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Moosejaw Market Expansion into France

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Moosejaw Market Expansion into France

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Honors Project

**Submitted to the Honors College
at Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for graduation with**

UNIVERSITY HONORS DATE

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Executive Summary:

This research project examines the Moosejaw brand, the outdoor apparel industry, and an overview of France's political, economic, and cultural environment. The research goal is to analyze key aspects of France that would influence a business's decision to expand into the country. The information regarding France's fit for new businesses would then be tailored to Moosejaw to implement. Data found throughout the research process that characterize France as a good fit or not for new foreign business include the current political state of rioting by the Yellow Vests, Macron's future pro-business plans, the French high quality of life standard, shifting demographic toward young independent adults with expendable income, and an increasing awareness of environmentally friendly practices. The report concludes with recommendations for how Moosejaw might effectively expand into the French market. The major recommendations include the following:

- To create a joint venture with Novotel including ideal locations
- To develop interactive workshops and loyalty programs
- To adapt French marketing tactics
- To tap into France's environmental consciousness

Introduction:

Moosejaw is an American outdoor brand apparel company. The company carries over 100 brand names of athletic clothing that can be used for outdoor activities as extreme as rock climbing or as mundane as yard work. The retailer's focus is on making their customers comfortable in whatever activities and environment they might be in. This flexibility in the apparel follows a trend of athleisure. Athleisure is athletic type clothing worn for fashion and comfort rather than solely outdoor activities, a style which has become more popular in recent years.

Moosejaw was chosen as the focal company for multiple reasons. First, Moosejaw is a Michigan brand rooted in adventure and non-traditional marketing. I have been familiar with the brand for many years and admire its quirky marketing. The company has trademarked its marketing as 'Moosejaw Madness.' By choosing Moosejaw for this project, not only am I challenging myself creatively as a marketer but will also be using critical thinking and research skills to take the company globally.

France was chosen for Moosejaw to expand internationally because of study abroad experience in Nantes, France during the summer term of 2018 at the Audencia Business School - a university. I was able to take multiple courses in English during an eight-week period including: Cross-Cultural Communication, Marketing to Europe, Global Sales, and International Trade. The courses helped build my interest in both of my specializations, Marketing and International Business. It is my goal to work for an international company and perform market research for global brands. Because I spent the summer immersed in the culture of Nantes, France, I feel as though the knowledge I gained on the region allows me to conduct international marketing research on this company successfully. By analyzing and researching how to properly

expand a brand, I have learned valuable lessons, skills, and knowledge that will be useful in a future career. This opportunity to incorporate both of my specializations, reflect on my study abroad experience, and gain critical thinking skills outside of the classroom has positively impacted my time in college. Though daunting at first, the challenge to accomplish an honors project as a business student taught me the importance of time management, but mainly gave me evidence to look back on how much I have grown as a student. Both the marketing capstone class, MKT 4600 with Dr. Gremler, and International Business course, BA 3900 with Dr. Zhang, helped guide this research, outline, and key concepts.

Moosejaw's Business Background:

Moosejaw is an online and in-person retailer selling outdoor recreation apparel and gear. The type of athletic and outdoor clothing and gear sold in the store revolve mainly around hiking and camping but also sell apparel designed for water sports and cycling. The first Moosejaw store was founded in 1992 by Robert Wolfe and David Jaffe Keego Harbor, Michigan (*MooseJaw*, 2018). The company has since expanded to an online presence and increased their in-person locations to six stores in Michigan, one in Colorado, one in Illinois, and one in Missouri by 2018 (*About Moosejaw*). In 2017 Moosejaw was acquired by Walmart for \$51 million under a “curated selection” due to Walmart only selling a portion of the 500 brands offered through Moosejaw. Walmart acquired the company because “apparel and accessories is now the number one category for digital commerce” (*Walmart Announces*, 2017) The acquisition still leaves Moosejaw to operate stores and its online presence independently as it has in the past while still benefiting from Walmart's website orders it shares. Moosejaw will still act as a standalone and will allow them to operate and expand on without restriction. Having Walmart as a partnering company has allowed Moosejaw to improve its website technology and rewards

program and offer free two-day shipping on orders over \$49 to create more customer value (Perez, 2018). As a result of Moosejaw's company growth from Walmart's technology resources and increased domestic exposure, the company has the potential to meet future goals of expansion. Not only has Walmart increased Moosejaw's revenue from sales on Walmart's site, but Walmart has previous experience expanding internationally. Walmart has a presence in 27 countries including China, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico (Walmart, 2015). Moosejaw can reach out to Walmart executives to use Walmart resources when expanding.

Currently, 93% of the 112 Moosejaw brands sold in their stores are primarily domestic and have not been exposed to international markets (Moosejaw, 2018). The following research is in recommendation that Moosejaw contact the 93% of brands sold domestically and can gain permission to sell those brands abroad. According to their website, the 7% of brands Moosejaw currently has permission to ship internationally are primarily already European Brands, which can be sold both in the United States and in France (Moosejaw, 2018). With Moosejaw introducing the domestic brands to a new market, those 93% of brands would gain new customer sales without as much work had they expanded their brand on their own. Therefore, it should be intriguing for those domestic brands to give Moosejaw permission to sell internationally.

Fjällräven is a Swedish brand sold in Moosejaw stores and internationally. Before Fjällräven expanded into Moosejaw and the United States' market in general, the company aimed to increase their customer outreach. According to Miller, European brands are catching onto the potential growth from "crossing the pond." Fjällräven experienced an incredible 1000% growth after just two years of entering the U.S market in 2012 (Miller, 2014). Moosejaw may potentially experience new market growth by introducing their brands in France, and likewise exposing themselves to new markets.

