huge asset. If you do not already have such personnel and cannot afford to hire them, then assign a senior resource to build relationships and on-ground intelligence about doing business in Africa ahead of a full-scale expansion. Try some of these approaches -



- *The best way your senior resources can understand African countries is by starting to engage with the local market – by way of trade partnerships or strategic alliances. Be open to making small investments in travel and research so early business development can be initiated*
- *Join industry networks with members in Africa – for instance, the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) has regional chapters in East, West and South Africa that can aid you in researching and understanding the market*
- *Identify market leaders (for-profit and non-profit) in your sector and connect with them through LinkedIn, Twitter or Email. Offer to exchange ideas and insights from India and Africa, most inclusive businesses are collaborative by nature and will reciprocate*
- *Take advantage of industry convenings that bring together Indian and African businesses – for e.g. CII organizes an annual India-Africa Summit, Sankalp Forum organizes conferences in India and Africa etc.*
- *Join online hubs and networks where you can connect with African businesses – e.g. the Lighting Africa platform is a great networking hub for solar entrepreneurs*
- *Can you build a “middle-layer” of managers in your organization who can take on more operational responsibilities?*

Case: Greenlight Planet

Greenlight Planet manufactures and distributes affordable solar lighting solutions targeted at low income off-grid households. Since its launch, it has set up 9 offices in 4 countries; and sold 2 million solar lamps in 31 countries. It has over 800 full-time employees and also works with 6000 sales agents for last mile outreach. It expanded to Africa in 2010 and has a subsidiary firm incorporated in Kenya. A second Africa office has been recently launched in Uganda.

A year into operations in India, Greenlight allocated a senior resource, Radhika Thakkar, Vice President of Global Partnerships, to explore expansion with a specific focus on Africa. Within a year, Thakkar successfully generated high demand for Greenlight products from distributors and retailers in Africa – particularly from East African countries like Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. She spent a significant amount of time on-ground in Africa, working with distribution partners to understand their approaches and challenges, as well as understanding the end consumer. These early lessons guided Greenlight in its Africa strategy and planning.

The firm soon saw nearly half of its annual revenues coming from Africa, and as sales volumes grew, it decided to start an in-country office in Kenya. Thakkar was a natural choice for leading the new unit, and relocated to start a small office with a handful of business development executives. By 2014, the unit had grown to a full-scale corporate office with 30 team members and was seeding the expansion of another Africa office in Uganda. Greenlight attributes the success of its management-readiness strategy to identifying an “owner” for the Africa business early-on and supporting her learning journey.