

Entering the US

How to build a successful global cross-border company

To enter the US market and build a successful cross-border company, consider the same three-legged stool framework you'd use to launch your venture at home: Team, Product and Market.

1. Team

- Founder DNA is critical for success. At least one of the startup's founders must relocate to the US to make a cross-border transition work!
- Company culture must be defined at an early stage, while a more intimate environment lends itself to building trust, office habits and norms. This company culture can only scale if a solid foundation is put in place while the startup is in its nascent stage, ideally with fewer than 15-20 employees.
- Management operations systems, like corporate culture, should be in place and validated before scaling. These systems, best practices, and mindset are required to compete on a global level.
- Don't be afraid to pay market price for top talent. You get what you pay for, and this is true in every market you operate in. As an immigrant entrepreneur, you will never sell or pitch like an American, so recruiting top talent, fluent in the local norms, language and culture, is key.

2. Product

- Make sure your product addresses a local pain point. Your ideal US customer profile may well look different from their rest-of-world (ROW) peers, so talk to at least five potential US customers to validate that your value proposition resonates.
- Think global from day one. The last thing you want for your cross-border startup is a country-specific product that does not scale globally.
- Americans prefer to buy from other US vendors, so the playing field is uneven. To compete, you'll need to outperform your local counterparts.

3. Market

- Prior to entering the US market, conduct a detailed assessment of the competitive landscape and fundraising environment, to understand which competitors have been funded, and who is holding dry powder.
- Clearly define your source of competitive advantage and build a moat around it. Invest disproportionately in these unique strengths and core competencies.
- Validate that there is a clear opportunity to become #1 or #2 in the market.

Separately, and critically, ask your VC investor how they will support you on this journey.