Moosejaw is most known for its branded marketing called, “Moosejaw Madness.” Moosejaw Madness is a type of marketing conducted by Moosejaw through “nonsensical” promotion. Robert Wolfe, Moosejaw’s founder, told Stephanie Thompson, a reporter from *Advertising Age* in an interview, that their marketing techniques have helped grow the company’s sales annually by 60% because “It is that idiocy in marketing that resonates with our consumers,” (Thompson, 2007). Wolfe further goes on to say that Moosejaw encouraged consumer interaction with the brand through the phrase “love the madness” and that the “nonsensical” promotion mainly resonates within the age range of college students. In another interview with Daniel Duggan from Crain’s Detroit Business Wolfe further explained that “if you’re only competing on price, you’re going to lose. If you’re not engaging your customers, you won’t succeed,” (Duggan, 2009). Examples of ‘Moosejaw Madness’ include filling one of their brand’s backpack with 25 pounds of jelly beans, putting their apparel on dogs, and posting articles about how to pretend you are outdoorsy, (*About Moosejaw*, 2018). All these marketing promotional activities have given customers a way to connect and interact with the Moosejaw brand.

It would be a mistake for Moosejaw to transfer their specific marketing style over to France without making alterations. The company’s trademarked strategy to market their apparel is fun and unique, but to be executed as well as it is in the United States Moosejaw should adapt to the local culture to be successful. As Theodore Levitt states in his article for the Harvard Business Review, *‘The Gloablization of Markets’*, “Many companies have tried to standardize world practice by exporting domestic products and processes without accommodation or change—and have failed miserably,” (Levitt, 1983). By examining the country’s political, social,

and cultural environment, and applying Hofstede's dimensions, the market can be better understood.

Country Analysis:

Political Environment:

Emmanuel Macron, France's current president, is considered pro-business and pro-innovation which has increased the stability of the business environment in France (*About-France*, 2018). In fact, BBC News wrote that Macron promised to help businesses so much as cutting corporation tax from 33% to 25% during his term (*Emmanuel Macron*, 2017).

Despite Macron's generous business practices, citizens of France are still hurting due to a 10% unemployment rate, low income, and high taxes on products such as gasoline. At the beginning of his term Macron promised to lower unemployment down to 7% by 2022 but has made little effective strides to get there (*Emmanuel Macron*, 2017). Those who are bearing the heaviest burden of low income and high taxes are employed in professions such as union workers and nurses. In 2018 union workers, nurses, and others took to the streets of Paris in protest beginning on November 17th (*French Economy*, 2018). The rioters demanded Macron to do as he promised and put an end to actions that favor for the rich. Those who made their way to Paris in protest came wearing emergency jackets found in all French cars, giving them the name, "Yellow Vests." (*Nossiter*, 2018). The Yellow Vests riots became violent. On the streets of some of France's most prestigious shops, the protestors broke windows and damaged retail property. These severe acts of violence and protest have caused many tourists to avoid the nation's capital and potentially threaten the profits of nearby stores in the next quarter. Retailers looking to open store fronts should also be aware of how the Yellow Vests movement may harm Moosejaw's

expansion into France due to political turmoil negatively affecting consumer's confidence and possible destruction of property to storefronts.

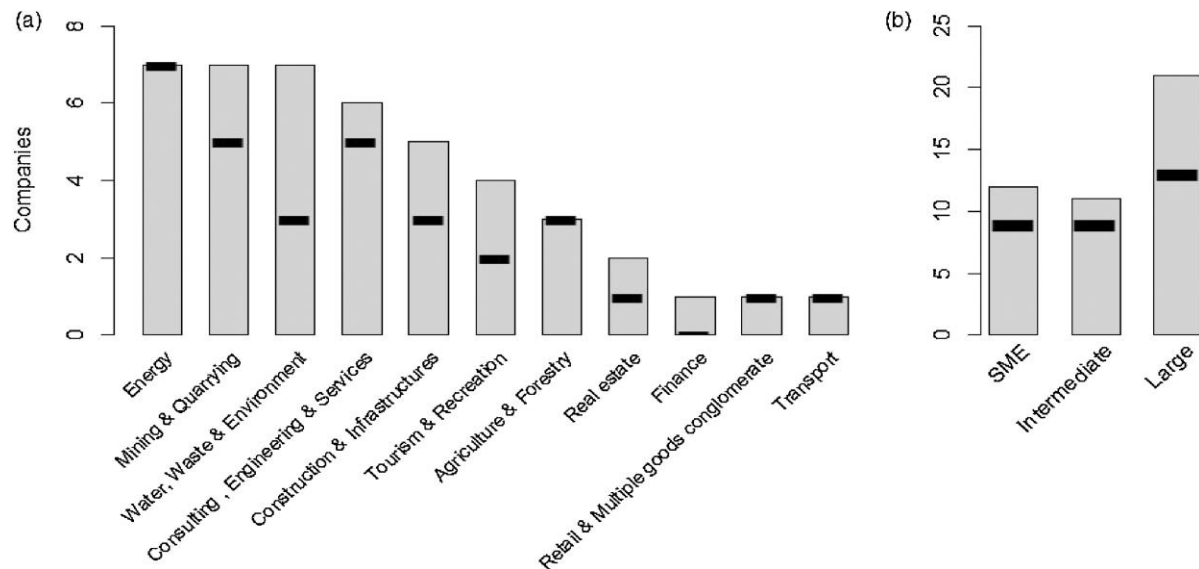
One-way Macron is successfully helping businesses around France is recent adjustment to the no-trading Sunday regulation. The regulation prevented many businesses from operating on Sundays. The *Connexion*, a French News outlet told readers that “Mr Macron had instigated as finance minister in 2015, which allowed for shops in designated “international tourist zones” to open Sunday and close as late as midnight in the evening had been a success – but said the time had come to go further still, so that traditional businesses could compete against internet retail services, including Amazon” (*MP's Demand*, 2018). Macron acted further with loosening the no-trading regulations by allowing retail shops to remain open up to twelve Sundays per year if employees agree to work. This policy has helped shops compete, earn more revenue, bring life back to city centers, be more accessible to tourists and even prevent some business from completely shutting their doors. Opening businesses doors on Sunday's also helps employees earn extra pay and may play a meaningful role in increasing their disposable income to spend on Moosejaw products.

