



COMPANY OVERVIEW

Company mission

The purpose of playhockeyNZ is to foster youth hockey and educational exchanges between Europe and New Zealand. The company will act as an agent to facilitate school and hockey playing placements in New Zealand for young European players aged between 15 and 18 years from Germany.

Identifying the business need

Alexander and Rachelle Ehlert returned to live permanently in New Zealand from Germany in early 2009. On their return Alexander began renewing and expanding his network within the Wellington hockey community. Through this network and particularly his work with local schools a strong interest in recruiting European players for the New Zealand hockey seasons was identified. Alexander organised two German players to join New Zealand's NHL team for the winter 2009 season which proved enormously popular and rewarding on all sides. The New Zealand team learned a lot from their European counterparts and the young German women enjoyed both the hockey and 'downunder' experiences. The women were billeted by the families of local players, and were able to combine playing hockey with some travel around New Zealand during their time here. At the same time Alex organised placements of top Wellington players with German premier league clubs.

The styles and attitudes of play are very different in New Zealand and Germany and a lot can be gained, particularly by kiwi players, from such exchanges. After discovering strong interest from Wellington school hockey coaches the idea for a business was born. Alexander's German hockey networks and excellent reputation among the hockey community there plus growing respect in the Wellington hockey community were considered significant strengths for such a venture. This, coupled with Rachelle's experience and understanding of the New Zealand education system, were a solid basis for starting playhockeyNZ.

Customer base

The company's target market is 15-18 year old German hockey players and their parents as funders.

Hockey is a popular sport among higher socio-economic groups in Germany. It is a sport that is often played throughout generations of a family. Hockey represents a sport but also a tradition and an important social connection. When you are a hockey player you speak about being part of the 'hockey family'. Generally speaking, hockey is a prominent sport at our equivalent of 'high decile' schools.

In all German schools young people begin learning English at the age of ten. It is a compulsory topic in the school system there for six years and many continue learning English beyond this. It is very popular for young Germans to spend a part of their high



school education overseas especially to improve their English. Typically the young people doing these 'exchanges' are from affluent families. America has been a popular destination for spending a school year but this has changed over the last decade. This is due to a perception that the quality of education has lowered, that it is less safe and there has been a shift in popularity towards learning British English.

At the same time, New Zealand has been growing in popularity for Germans as a travel destination. The quality of education in New Zealand is considered very good in Germany and, importantly, the NCEA is recognised for university entrance there. New Zealand's positive education image is helped by being highly ranked among OECD countries in the Programme for International Assessment (PISA). New Zealand is also considered a safe and relatively affordable place to visit and live.

PlayhockeyNZ plans to tap into the high interest in New Zealand among Germans as a safe, affordable destination with good quality education. By direct marketing to German hockey players we will be combining all these interests, something which we believe is not offered by any other organisation currently.

Marketing

PlayhockeyNZ promote its services directly to German hockey players and their parents. Key routes for this promotion is the playhockeyNZ website, the German Hockey Association (www.hockey.de) and information directed to German hockey clubs and schools where hockey is an elite sport. Alex's networks in Germany will aid distribution of company information.

Cooperation

PlayhockeyNZ cooperates with the Wellington Hockey Association.

The company is agent for Wellington College, Wellington Girls' College, Hutt International Boys' School, Wairarapa College, Scots' College and Marsden Girls.

Homestays will be organised through chosen schools and placements made specifically with 'hockey' families. The risk of mismatch is greatly reduced when there are shared interests and there is the convenience of travel to the same games and practices.