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Global Retail Expansion:
How to get your inventory and distribution strategy right

Expand confidently across the globe with virtual inventory and fulfillment workflow templates

Global expansion. It's the logical step to tap new growth——but not without its pitfalls.

Especially when it comes to stock availability and fulfillment. Why? Because as you expand it's important that you can mitigate risk. Move carefully. And take the learnings from one market into another. But to keep risk down it's important that you have a way to:

- Test products in a new market before opening up your whole line
- Control what you sell where
- Support different distribution strategies including regional hubs
- Use processes that are working in one market to accelerate rollout in another, but still be able to
- Adjust your fulfillment logic to account for local market preferences and requirements, like speed of delivery and timing of payments and refunds

That's where a distributed order management system, like Fluent Order Management, comes in. It helps you do all these things and more.

How?

01. Virtual inventory segmentation

Virtual inventory gives you new ways to aggregate and segment your stock. It lets you create virtual

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pools of inventory—defined by inventory rules, buffers and exclusions. That means you can control which inventory pool is sold where, and prioritize your stock by sales channel or region. How does it work?

Test your products in a new market

Let's say you sell in Country A but want to expand into Country B. You might choose to test a subset of your stock in Country B as a test.

In Fluent Order Management you could set up a 'Virtual Catalog'

for the region that only includes a few products, or a few categories.

Then, whether you test the market through your own regional online store, or regional marketplace, you can have that sales channel look only at the regional catalog. You can also set different buffer or safety stock levels for that region.

Control what you sell where

After the test you might be ready to open up your whole catalog to a new region. But you might need to restrict products that can't be shipped internationally.

For example, you may not want to ship fragile or bulky goods due to the risk of damage, or cost of

REGION A

REGION B

MARKETPLACES
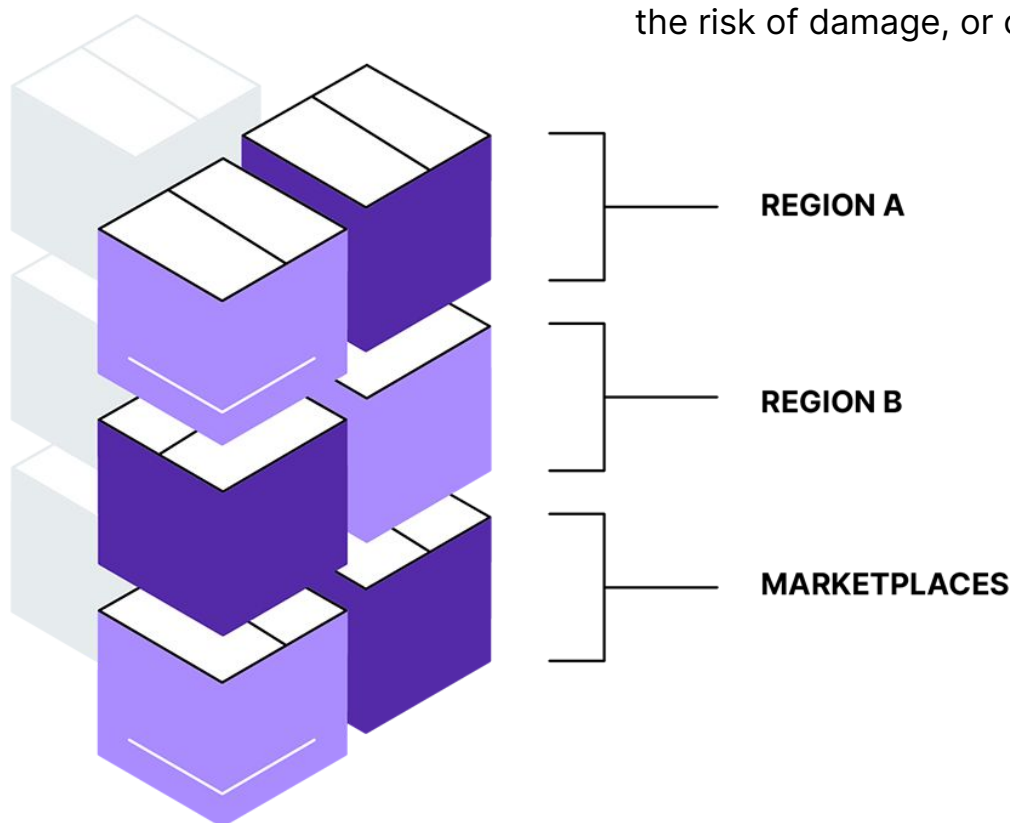
shipping. Or you may need to exclude items that are restricted or highly regulated in the new region, like alcohol or tobacco.