Another initiative of Macron's Presidential Administration is to improve France's environmental impact. BBC News writes that Macron plans on spending close to 15 billion euros on ecological reform (*Emmanuel Macron*, 2017). He wants France to be a world leader in green technologies and a role model towards taking acting to reduce harmful climate change.

One-way French policy is moving toward more environmentally friendly practices is by encouraging sustainable business practices. The French National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2011-2020, encourages companies to voluntarily commit to access their value chains, operations, and business practices to lessen carbon impact, ensure biodiversity

conservation, and make for a greener planet. As biodiversity loss is at an all time high, this corporate social responsibility is heavily placed on French businesses. Not only does the plan, although currently voluntary, promote more purposeful supply chain dynamics, but consumer's opinions of business that do not work to achieve a greener planet can be harmful. Potential customers might boycott companies that are not committed to the environment and choose the competition instead. As an outdoor apparel brand, Moosejaw is positioned well in an industry closely related to the health of the environment being critical to its success. Therefore, Moosejaw should capitalize on this environmental consciousness to appeal to customers.

Since the French National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan gained volunteers in 2012 and into 2016, 49 companies, both public and private, committed to the plan. The following chart shows the number of participants from each industry. The black bars indicate the companies that are included in the study for Environmental Science and Policy. The gray bar indicates all reported by NBSAP as committing. Retail and Multiple Goods ranks second to last meaning there are few companies that have taken the effort to be more corporately socially responsible (*Wolff*, 2018). The lack of environmental participation in the retail industry in France could set Moosejaw above competitors if Moosejaw actively promotes their efforts to be sustainable.

Figure 1:**French National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Volunteers by Industry:****(Wolff, 2018)****Social/Cultural Environment:****Quality of Life:**

It is very characteristic of France to embrace a feminine leaning Hofstede score, 43 on the masculinity scale, due to valuing a high quality of life (*Country Comparison, 2019*). French culture is known to embrace time to spend with family, relax, and overall prioritize the time away from the office. This embrace of an easy-going lifestyle is shown by the typical 35-hour work week, and five weeks of holiday per year (*Country Comparison, 2019*). One way the French embrace a high quality of life is experiencing nature and being active and healthy. This

healthier lifestyle is an avenue for Moosejaw to market towards French values of living their best life. Being an outdoor brand apparel company leverages Moosejaw's ability to market themselves as a key player in helping others have a quality life.

In correspondence to a high quality of life, France is experiencing a rising health consciousness and therefore causing a rise in the outdoor brand apparel and active sportswear industry sales. As further detailed in the *Sportswear in France* report, "women are largely driving sales of both performance footwear and apparel as they are increasingly turning to sports to keep fit and are buying the right sportswear for their chosen activities" (*Country Report; Sportswear in France*, 2018). The movement toward a healthier lifestyle in France creates a welcoming environment to those outdoor apparel brands such as Moosejaw looking to help individuals achieve a more health conscious lifestyle through high quality products.

Uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation are two more Hofstede characteristics that similarly shine light on a country with an unstable economy (*Country Comparison*, 2019). Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which the people in a country are confident in change, while long-term orientation is how a society prepares for the future. France ranks near the top of uncertainty avoidance at a score of 86. Therefore, long term orientation is expected to be high, and is at a score of 63 (*Country Comparison*, 2019). These high scores could be from high taxes and unemployment have giving French citizens reason to be cautious of the future, and therefore aim to prepare for it more.

Despite the French uncertainty avoidance that might cause more restrained spending, French households spending habits have changed. The surge in one-person households could offset lowered consumer confidence in France for Moosejaw. The Euromonitor explains "marriage rates [have] declined from 3.9 per thousand people in 2012 to 3.6 in 2017"

(*Consumer Lifestyles in France*, 2018). France is moving away from more traditional family households. The Euromonitor, a database on European demographics and industries, continues, “in line with this, the number of people both with ‘single’ and ‘divorced’ status grew by 6% over the 2012-2018 period. This demographic change has resulted in a corresponding rise in the number of single person households, which came to represent more than a third (35%) of all households by 2017” (*Consumer Lifestyles in France*, 2018). The report also explains that without the financial burden of a family to support French singles are spending their disposable income on clothing, leisure, and new technology. Therefore, young French singles are the fastest growing demographic to spend money on vacations within the country. The number of single consumers traveling reached 4.1 million in 2017 (*Consumer Lifestyles in France*, 2018). *Consumer Lifestyles in France* explains the rise in single households is due to more individuals pursuing advanced education, living with parents longer instead of marrying young, and an increase in migrant males into the country. This demographic of rising singles in France is attractive for Moosejaw because the *Consumer Lifestyles in France* report explains how individuals are now able to spend money on personal needs and wants rather than purchasing products to support a family. Therefore, Moosejaw’s product offering of clothing for leisure and outdoor activities is more attractive to at least more than a third of the country.

