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## Successfully Penetrating African Markets: A Case Study of Usco

Usco's<sup>i</sup> corporate headquarters expected double-digit growth rates from its sub-Saharan African market. In 2023, Genman Gersa,<sup>ii</sup> Usco's general manager for sub-Saharan Africa, bore much of the responsibility for organizing and delivering on that expectation. Eadir Torken,<sup>iii</sup> Usco's East Africa director, and other leaders of offices and practices were also heavily involved in those decisions. Successful execution of such growth goals required addressing many organizational questions. Should Usco have offices in multiple countries, or could it serve those markets more effectively from continent headquarters in South Africa and local partners in other countries? If Usco was to have its own offices, which countries should have them? What would be the responsibility and authority of the leadership of each office and of the different functions within the offices? What systems would most effectively facilitate beneficial information-sharing without overwhelming Usco decision-makers with non-beneficial information? Gersa, Torken, and others within Usco had to address these questions and continuously reevaluate their answers as circumstances changed. Had they identified every organizational issue they need to be thinking about? If not, decisions would be made by default instead of by deliberate consideration of the costs and benefits.

### Usco

Usco, a Fortune 500 company with approximately 100,000 employees in 25 countries, began in 1902 as a producer of toilets. Usco went on to acquire firms and develop other products, ultimately turning into the conglomerate that it was in 2023, serving a wide variety of consumer and commercial markets including bathroom, kitchen, home and commercial energy, and heating.

Usco's operations in Africa began in 1958 with the opening of its office in Johannesburg, South Africa. As of early 2023, Usco's African operation employed about 1,000 individuals in four offices: South Africa; Ghana and Nigeria in west Africa; and Kenya in the east.

<sup>i</sup> Usco is a fictional company.

<sup>ii</sup> Genman Gersa is a fictional character.

<sup>iii</sup> Eadir Torken is a fictional character.

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