Virtual catalogs can solve the problem too. They let you exclude specific categories or products from your regional catalog. These exclusions can even be based on product attributes, so you have complete control over what you sell where.

02. Flexible fulfillment logic workflows and templates

Fluent Order Management was designed from day one to flex with your business. Especially when it comes to fulfillment logic. And for global retailers, this is essential. **Why?**

Customize sourcing logic by country

Because every country is different. You might have different distribution strategies, or want to prioritize different sourcing logic in different countries. For example, when an order comes in, which one do you want to ship from?

- Distribution center in country
- Regional hub distribution center
- Store in country
- Distribution center in headquarters country

And what other factors do you want to consider? Reducing split shipments? Store capacity for
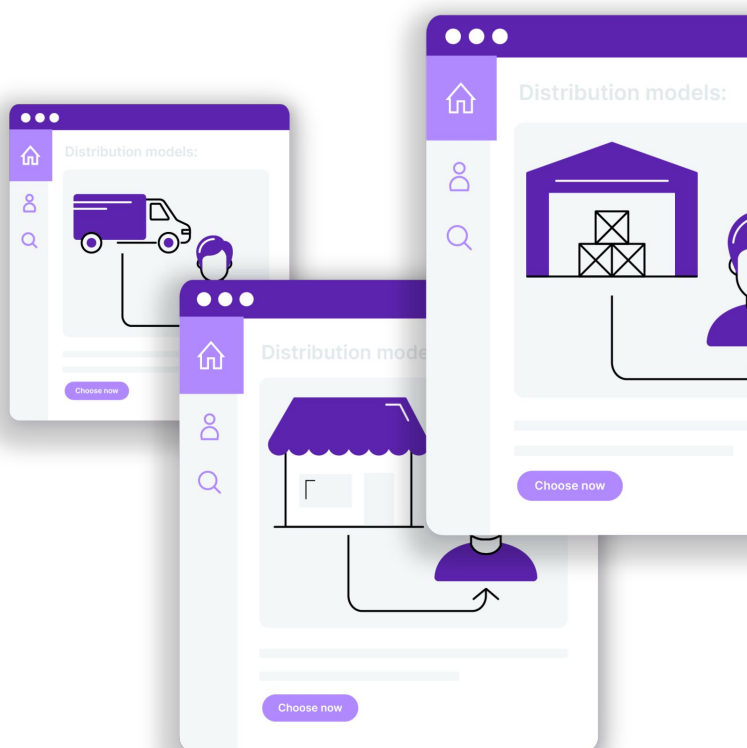
online orders? Availability of appropriate shipping materials or ability to process customs paperwork if required? There are other considerations too.

Manage order orchestration

At the simplest level an order comes in, is processed, then delivered or picked up. But those of us who work in ecommerce know there are many more steps involved. And each country can have different needs. So you need flexible order orchestration logic that lets you:

Cater to different shopper preferences

Think fulfillment preferences like fast delivery, locker pickup, or delivery to another third party location. Or even a preference for cash on delivery in some countries.

Manage fraud checks and payment timing

Then there are different requirements for the timing of payment. And you will need to work with different regional carriers which may impact your fulfillment workflows. And then there are return windows to manage, and different

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requirements for the timing of refunds. All these factors require flexible, finely tuned fulfillment logic so that you can deliver a great customer experience across borders. But it's also important to get economies of scale.

That's where workflow templates come in.

03. Use workflow templates to accelerate expansion

Each country may have its differences, but chances are, you have a core set of processes that work well.

Common fulfillment processes also let you provide consistency of experience across markets. So it makes sense to use those core workflows as a base, so you can roll out to new markets faster.

That's why **Fluent Order Management** was designed to support workflow templates.

With templates, you can configure your core workflows and use them as a base in each new market, but still tweak them to fit local needs.

This lets you leverage the efficiency of your core set of processes, but still allow for regional shopping preferences.

What's more, it empowers each country with the autonomy to provide a differentiated experience to attract new customers and grow your business.

Summary

When you are ready to expand globally, don't overlook the details.

In order to mitigate risk, optimize operations and be successful, you need the right technology in place. Whether you plan to test new products in certain markets, cater to regional preferences such as carriers and delivery methods, or even enable local languages for staff, you need a distributed order management system that can help you accomplish all this—and more.

Fluent Order Management is designed to allow you to easily segment inventory by brand or regional with rules.

Configure flexible fulfillment strategies so each region is enabled to create their own sourcing and allocation logic.

And most importantly? Accelerate expansion thanks to workflow templates. Because when technology is no longer a barrier to growth, but an accelerator, global expansion is within reach.

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Create a profitable global expansion strategy.

See it in Action!

To learn more about how Fluent Order Management can support your growth, schedule a demo today.

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