As a result of more non-critical purchases consumer spending on vacations and holidays are expected to grow. The Euromonitor shows predictions for consumer holiday expenditure continuously rising into 2030, (*France: Country Profile*, 2018). A 2018 Country Report survey for France showed that “75% of French respondents had taken at least one domestic leisure trip and 50% at least one international leisure trip in the last year” (*France: Country*

Profile, 2018). The generous leave policy in France averaging 5 weeks along with the desire to make the most out of life could mean the French are saving more, but not necessarily on vacations.

Social Media:

Social media is rapidly growing in France. As the use of smart phones increased rapidly since 2012, so has the use of social networking sites. The Euromonitor report on the French Digital Consumer reported 56% of French survey respondents reported using social media at least once a week, mainly Facebook. Of these French respondents, the highest percentage of users were aged 15-29, although there was a significant amount of age 60+ users visiting the sites weekly as well (*Digital Consumer in France*, 2018). Online social media use has led to an increase in consumers following trend behaviors. Social media influencers are constantly promoting specific brands, products, and a high quality of life overall. When social media influencers are transparent with their lives online, they gain the trust of their followers therefore driving sales for the products they promote. (*Digital Consumer in France*, 2018).

As social media drives purchases for specific products and brands, online shopping follows due to the desire for a faster, easier, and more efficient way to buy. In a country with increasing technology at their fingertips, stores are increasingly moving to online shopping orders to meet the demand. According to the Euromonitor French Digital consumer report, “France is the fifth largest e-commerce market in the world with retailing driving digital remote purchases. With a transaction every 33 seconds and record increase in purchasing frequency, the number of online shops continues growing” (*Digital Consumer in France*, 2018). The retail industry is the largest market sector to experience the wave of

ecommerce. Therefore, brands and companies are constantly looking for online services and marketing to differentiate themselves. The French marketing and other French digital advertising market are experiencing growth to meet this demand. Advertisements are used amongst all channels, while social media remains one of the most popular, radio, tv, press, and print are still being used to reach potential customers. It is important to note that almost all advertisements are in the national language because of the high value the French place on their language. There are even boards and committees within France to preserve the French language within school, business, and society in general. Therefore, for Moosejaw to maintain this advertising heavy market in France, Moosejaw can use their creative marketing style, Moosejaw Madness, to their advantage if it is written in French.

Lastly, along with Macron's initiative to increase business success across France, he started a campaign in 2018 called "Choose France" (*Digital Consumer in France*, 2018). This initiative will endorse "the development of an economy of competence, knowledge and digital innovation," by opening research centers and investing highly in companies such as Google and Facebook (*Digital Consumer in France*, 2018). Increasing digital innovation could mean more targeted advertisement by the collection of user data. The 10 million Euro investment is expected to continue to propel France forward in the digital industry, which could mean more influence to buy online for the typical French consumer. By Moosejaw implementing an online presence for the digital consumers, the Choose France trend will help with direct customers to their site by effective advertising made possible by Choose France initiatives.

Country Analysis Summary:

France is currently experiencing a state of economic and political uncertainty. The presidential administration of Macron, although pro-business and have initiated supportive action of companies in France, the French are still cautious because of issues such as rioting, unemployment, and terrorism. Despite French consumer hesitance toward the market, investment in France is still increasing and GDP is expected to do the same.

Shifting traditions in France such as the increase in single-person households has influenced France's consumer purchases. The French value of obtaining a high quality of life has not only given rise to the increase in health consciousness and working out, but also increased awareness of their impact of the environment. Social Media has also influenced the digital market in France by highlighting ease of shopping and fashion trends such as athleisure. As a result, the country's environmental factors show that Moosejaw could be successful in France.

Industry and Business Environment Analysis:**Athleisure:**

Moosejaw's outdoor apparel falls under the athletic category due to its intention for use in hiking, skiing, and other outdoor activities. The athletic industry is currently experiencing wide growth and success in the apparel market. In fact, Chavie Lieber explained that magnitude of sales generated off this industry: "The overall athletic category also continues to skyrocket: athletic apparel is outpacing the apparel market as a whole and accounted for \$33.7 billion in sales last year; the market is expected to be valued at \$180 billion by 2018" (Lieber, 2015). Lieber further explains the dynamic appeal to this industry that is driving growth. Many brands

such as LuLulemon, which was originally associated with yoga, have moved toward marketing their apparel as athlesuire brands as well. *Mintel's Activewear-US October 2016 Report* indicates that most consumers purchase activewear for casual purposes (*Poelking, 2017*). Expanding brands from typically more rigorous activities such as hiking and yoga to everyday wear that one can wear for activities such as walking their dog; has driven brands to promote an outdoor lifestyle in general. As Jill Chatwood, LuLuLemon's director of global trend and collaborations, explains "the entire industry has seen a major shift in the last decade towards a healthier, active lifestyle" (*Lieber, 2017*). Therefore, outdoor apparel sold at companies such as Moosejaw has access to a larger market outside of extreme outdoorsmen and women. Moosejaw may tap into the market of casual wear, for those who seek fashion in outdoorsy trends without being outdoorsy.

This increase in sales for outdoor brands has been significant in the U.S market. Italy's Salewa and Dynafit brands experienced a 30% growth since entering the U.S. market according to Eric Henderson, the brand's communications manager (*Miller, 2014*). Henderson further suggests that "opening the doors in North America is actually opening up more doors globally" (*Miller, 2014*). Behind only North America and Asia Pacific, Western Europe was in third for apparel sales in 2017 (*Country Report; Apparel and Footwear in France, 2018*). Although the apparel and footwear industry experienced lower sales into 2017, forecasts for 2018-2022 were for an increase (*Country Report; Apparel and Footwear in France, 2018*). The sportswear industry in France was expected to grow at an accelerated rate within the overall apparel industry. In 2017 the French sportswear industry growth of 3% helped sales approach into the seven billion euros, (*Country Report; Sportswear in France, 2018*). Therefore, in the retail industry, sportswear, and other active clothing are performing better than before.

