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# Brand Passport™

## *Readiness Checklist*

*Is your brand ready to cross borders?*

A practical self-assessment based on the Brand Passport™ methodology.

### How to use this checklist

This checklist is structured around the five steps of the Brand Passport™ methodology, developed from 15 years of helping businesses navigate brand strategy across Singapore, Indonesia, and Europe.

For each statement, score yourself honestly:

<b>0</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	This has not been addressed or considered.
<b>1</b>	<b>Partially</b>	Some thinking has been done, but it is incomplete or informal.
<b>2</b>	<b>Mostly</b>	This is largely in place, but gaps or inconsistencies remain.
<b>3</b>	<b>Fully</b>	This is clearly defined, documented, and consistently applied.

At the end, total your score to see where your brand stands. There are 20 statements, so the maximum score is 60.

Be honest. This checklist is most useful when it reveals what you do not yet know.

STEP 1

## Cultural Audit

How well do you understand how your brand is perceived across markets?

**1. You have conducted formal or informal research into how your brand is perceived in your home market.**

0	1	2	3
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*This goes beyond sales data. It includes how customers describe you, what they associate with your name, and whether their perception matches your intent.*

**2. You understand how trust, quality, and credibility signals differ between your home market and your target market.**

0	1	2	3
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*What builds trust in Jakarta (relationships, warmth, personal connection) may differ significantly from what builds trust in Singapore (efficiency, credentials, track record) or Europe (heritage, design, transparency).*

**3. You can clearly articulate what your brand stands for in one sentence, without using jargon.**

0	1	2	3
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*If your own leadership team cannot do this consistently, your market certainly cannot.*

**4. You have identified which aspects of your brand may confuse, alienate, or fail to translate in a new cultural context.**

0	1	2	3
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*This includes naming, visual identity, colour associations, messaging tone, and assumptions about customer behaviour.*

Section score: \_\_\_ / 12

STEP 2

## Brand Core

Is the foundation of your brand strong enough to travel?

**5. Your brand has a clearly defined core value proposition that is not dependent on geography, language, or local market conditions.**

0	1	2	3
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*A brand whose only advantage is price, location, or local familiarity will struggle to cross borders. The core must be deeper.*

**6. You can distinguish between what is universal about your brand and what is culturally specific.**

0	1	2	3
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*Universal: your quality, your mission, your expertise. Culturally specific: your tone, your visual language, your customer expectations.*

**7. Your internal team (leadership, marketing, sales) agrees on what the brand stands for.**

0	1	2	3
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*Misalignment internally always becomes confusion externally. This is one of the most common and most overlooked problems.*

**8. Your brand story has emotional and strategic depth beyond your product or service features.**

0	1	2	3
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*People do not cross borders to buy features. They cross borders because they trust a brand that stands for something they value.*

Section score: \_\_\_ / 12

STEP 3

## Market-Fit Positioning

Is your positioning built for the market you are entering, or the one you are leaving?

**9. You have studied the competitive landscape in your target market, not just your home market.**

0	1	2	3
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*Your competitors in a new market are often completely different from those at home. Positioning that differentiates you locally may be irrelevant internationally.*

**10. Your brand positioning has been tested or validated with people who are from or deeply understand the target market.**

0	1	2	3
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*Assumptions made from your home market office are the number one cause of failed international brand launches.*

**11. You are prepared to adapt your positioning without losing your brand identity.**

0	1	2	3
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*If your own leadership team cannot do this consistently, your market certainly cannot.*

**12. You have a clear answer to the question: why should a customer in the target market choose you over a local alternative?**

0	1	2	3
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*This is the hardest question in internationalisation. If you cannot answer it clearly, the market will answer it for you.*

Section score: \_\_\_ / 12

STEP 4

## Cross-Cultural Brand Architecture

Are your brand assets, messaging, and identity systems designed to work across markets?

**13. Your visual identity (logo, colours, typography, imagery) has been reviewed for cultural appropriateness in your target market.**

0	1	2	3
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*Colours carry different associations across cultures. White signals purity in Western markets but mourning in parts of East Asia. Red signals luck in China but danger in Western contexts.*

**14. Your brand messaging framework exists in written form and can be adapted for different languages and cultural contexts.**

0	1	2	3
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*Without a documented messaging framework, localisation becomes guesswork. Every translator, agency, and local team will interpret your brand differently.*

**15. You have brand guidelines that are clear enough for a team in another country to execute consistently.**

0	1	2	3
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*If your brand guidelines only make sense to people who already know the brand, they are not ready for international use.*

**16. Your digital presence (website, social media, content) is prepared for a multi-market audience.**

0	1	2	3
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*This includes language, imagery, payment systems, customer support channels, and cultural tone of voice.*

Section score: \_\_\_ / 12

STEP 5

## Launch and Activate

Are you operationally ready to enter a new market with your brand?

**17. You have a go-to-market plan that includes brand launch activities, not just distribution or sales targets.**

0	1	2	3
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*A brand that enters a market without a deliberate brand introduction strategy is invisible. Distribution is not the same as brand presence.*

**18. You have identified local partners, distributors, or advisors who understand the target market's business culture.**

0	1	2	3
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*Every successful cross-border brand launch we have seen involves at least one person on the ground who understands how business is actually done locally.*

**19. You have a plan to monitor and course-correct your brand positioning within the first 90 days after market entry.**

0	1	2	3
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*The first 90 days are when most brands discover the gap between their assumptions and reality. Having a feedback loop is essential.*

**20. Your leadership team is committed to investing in brand building in the new market, not just expecting immediate sales results.**

0	1	2	3
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*Brand building across borders takes time. Companies that expect month-one ROI from a new market typically pull out before the brand has had time to take root.*

Section score: \_\_\_ / 12

## Your Score

TOTAL SCORE

Section score: \_\_\_ / 60

### What your score means

#### 0 – 15: Foundation Stage

Your brand has significant gaps in cross-border readiness. This is not unusual — most businesses have never been asked to think about their brand through a cross-cultural lens. The priority is to build foundational clarity before entering any new market. A cultural audit and brand core definition would be the right starting point.

#### 16 – 30: Development Stage

Your brand has some foundations in place, but important gaps remain — particularly in market-fit positioning and cross-cultural brand architecture. You are likely ready to begin planning for internationalisation, but not yet ready to execute. Focused work on positioning validation and cultural translation would reduce risk significantly.

#### 31 – 45: Readiness Stage

Your brand is well positioned for cross-border growth. Most of the fundamentals are in place. The areas where you scored lowest represent the highest-leverage opportunities for improvement. A targeted engagement on those specific gaps would accelerate your market entry.

#### 46 – 60: Acceleration Stage

Your brand is strongly prepared for internationalisation. At this stage, the focus shifts from readiness to execution: go-to-market strategy, launch planning, and the first 90 days in a new market. You are in a position to move with confidence.

### *Want to discuss your score?*

Book a complimentary 30-minute call with our brand strategist to review your results, identify the highest-impact areas for improvement, and explore whether the Brand Passport™ approach is the right fit for your business.

**Book a Strategy Call → [yuliasaksen.com](https://yuliasaksen.com)**

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The Brand Passport™ Readiness Checklist is developed by Yulia Saksen, an international brand consultant and creator of the Brand Passport™ methodology. CMC® certified. 3× Indonesia Retail Summit keynote speaker. Based across Singapore, Jakarta, and Milan.

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