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[Europe Connect Pte. Ltd.](http://www.europe-connect.com.sg)

06, Tagore Drive #02-02
Tagore Industrial Building
Singapore 787623
marketing@europe-connect.com.sg

eBay's French Connection

Bonjour, **eBay** (Nasdaq: EBAY). Sadly, that's about as much French as I know, but I'm using it in honor of the fact that eBay's PayPal service is launching in France. It represents another step in the company's crucial overseas expansion.

PayPal has been a particularly successful acquisition by eBay. eBay touts 50 million PayPal account holders who use the service to make payments online. In the U.S., one out of three online users has a PayPal account to expedite purchases with a sense of security, the company said last quarter.



Meanwhile, movement into the European market is one of the ways eBay will work to expand its growth engine. My fellow Fool Rick Munarriz recently highlighted the importance of this endeavour, with the company's auction segment growing by only 32% in the U.S. but by a stunning 76% overseas.

The new site is in French, with content geared toward the French market, the company's press announcement said.

In the company's most recent conference call (transcript courtesy of Thompson StreetEvents), CEO Meg Whitman listed France as one of the countries it is counting on for "the next very rapid substantial contributors to international growth." (Indeed, in the first quarter, eBay cited France as one of the countries with accelerating growth rate in auction use in the high double or triple digits).

Other countries cited as sources of rapid expansion include Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, as well as the no-brainer for anyone, China. So watch for different ways eBay takes advantage of the wired populations in those countries in the coming months.

Today's news is certainly not something that would drive the stock higher. However, people who have invested in eBay (a longtime *Motley Fool Stock Advisor* pick) know that announcements like this one need to keep coming to keep up eBay's hyper growth.



~ By Alyce Lomax
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