Sportswear's success in France is due to more flexibility within those brands. The country report on French Sportswear in 2017 also mentioned that the clothing was used amongst growing popularity in sports such as trail running and cycling, but also leisure and work purposes. With these outdoor brands being perceived as more practical everyday apparel, it is fitting to all generation and lifestyles, not just individuals seeking adventure through mountain climbing, kayaking, and more. Along with the increased demand, there is an increased need for companies to focus on quality to compete amongst the competition. French markets are focused on technical fabrics in performance sportswear and streetwear. The rising number of competitors looking to fit into the athleisure and active outdoor apparel cannot enter without high quality products because customers seek to spend disposable income only on fabrics designed to help perform better and provide better comfort. For example, The North Face has done well in France due to its technical parkas designed to be breathable and warm, (*Country Report; Sportswear in France*, 2018). Therefore, Moosejaw should be cautious of their product quality when entering France.

French R&D:

Moosejaw can develop these high-quality products thanks to growth in France's technology advancement. "The French policy mix for R&D [Research and Development] has evolved substantially in recent years and is now one of the most generous systems in the world," (*Montmartin*, 2018). A heightened R&D movement means better chances to make quality material even in the textile industry. Especially with a focus more toward environmentally friendly products, Moosejaw can take advantage of the technology within France to produce high quality, green clothing and equipment which will boost their ability to be competitive in the French apparel market. Producing environmentally friendly products is important in France

because there is a trend within the French apparel and footwear industry for companies to be more consciously aware of their environmentally-friendly positioning. Consumers are being made aware of how companies aim to reduce waste and excessive consumption. The *Country Report on Apparel and Footwear* emphasizes that mainly young and high-income urban dwellers are those most in favor of companies aiming to be greener in their processes. Outdoor apparel companies tend to have values in line with a positive environmental impact. It would be contradictory to the purpose of outdoor apparel to be anything but environmentally friendly. Therefore, for Moosejaw to be respected in the outdoor apparel market, they must be strategic in developing ways to create positive change environmentally. Companies may also choose to financially support efforts and research for a cleaner world financially.

Loyalty Programs:

Also, due to the highly competitive market, apparel companies are looking to differentiate themselves through increased range of services to create a stronger customer bond, (*Country Report; Apparel and Footwear in France, 2018*). Loyalty programs and internet retailing have driven connections between brands and customers. These programs and services increase communication from both parties and help to improve the overall shopping experience. Loyalty programs are designed to attract customers back again after their initial purchase with a specific brand or company. These can be implemented by offering discounts when subscribing to a company's email, buying a certain number of products to receive a free item, exclusive sales to customers that shop regularly, and more. Internet retailing could include promoting one's brand through different platforms and encouraging users to interact digitally by browsing website or sharing material. Internet retailing is an increasing trend around the world including France. Internet retailing allows the ease of forgoing the trip to the physical stores, dealing with traffic

and handling kids when one goes. Mainly, consumers enjoy having all the options at their fingertips as technology continually plays a larger role in people's lives.

Social Media:

Not only is social media increasingly popular in France but especially within the apparel industry. Therefore, social media is becoming increasingly vital to company marketing strategies. John Poelking in his Mintel article on *Outdoor Enthusiasts; Social media*, writes about the increased sense of community and brand loyalty outdoor apparel companies are experiencing through social media (Poelking, 2017). When companies share their company values and how others are interacting with their products, potential customers have an increased understanding of what they could get out of purchasing their apparel. With the rise of athleisure, brands can also be flexible in their social media and demonstrate through photos that their apparel caters to all functions and style whether it be gardening or snowshoeing. Social media is also a great way to reach millennials and younger generations. Referred to as digital natives, they have grown up in the age of technology and spend vast amounts of time plugged into social media platforms. This experience online is beneficial for activewear companies to know because according to Poelking, millennials are two times more likely than the general population to buy new outdoor gear/accessories for preferred activities each season (2017). Moosejaw could target the young single population to tap into the potential sales.

French Business Investment:

The French economy and business environment have been experiencing up and downs due to Macron's administration. Any actions taken by Macron to help business may be offset due to decreased consumer confidence based off high taxes and lingering unemployment. Overall,

the inefficient labor market has reduced France's competitive abilities within the global economy. Corporate investment and residential construction slowed down leaving the GDP of France in recent years to rely on its growth through private investment. Fortunately, France remains the world's tenth most favored destination for foreign direct investment according to the Euromonitor. According to an Euromonitor article, *Doing Business in France*, foreign and domestic companies are treated equally in an economy focused on growth. In fact, foreign direct investment helped real GDP reach 2.2% in 2017 despite strikes, and terrorist attacks to name a few negative influences on the French economy (*France-Country Profile*, 2018).

To offset falling economic prosperity the French government intends to cut taxes and invest €50 billion into the market to influence future growth. The Euromonitor predicts that these proposed business friendly actions will strengthen investment and consumption further. After the initial fifty-billion-euro investment, the French government intends to scale back on both government funding and on regulations. For example, companies may now make deals with their own workers outside of industry standards. Therefore, the scale back will hopefully strengthen the natural course of the market and let the economy structurally support itself. Results expected to come from predominately structural reform to the market are: a tighter labor market with a slight wage increase, increased exports, productivity growth and a rise in real GDP by 1.7% into 2020 (*Business Dynamics, France*, 2018). The increased urgency to tap into private investors and grow the economy might mean a welcoming environment for new foreign business such as Moosejaw who can help build the threatened GDP.

