



FOUR COMPANIES THAT...

1. Royal Bank of Scotland. This company built up a strong retail market share in the U.S., not under the RBS brand, but through a series of acquisitions of regional (not national) banks. RBS is adding value for its shareholders by letting these banks retain their individual brand identities, by focusing on improving back office efficiencies, and by having the highly respected CEO of one of the acquired entities lead the combined U.S. organization. Meanwhile, RBS is building its B2B brand with institutional clients on Wall Street.
2. IKEA. IKEA offers a furniture retailing value proposition and experience unparalleled in the U.S. market. There are no national furniture retail chains, making market penetration easier. IKEA's location selection expertise and their established global supply chains enable them to offer exceptional category-killer prices that are further keys to success.
3. ING. The Dutch bank converted its weakness (no retail branches in the U.S.) into a strength. Following a successful Canadian market test, ING gave its entrepreneurial general manager the green light to offer retail banking services to U.S. consumers but exclusively on an online basis. Taking advantage of its low no-bricks-and-mortar cost structure, ING was able to offer generous rates on certificates of deposit. Just four years on, ING is the third-largest holder of consumer CD investments in the U.S.
4. Dyson. The British home appliance maker earned a break when it managed to get a Best Buy buyer to take one of its vacuum cleaners home to test. The buyer was impressed. Fortunately for Dyson, Best Buy became the first U.S. retailer to stock Dyson vacuum cleaners—other U.S. retailers invariably follow Best Buy's lead. Electronics retailing in the U.S. is concentrated (10 chains control 60 percent of the market) and tough to penetrate. But Dyson could not have succeeded had its products not been superior to other vacuum cleaners already in U.S. stores. A current case, well worth watching, is the effort of Tesco, the British retailer, to enter the U.S.

