

GAMERS ADDRESS THE ARAB SPRING

CODING FOR CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Ted Rogers Leadership Centre

You are director of marketing for the independent video game developer, CyberGamers Inc., which has developed a reputation in the North American market as a reliable developer of AAA games. Founded in the 1990s, the firm has grown from 10 employees to 200, with annual sales last year of over \$50 million. The firm's success is owed to the hard work and dedication of the founding team of six partners, of which you are one. All of you are now anxious to capitalize on your efforts by going public with an Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the next few years.

There are some issues that the team feels they need to address before a public offering. In particular, while annual revenue growth is still strong, it is slowing and profitability is being pinched as administrative costs rise. The team feels they need to look for ways to further expand globally as the North American market has not only become saturated with many players, but is also being impacted by serious culture wars sparked by the Gamergate controversy. Consequently, CyberGamers is looking to expand to new markets like the Middle East, where, with the proliferation of technology, the gamer community is on the rise.

You are very much aware, however, that some competitors have got themselves into trouble in the Middle Eastern market by introducing games that misrepresent Islam. These sentiments are further fanned since the rise of the Arab Spring. The question becomes: does CyberGamers have what it takes to succeed in the Middle East? In order to help the team at CyberGamers understand what it will take, develop a practical list of the key considerations and requirements for the Middle Eastern market. How big an undertaking does this have to be?

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The Twist

Now that the above has been settled, CyberGamers wants to acquire another firm with lucrative titles. But among its back list of titles is a game with a Middle Eastern villain at the centre. The game has add-on packs that continue to sell very well. If you go ahead with the acquisition, what should you do with the games featuring the Middle Eastern villain?

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