Yellow Jackets:

Despite foreign direct investment benefiting the economy, it is believed that French households will be holding onto the increased disposable income to increase savings and lower consumer spending for precautionary reasons leaving consumer confidence to remain weak. Precautionary consumer behavior may be influenced by the Yellow Jacket riots as well as the concern that rising taxes will remain high. If the rise in disposable income continues, and the threat of the Yellow Jacket riots come to an end, there could be beneficial results affecting Moosejaw. Potential customers and French citizens would gain back consumer confidence and be able to seek avenues for expenditure such as new clothing. However, if the political turmoil influencing the riots continue, citizens may continue to keep their spending minimal.

Five Forces:

“Porter’s Five Forces is a simple but powerful tool for understanding the competitiveness of your business environment, and for identifying your strategy’s potential profitability” (*Porter*, 2019). Using Five Forces theory will exemplify how Moosejaw might experience challenges in France, but predominately experience positives or advantages to help the company prosper in the new market.

As mentioned previously, Fjällräven is a Swedish brand that experienced huge growth when it expanded internationally. Entering a new market led to greater sales and aided in successful brand extension in the United States. Other brands are participating in the increasingly competitive global arena by taking advantage of new technology and increased globalization. The ability to tap into larger potential markets is attractive to companies, but they must take the time to understand the culture they are expanding to in order to be successful.

Supplier Power:

One indicator of Macron's pro-business administration is that there was high optimism amongst French investors due to an increase in manufacturing output after his election in 2016. The manufacturing output grew 1.9% over 2017 which is the strongest it has been since 2011 (*France Economy*, 2018). Along with the increased technology through R&D funding throughout France, suppliers can make more high-quality products while meeting client demand to be sustainable (*Montmartin*, 2018). Therefore, the suppliers also have room to increase capacity with heightened technology meaning they have power to meet client demands easily. This ability to easily meet customer's demand for quality is beneficial to Moosejaw when expanding into France because Moosejaw will not be limited in suppliers. There is a great market of quality suppliers due to the R&D technology increase making it easier for Moosejaw to purchase material abroad.

Buyer Power:

Moosejaw has buyer power because their partnership with Walmart allows them to tap into Walmart's international resources. Walmart is known for working with suppliers to be as lean as possible. Walmart has become extremely efficient in their supply chain management and cost cutting that they can offer customers some of the lowest prices on the market. If Moosejaw has permission to tap into Walmart's supply chain, Moosejaw could transport cheaper material into their French Stores giving them potential to sell at a cheaper rate than competitors.

Competitive Rivalry:

It is important for Moosejaw to understand French and other international competitors in order to best strategize their marketing efforts. Popular brands in France and Europe that have a presence in France are: Patagonia, Northface, Mammut Sports Group, Helly Hansen, and La Sportiva, Norrona, Lafuma, and Millet. Moosejaw carries some of these brands such as Patagonia, and Northface. The outdoor apparel brands both exist by online stores, omni brand selling outdoor brand stores such as Snowleader, or their own physical stores. This wide range of competitors poses a potential threat to business looking to enter the highly concentrated French market. Manufacturers have strong control among retail networks in France. French retailers are organized and strategic with markups, innovation, and marketing approaches (*France-MarketChallenges*, 2018). This intense industry could be one of the factors keeping France amongst the top competitive countries in the apparel industry. This information is supported by a 2018 Euromonitor study of 137 countries in which France was ranked 22nd on a global competitive index (*Business Dynamics France*, 2018). The competitiveness poses a threat to Moosejaw and will therefore require Moosejaw to gain a competitive edge through marketing and differentiating themselves. The high competition is going to be challenging for a new retail store; however, the industry is showing that a trend for athletic/outdoor clothing stores such as Moosejaw are becoming more and more popular. France used to have a dressier and sleeker look which means there is room for more athleisure style brands.

Threat of Substitution:

The athleisure trend has helped increase sales of predominately outdoor and active style apparel because French customers are wearing the clothing in a more causal and leisurely way. Therefore, the use of outdoor and athletic clothing for more purposes, such as when just hanging

out in one's house, opens up Moosejaw products to more than just the adventurous and outdoorsy individual. This flexibility among the clothing might decrease the threat of substitution. Instead of deciding between more formal street wear, French citizens a part of the athleisure trend can use Moosejaw clothing for both needs. More French individuals could be expected to purchase athletic and outdoor clothing because they can use it in more ways than casual street wear such as jeans and blouses might.

Also, the competitive brands already present in France such as Mammut Sports Group, Helly Hansen, and La Sportiva, Norrona, Lafuma, and Millet are potential substitution brands. What is important to look at in France to observe how customers might seek substitutions are factors of price and quality. As mentioned, France is in a currently low consumer confidence economy, while still maintaining high expectations for quality.

Threat of New Entry:

High taxes are not only impacting French households but new businesses as well. Labor Tax and contributions were reaching nearly 50% of profits from French businesses in 2018. In a survey by the Euromonitor of 190 countries, France ranked in the lower half for both ease of doing business and starting a business. On average, French businesses pay taxes faster during the year than their European neighbors such as Spain, Germany, and Italy. However, this ability to pay taxes fast has not prevented these French businesses from acquiring high amounts of debt (*Business Dynamics, France, 2018*). In attempt to ease the tax burden, "France has made paying taxes less expensive by reducing social security and training contribution rates" (*Business Dynamics France, 2018*). In addition to these reduced rates, the French economy depends on the tourism industry for much of the country's financial support to keep up with higher taxes. In fact, France is the #1 tourist destination in the world (*Travel France, 2017*).

France's tourists are a client market to reach as a safety net for Moosejaw when French citizens experience downfalls in the economy. Therefore, the steady inflow of visitors should peak Moosejaw's interest in expanding to France because there is increased assurance in reaching sales despite the potential for a business environment decline among the French. The steady cushion of sales from tourists will be helpful when entering France to balance out high taxes.

