

Checklist

How to Succeed in Your First Year in Germany

Launching your scale-up in Germany is as exciting as it is demanding. Before diving in, rely on a proven plan inspired by companies that have already navigated the market successfully.

Here's your actionable checklist to maximize your chances of success during your first year across the Rhine. All the tips were shared during Next Market Live by Weglot, the event to help you go global

■ Before you launch



Clarify your “why”

Ask yourself: Why Germany? What unique value can you bring to your sector in this market (e.g., insurance, HR, spend management, etc).



Ensure strategic alignment

Confirm that entering Germany fits your overall company strategy and that it's not just a short-term “test”. It should be a committed move backed by your team and investors.

■ Preparation & structuring



Conduct qualitative and quantitative market research

Speak with 30+ local prospects or peers to understand their expectations for your product or service in their context and how they use it.

Study local competitors and review industry standards.



Hire a local team from day one

Prioritize native or bicultural profiles (PMM, country manager, sales, etc).

Account for higher salaries and the typically slower recruitment processes in Germany.



Set clear ICPs & objectives

Focus on 2–3 specific segments or account pools.

Establish investment milestones (e.g., hire a BDR at €15k MRR, a second at €30k, etc).

■ Local presence & networking



Be physically present

Plan multi-city trips and schedule a week of in-person meetings in each.

Announce your visits by email to increase meeting confirmations.



Build a network of local partners

Identify trusted advisors (e.g., accountants, referrers, integrators).

Turn early German clients into brand ambassadors.

■ Product & adaptation



Adapt your product in all aspects

Collect and address all market-specific usage feedback (even if you have more than 300 points to fix!).

Integrate local legal and industry-specific requirements (vacation, payroll, compliance, etc).



Refine your localization strategy

Localize both products and promotions for the German market.

Create content that aligns with local expectations.



Adjust your positioning

Adapt tone, image, and promise to convey reliability and seriousness, especially in traditional sectors.

Evaluate your “startup” image and adjust it according to industry norms and your target audience.

■ Tracking, iteration & scaling

□ Track operational KPIs in the first months

Monitor key metrics such as emails sent per day, response rate, in-person meetings, and field conversions.

Measure actual product usage among clients.

□ Hire as soon as you can

Once you see signs of traction, expand your team to capitalize on momentum and bring in new expertise as you share learning

□ Keep improving

Refine messaging, product, and processes after every piece of client or prospect feedback.

□ Communicate your local commitment

Demonstrate your investment in Germany through your team, client relationships, and presence at trade shows.

■ Cultural factors

□ Anticipate hiring challenges

Expect higher salary demands and more cautious senior profiles.

□ Differentiate Germany from German-speaking Switzerland

Adapt both strategy and tone, even if the language is the same.

□ Accept long cycles and the need for reassurance

Approach the market with patience and determination.



About Weglot

Germany rewards companies that prepare thoroughly, adapt relentlessly, and commit locally. With the right partners, you can turn localization into a competitive advantage. **Weglot** helps scale-ups do exactly that! It's an AI-powered website translation tool that instantly translates your site.

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