



## The Overlooked Signals of ccTLDs

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Two ccTLD signals should get more attention when we're talking about the domains' benefits. Companies in emerging markets can signal their brands to expats and/or westerners. This ability to take the companies' appeal beyond their immediate, national markets deserves a look and some appreciation.

Traditionally, Western companies have been the ones who registered [ccTLDs to signal](#) operations in overseas markets, while companies in emerging markets use them to signal their local brands to the local market.

I'm not talking about the names most likely to come to mind when we think about emerging-market companies that compete globally. Not the [Haier](#), China's multinational consumer-electronics and home-appliances company. Not [Tata](#) of India, with its empire of companies ranging from agrochemical specialists to retail chains. Not [Natura](#), the Brazilian company that's a leading manufacturer and marketer of perfume, cosmetics, beauty products, household products, and personal-care, skin-care, and hair-care products. I'm talking about lesser-known companies that have struck to this particular strategy: following their countries' emigrants to new homes around the world. One example is the fast-growing South African casual dining chain [Nando's](#), which has opened outlets in Australia, Canada, the UK, and 22 other foreign countries, where large numbers of South Africans live. Another is the Saudi Arabian fragrance retailer [Arabian Oud](#), which has set up 620 stores in 33 countries, including the UK and France. The United States has 32 million Mexican-Americans; Germany, 4 million Turks; and the United Kingdom, 3 million South Asians. They present opportunities for countries from back home who want to explore a First World market.

As far as vast new markets are concerned, Africa's \$2 trillion economy is growing faster than that of any other continent. About a third of the 54 African countries are seeing annual GDP growth of more than 6%. This isn't just about diamonds and oil: Only 24% of the growth from 2000 to 2008 was attributable to natural resources.

The expected growth in emerging markets will force Western and local companies to expand their ccTLD signaling for their brand names and relevant generics. This will increase competition, which will push higher the prices of ccTLDs. ■