SWOT Analysis:

Moosejaw Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moosejaw carries brands specifically sold in the United States which would be new and exciting brands to introduce to the French Market that customers can only purchase from Moosejaw • Moosejaw’s creative Marketing techniques “Moosejaw Madness” • Recent help from Walmart has helped the company grow • Moosejaw already has an online presence in social media and through their website
Moosejaw Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moosejaw would need to gain permission from over 90% of their brands to begin selling internationally • This would be Moosejaw’s first international expansion which means they have no previous data to work from
Opportunities within France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The French take a lot of vacations that might require outdoor apparel • Large tourism could attract potential customers • With a large presence in online retailing, unique marketing helps a company to differentiate themselves • “Choose France” initiative helps drive technology • The R&D capabilities could help touch into the environmentally friendly consumer • Pro-Business Presidential Administration • Wide presence in social media has made digital shopping, and advertising easier • Social Media influencers have driven market interest in activewear and outdoor apparel • Single person households have a disposable income to buy discretionary items such as clothing and travel
Threats within France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The French might have a more sophisticated, luxury brand style • Rioters have been known to become violent and break into stores • If households begin to save more to prepare for a potential economic crisis • Terrorism has affected many cities negatively in France • Highly concentrated retail market • Large unemployment due to a large population seeking work but lacking skills • High taxes that could make starting a business in France difficult, and hinder French consumers from spending on non-need-based items

Recommendations:**Preface:**

For Moosejaw to successfully expand into France, their first mission would be to gain permission of their U.S. national brands to sell internationally. Moosejaw currently carries European brands along with brands that have already entered the European market such as North Face and Patagonia. However, to stand out from competitors, Moosejaw would need to introduce those predominately American brands, as well as its own Moosejaw products to France to gain market share. The new products, when marketed well may be attractive, fresh, and increase the French consumer markets interest in Moosejaw overall.

Entry Mode:

To expand into France, Moosejaw should conduct their international entry mode as a joint venture with the parent company in France for hospitality called AccorHotels, specifically with their Novotel brand. Moosejaw's joint venture with Novotel would be beneficial to both parties because like a gift store, Novotel could receive partial profit from Moosejaw opening a mini store off their lobbies, and Moosejaw would grow its brand to the French individuals traveling domestically, as well as other tourists visiting the hotel. Therefore, Moosejaw would be relieving itself of some of the burdens of being a new stand-alone business in a foreign country, increase its exposure in France, and still gain revenue by outside tourists as well. Opening a joint venture with a hotel is optimal because hotels and resorts are not only in places where individuals are looking to interact with the new environment around them, but also on a vacation mode which might prompt them to spend money on more discretionary items like clothing. They might also see needs for the outdoor clothing depending on if they came prepared to do activities

such as hiking or skiing. Also, as the athleisure style becomes more and more popular, even in areas that are more urban, the Moosejaw brand might be bought just as comfortable clothing to do a lot of walking.

Developing a joint venture between an apparel company and a hotel is not a common practice in France but could offer many benefits to each relationship if executed efficiently. If Moosejaw is unable to develop a strategy with Novotel, or other hotel brands, Moosejaw would incur larger start up costs. Additional taxes and costs would challenge Moosejaw when expanding into France, but the following recommendations may still be applied to Moosejaw with out a joint venture. The profitability of being near tourist destinations remains strong and should still be a major part of Moosejaw's expansion strategy.

Interactive Marketing Techniques:

Another reason creating a joint venture with Novotels is an attractive option for Moosejaw is because on vacation, guests typically look for fun things to do, then you pair that with the French outlook on a high quality of life, Moosejaw can promote their brand at the Novotel through interactive workshops that promote a healthy life. For example, in Lieber's article she continues her conversation with the head of women's outdoor at The North Face, Jasmin Ghaffarian, who mentions an interactive marketing style done by Decathlon; "Decathlon is testing a new concept called Decathlon City, with this being a 500 sq. m store offering a wide range of sports goods focused on key items. This concept is primarily aimed at sportsmen and sportswomen in urban areas. Decathlon is also running events such as free evening classes for yoga or cross-training, with these led by staff who are also qualified coaches. Decathlon is also opening stores at railway stations under the name Decathlon Mobility as well as outlets for families called Decathlon Essentiel." (Lieber, 2015).

Moosejaw could model these events and activities by running yoga classes, ski lessons or guided hikes near by the hotel. The events and workshops would be led by employees of Moosejaw. The schedule of events would be given to guest itinerary's, on a brochure for the hotel, and posted online. Before each of these classes or workshops, employees of Moosejaw/Novotel would refer guests to purchase gear right off the lobby if needed.

Location:

Moosejaw should start off in only a few Novotels in France, until they can hopefully become more successful and grow their brand/market share in France. The Novotel locations that Moosejaw should initially target are locations well known for their outdoor activities. France has a diverse geography, from densely populated cities, villages and farm land, beaches, and forested mountains. The ideal Novotels are in the south east part of the country. The world atlas describes the country's geography as so, "mountains dominate eastern, south central and southern France, including the snowcapped Alps that stretch along its border with Italy, then on into Switzerland and across southern Europe," (*France Geography, 2017*). An interesting fact about France, also found on the World Atlas is that the second highest point in Europe can be found in France and is called Mont Blanc standing 15,770 ft. tall. Mont Blanc would be popular tourist attraction for individuals interested in the outdoors, therefore benefitting Moosejaw's potential sales. Other geographies great for outdoor activities such as hiking, rock climbing, skiing, and more are the forested Vosges Mountains in the northeast, and Gorges du Verdon, a canyon next to the Verdon River, (*France Geography, 2017*). There is a Novotel in Belfort, and Mulhouse, France by the Vosges Mountains. There are six Novotels down in the southeast corner near Nice, France, close to the Gorges du Verdon,

(*Hotel List Map*). Moosejaw should also open on in a Paris Novotel to introduce the brand as flexible, appealing to athleisure, and fit into the countries most well known retail location.

