

India is the Perfect Location for International Expansion. Here are 5 Things to Consider When Expanding to India



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I recently expanded my business into India. This decision was based on several reasons. Undeniably, the size of the Indian market, with over a billion potential customers, was very attractive. India's established call center and outsourcing industry also presented an excellent opportunity for our time-tracking software.

Another big factor was the surge in Indian users during the pandemic-induced shift to remote work that highlighted the need for tools to track remote employee hours. India became

our leading source of new subscriptions, making up nearly half of our customer base. This user growth naturally led us to explore further opportunities in the Indian market.

Finally, a change in Indian legislation in 2021 forced our hand. Automatic payments became unreliable for non-Indian registered companies, especially for subscription-based models like ours. This created a customer service nightmare with constant support tickets. To get automatic payments working again and streamline our operations, we needed an Indian bank account, which required a registered Indian company.

Here's what we've learned so far about doing business in India.

1. Be prepared for bureaucracy

Despite India's efforts to modernize, there's a surprising amount of bureaucracy. The company registration process includes a lot of paperwork and lengthy processes, especially for opening a bank account. This is partly due to a crackdown on fraudulent companies registered during COVID.

Another big challenge is the way Indian authorities handle documents. Approvals often involve sending physical copies back and forth, including some that require physical stamps, which are rarely used elsewhere. The Indian government also requires very detailed documentation to prove ownership and residency.

Related: [6 Obstacles of Expanding Your Company Internationally](#)

2. Find reliable local partners

As Indian law requires at least one company director to be an Indian citizen, you will need trustworthy partners there. Furthermore, navigating the whole process requires a local representative to handle in-person meetings and documents.

It soon became clear that we needed to partner with a company specializing in helping international companies enter India. After searching and comparing prices (which vary greatly), we eventually found reliable partners who fit our business well.

Working with such local representatives is a good arrangement if you don't need a significant physical presence in India right from the start. You can use their office as your registered address and pay them a monthly fee for their services.

Once you've found your Indian partners, consider cultural differences. Be prepared for more frequent follow-ups due to cultural differences and acknowledge potential delays during holidays.

Related: [3 Steps to Creating Powerful Business Partnerships](#)

3. Leverage the power of word of mouth

Indian customers are known to spread the word about helpful solutions. From our experience, if your product appeals to the Indian market, you can get good traction through word-of-mouth.

Our customers also played a big role in raising brand awareness in India. Once we had a good base of Indian users, we started requesting case studies and success stories for our marketing materials.

Now, we're taking localization one step further, revamping our signup process with design and messaging that resonate with the Indian market. We believe this will make us appear more trustworthy and relevant locally.

If applicable to your business type, running a reseller program in India is another strategy that leverages the power

of word of mouth while generating a good revenue stream.

4. Gather insights from your resellers

India's reseller programs have been instrumental in acquiring large clients and fueling our growth. We've actively asked for their feedback, which has given us invaluable insights on what works and what doesn't in the Indian market.

Here's what we've learned about working with resellers in India:

- **Build relationships:** The Indian market values strong relationships. Resellers there want to be confident in the product before selling it.
- **Prove your worth:** Indians are cautious about adopting new things. You need to demonstrate the value of your product before they'll be interested.
- **Avoid clashing with resellers:** If you decide to also sell directly in India, be careful about pricing, negotiations, and territory to avoid competition with your resellers.

Resellers are also helping us determine the best way to advertise in India. Price reigns supreme for Indian customers, so they often prioritize the cheapest option over features.

Related: [How To Build a Reselling Platform in India](#)

5. Choose the right city

Because India is so huge, choosing the right city to operate from can be as crucial as selecting the right European country. Your business location is especially important when starting out and going through the registration process. As soon as you're set-up, it doesn't matter where you're working

from.

Our choice was between Delhi as the capital and Bangalore as sort of a Silicon Valley of India. We went with the Delhi branch because we found partners there, and it was cheaper to start operations there.

Whichever option you choose, consult your local partners and seriously consider geography—e.g., which locations have the best flight connections to your headquarters and other branches.

Setting up a company in India can be difficult unless you do your research and preparation well and find a reliable local representative to help you navigate the bureaucracy. For DeskTime, this expansion is an experiment with the potential for significant gains.

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