

The establishment of a wholesale company of paramedical products in Albania

A. The Management Team

Alexandros Avramidis: Logistics major; experience in supply chain and warehouse management

Evangelos Ergen: Technology, Innovation & Entrepreneurship major. Expertised in logistics and medical equipment.

Konstantinos Papathanasiou: Manager of a company specialising in gymnastics and physical training.

Maria Spachidou: Biology major; experience in sales and product management, specialised in medical and genetics equipment as well.

B. The concept

The management team plans to establish a wholesale company in Albania which will sell paramedical products for domestic use, in pharmacies and doctors. The initial idea includes the simultaneous opening of three spots in three cities of the country as follows:

- Head office and main warehouse in Tirana
- Branch and warehouse in Durres
- Branch and warehouse in Korce

To cope with currency issues and importing procedures the company will maintain an additional branch in Greece, near the Greek-Albanian borders (Krystallopigi village), which will act as a mediator company in terms of promoting the goods and making the exchange of currency (Euro-Lek).

The company will import the products from a list of countries (USA, Japan, Switzerland etc.) and promote them to the network of pharmacies and doctors. The initial plan is not to make direct sales to retail customers.

The presence in Albania should take place through strategic alliance, since the market is unknown and it appears to have many specialties.

The list of products includes the following:

- Home care
 - Transport wheelchairs
 - Assist walkers
- Diagnostic equipment
 - Blood pressure monitors and accessories
 - Medical massage equipment
 - Thermometers
 - Pulse oxymeter
 - Electrocardiograms
 - Blood glucose meters
- Everyday disposables
 - Gloves
 - Catheters
 - Gauges
 - Bandages and tapes
- Orthopaedics medical supplies
 - Arms and ankles support
 - Knee sleeves
 - Braces for knees, backs, wrists

C. Why the market is attractive

Albania is an emerging economy which lacks the specialization in health care issues. Moreover, a surface survey has demonstrated that the network of supplying the hospitals is highly corrupted and the health care market is in high need of the specific products.

Albanian citizens are obliged to find other ways of getting the home medical products, which most of the times are imported through relatives or friends. The country shows characteristics of a black market economy in terms of such products since there is no official network of supplying. The pharmaceutical warehouses are located mainly in Tirana and provide products mostly to local hospitals and local market without including West and East Albania markets due to poor logistic mechanisms.

D. The competitive advantage

First of all the team will try to take advantage of the first-mover action and establish a network which originally aims in the domestic needs. We aim to provide useful products to the end-user (patient) through certain selling points which are (a) the pharmacies and (b) the doctors' practices.

The competitive advantage will be the logistics network (supply chain) within the country. The aim should be to cover the needs of customers on-site. The branch on the Greek borders not only will help as first base warehouse for importing the products but it would also sell supplies to people living in the area nearby the borders whose location does not provide them with easy access to such kind of products.