Digital Marketing and Website:

Moosejaw should also open a French version of their website and provide a link to it on Novotel's site. Opening an online shopping presence is important as we have seen by French culture moving to a more digital consumer lifestyle. With the ease and convenience of shopping online that customers like, not having an efficient store online would hinder potential sales, especially of busier individuals. Another reason opening an online Moosejaw store would help sales is because with the high fuel tax, French citizens are looking for ways to save money on traveling. Allowing individuals to purchase Moosejaw products from their homes instead of driving to a physical store would eliminate the threat of low sales from minimal driving. It is important to note that due to France's high concentration of competitors in the retail market, and forward moving digital advances, online competition is intense. Gaining the French consumer interest online can be enticed with more efficient processes, and unique characteristics such as a new online loyalty program developed just for France.

An example of a loyalty program that Moosejaw could implement is a product discount after a customer creates an online account, linked to their social media. The discount would come into effect after a user has bought an item and displayed it positively on their social media tagging Moosejaw. The customer would then receive a product discount around 10% off their next purchase and may do this up to three times. Developing an exclusive offer such as this not only encourages repeat shoppers but uses positive word of mouth through earned media. Users are sharing with friends and family on their social media

their positive experience with the brand for free! Due to social media, and social media influencers rising in France, reaching the market through real people they can trust such as their friends, family, and colleagues creates an authentic and credible brand.

Also, through Moosejaw's social media efforts, they should work with well known celebrities to market their product as high quality, something important to the French. An example of a useful brand ambassador on social media would be a French Olympic Athlete. Perrine Laffont is an Olympic freestyle skier that brought home the gold for France in the recent 2018 Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, (*Perrine Laffont*, 2018). She is only twenty years old and has over 48 thousand followers just on Instagram, (*Perrine – Laffont*, 2018). Laffont would make a great brand ambassador that would appeal to a younger generation in France, who have been shown to use their disposable income on discretionary items based off social influencers opinions.

Moosejaw Madness:

Something that has differentiated Moosejaw in the United States and differentiated itself from other outdoor brands is their quirky, and unique marketing style. Keeping their upbeat, humorous, and unconventional marketing can be just as effective in France if modified to their society and culture, as well as done in their language. Moosejaw Madness in France would incorporate humor, emphasize how their products get individuals out in nature to increase their quality of life, and appreciate their culture all at once. Moosejaw Madness could also promote their brand coinciding with France's health consciousness trend. As shown in the industry report, French citizens are increasingly looking for exercise and a healthy lifestyle through sports and outdoor activities. Therefore, as a part of Moosejaw Madness Moosejaw should incorporate the promotion of playing sports with their products so

that potential customers can picture themselves needing the product in order to pursue that lifestyle they are aiming for.

Environmental Impact:

One of the relevant factor influencing French politics, business, and human behavior is how French citizens treat the environment. The French are increasingly making strides to reduce the effects of global warming and do their part in creating more green initiatives. French National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Macron's 15 billion Euro investment on ecological reform are just two examples of France taking a national stance on preventing further damage to the earth. Individuals in France are also doing their part to be more environmentally conscious by even avoiding businesses that refuse to change irresponsible business practices. Because Moosejaw is an outdoor brand, it is inevitable that they have a concern and reverence for protecting nature as well. Capitalizing on their strategic values in helping prevent climate change, and support initiatives that aim to do just that, could benefit Moosejaw greatly in France. Not only would environmentally friendly business practices be attractive to environmentally consciences consumers, but also slightly lift the burden of doing business in France with a tax break. Tax breaks such as Competitiveness and Employment Tax Credit (CICE) are designed to help business in France sustain better business practices such as hiring and training workers, R&D for new innovations, and of course developing new strategies for sustainability, (*Tax Incentives*, 2018).

Moosejaw should take advantage of the growing R&D sectors in France to work with locally made material, and green technology that makes their products high quality, local, and good for the environment. Moosejaw could then market these actions taken by posting videos of how their products are made on social media. They could also list their products as eco friendly

on the tag of the clothing. The French government has recently created guidelines to labeling products on if there are environmentally friendly, organic, and more conditions that should be easily shown to the customers. They should also post on their social media about supporting national campaigns or non-profits in France that work toward saving the earth from further harm.

Recommendations Summary:

Recommendation	Supporting Evidence
Gain permission from all of Moosejaw's brands to be sold abroad, specifically in France.	Moosejaw must receive permission to sell all of their current brands before expanding.
Create a joint venture entry mode with Novotels France.	Partnering with a hotel company also helps Moosejaw tap into the tourist market in France both from internal and external tourists.
Implement interactive marketing techniques at their Novotel locations.	To express how Moosejaw brand fits into the high quality of life the French value, Moosejaw should use interactive events related to well-being.
Ideal Novotel locations for Moosejaw to expand would be Belfort, Mulhouse, Nice, and Paris.	The locations were based off French Geography for popular tourist destinations and where Novotels currently exist.
Develop a French version of Moosejaw's website with online shopping, loyalty programs, and increased social media.	Based off their love for their language, increased use of social media, and increased online shopping from Choose France.
Implement Moosejaw Madness in French advertisements.	Moosejaw should use this differentiated technique to engage French consumers.
Environmentally friendly	The French are increasingly environmentally conscious and look to support companies that are more sustainable in their business practices.

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