Your Assignment, Part I

Your assignment will be based on the following fictional scenario:

You work for a company, Kid and Carry, that sells carriers, strollers, and other baby and children accessories to active parents. Kid and Carry is a retail franchise with their corporate office located in California. Currently they have franchises in Oregon, Florida, and California.

Kid and Carry wants to expand their market and open franchises in the Midwest. More specifically, they are looking at Ohio. Kid and Carry is looking to expand their business because they've seen a steady growth in the economy the past two years after experiencing several years of no growth. They've also had success in their current regions; people like the products they carry and appreciate the high level of customer service. However, they haven't set up an e-commerce component to their website, so customers have to go into the stores if they want to buy something.

Furthermore, within their industry, Kid and Carry has maintained a good relationship with their suppliers (the businesses that make the products they sell). This means that Kid and Carry usually gets the products they want, when they need them, and at a reasonable cost. While there are a few other major retail franchises that sell the same types of products that Kid and Carry sells, Kid and Carry has been able to tailor their promotional strategies to highlight their commitment to service and their high level of product knowledge.

Is expanding the franchise to a new region a good idea? You will complete a SWOT analysis to help you determine this answer. As part of identifying the external opportunities and threats, you will do a PEST analysis.

Complete the chart below by describing the types of factors in the middle column. In the far right column, identify at least two of each potential PEST factor and explain how it could affect Kid and Carry.
Once you've completed the chart, answer the following questions about some additional economic considerations that could affect the business' decisions:

1. Based on the scenario, what part of the business cycle is the economy in?
2. How will supply and demand affect the launch of the franchise into the new region?

3. What is dollar voting? How can it affect the launch of the franchise into the new region?

Now, imagine you've discovered the following information.
| Political factors | Business taxation rates are low, compared to California and Florida.  
Employment laws for the state of Ohio are different from both California and Florida. |
| Economic factors | The inflation rate is increasing.  
Interest rates have remained low at two percent for last three quarters. |
| Social factors | Population growth rate is increasing in Ohio.  
On social media, parents are posting pictures of themselves using jogging strollers and sturdy baby carriers on walks and hikes. They are also praising these products' features. These are all products that Kid and Carry sells. |
| Technological factors | The ability to use the Internet is strong throughout the country (easy to connect to Internet).  
The use of social media is increasing across the country. |

Categorize the various PEST factors into either opportunities or threats. Then, complete the rest of the SWOT chart based on the scenario above.
Based on your SWOT analysis, answer the following questions:

1. Which factors will most likely affect the business' expenses?
2. Which factors will most likely affect revenues and profits?

**Your Assignment, Part II**

Next, your teacher will organize your class into teams of three. Identify who will be Team Member (TM) 1, TM 2, and TM 3.

- TM 1 will be a VP in top-level management.
- TM 2 will be a supervisor in middle management.
- TM 3 will be a frontline staff member.

Kid and Carry is divided into divisions based on regions (California, Oregon, Florida, and the corporate office). You and your fellow team members (co-workers) are representatives from the Oregon region attending a meeting at corporate headquarters to discuss your findings from your SWOT and PEST analyses.

In your group meeting, decide who will lead the discussion. That person will make sure that all members have a chance to share their findings and ideas. Each member of the group is responsible for demonstrating appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication for a business environment, as well as applying active listening skills.

You can demonstrate active listening by doing the following:

- Restating what the other person has said in your own words to clarify meaning.
- Using brief prompts to show you are listening, such as "yes" or "I see."
- Reflect what the speaker is saying back to him or her to help capture the speaker’s feelings.
- Mask questions to clarify understanding.
- Maintain silence when the other person is speaking.

During your discussion, as a group, decide the following:

- Should the franchise expand to Ohio?
- What factors will likely have the greatest effect on the success of the expansion?

Summarize these decisions and the findings from your analyses in a memo addressed to the rest of the Oregon division. Submit your memo to your teacher.

**Tips for Success**

*Here are some tips to keep in mind as you write your memo.*

- Present your thoughts in a logical manner. Use headings and lists as needed to organize your ideas.
- Use specific examples as part of your analysis.
- Do a final edit, including checking spelling and grammar, before turning in your assessment.

After your group meeting, answer the following questions about your experience:

1. What verbal and nonverbal cues or behaviors were you able to demonstrate during your discussion to enhance communication?

2. What types of active listening skills were you able to apply in order to obtain or clarify information?
3. What did your team members’ verbal and nonverbal cues lead you to believe about their thoughts on the discussion?

**Your Assignment, Part III**

Now imagine the Kid and Carry franchise has expanded to Ohio. The first two stores have been open for about six months. Each team member needs to "meet" with a specific audience to address certain issues. This will give you an opportunity to further practice your verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pairing</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TM 1 talks to potential vendor (portrayed by TM 3)</td>
<td>TM 1 needs to talk to supplier about wanting to sell a new product in the store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM 2 talks to supervisor, the VP (portrayed by TM 1)</td>
<td>TM 2 needs to give the VP a status report on how well the franchise is doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM 3 talks to customer (portrayed by TM 2)</td>
<td>TM 3 needs to address a complaint about a product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Assessment Checklist

*Read each question and evaluate your work. If the answer to the question is yes, check the box to the left. If the answer is no, go back and revise your work. Your teacher will use these same guiding questions to score your assignment.*

Quality of Ideas (50 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did I demonstrate an understanding of the assignment by:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>providing a thoughtful analysis of PEST factors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing a thorough SWOT analysis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using verbal and nonverbal communication skills to work well with my team members?</td>
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Form and Presentation (30 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does my memo make sense?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did I support all of my main ideas?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is my document professional looking and easy to read?</td>
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Style (20 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did my use of fonts, font sizes, and spacing stay consistent throughout the memo?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did I follow directions from my teacher about how to format my assignment, such as using the proper font, font size, and spacing?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did I proofread the assignment and fix any obvious typos, such as double periods (..), misspellings, and errors in capitalization?</td>
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</tbody>
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