Category

Strategy

Market Entry & Go-to-Market Strategy Playbook

A decision framework for choosing the right entry mode, sequencing target markets, and building the go-to-market motion for a new geography, segment, or channel.

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included

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- 8 minute(s)

Overview

A practical framework for scoring new markets, choosing between direct, partner, or acquisition entry, and building a go-to-market motion with clear launch and kill criteria.

How do we choose between a channel partner and a direct sales team?

Use the risk-control matrix: channel partners get you to market faster with less capital but less control over customer experience and pricing, while a direct team costs more and takes longer to stand up but gives you full control and margin capture. The right answer usually follows the regulatory and buying-process complexity uncovered in diligence, not a general preference for one model over the other.

What's the biggest reason market entry pilots fail?

Undersized resourcing against an ambitious KPI. Teams frequently commit to aggressive pipeline or revenue targets while approving a fraction of the headcount or partner investment the chosen GTM motion actually requires, which sets the pilot up to miss its own kill criteria regardless of market potential.

Should localization go beyond translating the website and converting pricing to local currency?

Yes, in almost every case. Real localization covers compliance requirements, payment methods, contract and procurement norms, and often product feature gaps specific to the market — currency conversion and translation are necessary but rarely sufficient.

How long should we give a new market before deciding to exit?

Set the review checkpoint at 90-120 days for the first go/no-go/adjust gate, but define the full kill criteria with a longer runway in mind — typically 12-18 months to reach a sustainable unit economics case, with the 90-120 day checkpoint used to catch clearly non-viable launches early rather than to make a final call.

Can this framework be used for a new customer segment instead of a new geography?

Yes — the market screen, entry-mode thinking (build in-house vs. partner vs. acquire a niche player), and GTM motion selection steps all apply directly to segment expansion; only the localization step becomes less relevant and can be replaced with a segment-specific product-fit assessment.

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