




Tombstone Pizza

International Marketing Export Strategy Brief

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Overview

Tombstone is a frozen pizza brand that originated in Medford Wisconsin. This Midwest pizza brand was born in a bar by Joe Simek. Now they are selling them all around the United States. Tombstone upholds the heritage of being invented in a bar. Partnering with popular beer brands, creating wild tavern-style flavors, and staying true to their roots. Tombstone is a brand loved by many and exporting could be something for the future.

This strategy brief will outline the steps Tombstone needs to take to consider exporting to the United Kingdom. Tombstone needs to look at the situation, product and pricing, distribution and logistics, and promotion and audience targeting. Before making an exporting decision. Once we have reviewed the following a decision of whether we are recommending Tombstone to the UK will be made.

Situation Analysis

Internal Analysis

As mentioned earlier Tombstone has partnered with beer brands in the past. Specifically Voodoo Ranger an IPA brand. The two brands created a pizza-flavored IPA. Tombstone advertises all over their company website and social media that they were born in a bar. The company keeps its heritage known to any consumer. Entering the bar scene of marketing their product can open up many possibilities for partnerships and interesting campaigns. Doing so in the UK could have beneficial impacts on the company.

External Analysis

Tombstone has a large number of direct competitors. Jacks, DiGiorno, and Red Baron to name a few with similar price points. A difference the UK and the US face in frozen pizza brands is that the top brands in the UK are supermarket-branded pizzas. Meaning the “generic” brand from the store. Including Tesco, Asda, and Sainsbury. Along with the generic pizza brands. There is already a US-exported frozen pizza brand infiltrating UK supermarket shelves. Chicago Town Frozen Pizza was created in Chicago, Illinois. Now exporting to countries like the UK. This creates a threat for Tombstone. They will face competition with a very similar brand that originated close to where Tombstone did.

Product and Pricing

Product

While in London I had the opportunity to visit a variety of different supermarkets that sold frozen pizza. At my first glance at these stores, I noticed how small the selection of frozen pizzas was. Before visiting London, I completed in-depth research on the pizza market within the UK. Where I found chilled pizza had a larger market share than frozen pizza. I found that very interesting because in the US chilled pizza is not popular, it's either fresh or frozen. When coming to London I knew what to expect but did not realize how small the frozen pizza market would be.

Price

Chilled pizza compared to frozen pizza is much more expensive. A two-pack of frozen pepperoni pizzas from Chicago Town was 1.75 pounds (2.24 US dollars) compared to Tesco's chilled pizza brand at 4.20 pounds (5.38 US dollars). Chilled pizza is more than double to cost of a frozen pizza. This is concerning considering Tombstone at Walmart costs 4.82 dollars (3.76 pounds).

Distribution and Logistics

Tombstone is a frozen pizza brand, so they are classified under the Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing NAICS code. The number code is 311412. Tombstone is owned by Nestle Pizza Division, which is their parent company. Nestle also makes Digornio and Jack Pizza two of Tombstone's competitors. Nestle Pizza Division is located in Wisconsin so it is not very close to the US border meaning it can be a little harder to get over to the UK. To bring Tombstone from Wisconsin to London it needs to get shipped either by air or sea. Considering the length and unpredictable circumstances of sea freight, air freight will be the best option. Air freight will take 34 fewer days. Tombstone needs to be kept at a certain temperature to stay edible. Having a shorter shipment time will help lessen any possible problems.

Channel Partners

When exporting to a new country it can be helpful to partner with a company such as a wholesaler. I am recommending Tombstone partner with Smylie's a UK exporting company. They specialize in the food industry specifically with frozen foods. Another thing they offer is help with actual exporting so they would offer air freight when partnering with them. Smylie's also is familiar with Chicago Town one of Tombstones UK's competitors

Promotion and Audience Targeting

Target Audience

The ideal target audience is single people aged 18-24. This age range typically has not settled down and started a family yet. They often have busy lifestyles and are on the go. Looking for meals they go for ease whenever they can. Tombstones can be marketed to the social people of this age range. Marketing towards people who enjoy hanging out at social gatherings.

Promotion

If Tombstone were to come over to the UK d creating a one-week pop-up shop would be a great way to get consumers knowledgeable about a new product coming soon. Offering a pop-up pizza shop in the middle of Soho, where if you require a bite, coming back from the pub, or just looking to try something new while shopping you can stop into the pop-up shop. Tombstone can offer specialty pub pizza flavors. Including fish and chips, Sunday roast, and steak and ale pie. Special flavors will make the company seem more personalized to the London area and pub scene.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on my extensive research of the UK consumer, pizza market, and culture. Before, during, and after my time in London, I am recommending not exporting to the UK. Learning about the pizza market, chilled pizza is dominating the whole market share. Furthermore, most frozen pizzas found at popular supermarkets are generic brands. Along with that UK frozen pizza prices were much cheaper than they are in the US. Many come in packs of two for a cheaper price than one in the US. I believe with the small market share, pricing, and difficulty to differentiate that Tombstone may not do well in the UK at this time.

However, I think if they investigated chilled pizza and were able to switch around their ingredients to make a chilled pizza rather than frozen pizza, I think that could attract many more consumers. You cannot change a consumer's preferences easily. Consumers in the UK prefer chilled pizza. If Tombstone can create a chilled pizza, I think they could be successful, but for now, I do not recommend entering the UK market.

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