

# CEO Worldwide Expert File

## How You Can Grow Your Company Globally?

### Why your company should be interested in the global market?

For the same reason that Apple, Starbucks, FedEx, Caterpillar, Microsoft, Walmart, Netflix, McDonalds and others are, most of their future growth will come from that market. In small to medium size companies, it may come as revenue growth or as an opportunity to increase the value of your company, if you and your investors decide to exit.

Netflix recently announced quarterly results. [Netflix, again exceeded analyst estimates through moderate US growth, and better than expected international growth](#). Also note the agreement with Comcast. As you can see Netflix international market is bigger than US market and is quickly widening the gap.

Excerpt - *The company said its international subscriber base increased by 5.5 million members to 68.3 million, better than the 4.9 million additions the company predicted. In the US, Netflix added 2 million streaming customers, for a total of 56.7 million, beating its 1.5 million guidance.*

*Netflix buried the hatchet with a longtime enemy. Last week, Comcast agreed to include Netflix subscriptions in more of its cable packages, opening up a way for Netflix to connect with hard-to-reach potential new members.*

If you read the edited version of [Netflix's earnings call](#) you will find their well-researched emphasis on Brazil and India in the International market. I have done business development in both countries for cable and satellite TV interests, and totally agree with their focus, and big opportunities.

### Right Ways and Wrong Ways

There are right ways and wrong ways to approach international business development.

Some of the wrong ways include – trying to sell and support directly, lack of understanding of the local culture and laws, failure to meet local requirements, underestimating localization, and failure to determine which selling techniques works best – top down or bottom up? In Argentina, I went to dinner with the U.S Ambassador. He had developed a rock star status, due to his support of a local soccer team – one that went from worst to first. He was from my state, and opened opportunities.

I have found doing business in Brazil closer to USA and Japanese finesse styles, while Argentina more European smash mouth, in your face. A combination of Spanish, Italian, and German cultures. If you fail to recognize those nuisances it's very unlikely to do business with them.

Very important to develop your strategy based on the information you have collected in face-to-face meetings, including target market; whether horizontal or vertical; size of market; market share potential; location; support, etc.

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## Social Impact and appreciation for culture

Important to gain acceptance from the gatekeepers in the industry, join technical associations, cooperatives, exhibit at conferences, establish a proof of concept partner that can become a great reference site, as well as provide a concise demonstration

Cooperatives or distributors can reduce direct sales expense.

Realizing schedules may not be as exact as USA, sometimes starting later as well as running unanticipated times.

Most work days may start later than USA, but last longer. Not unusual to have a lengthy lunch, and eat dinner after 9 PM.

Whether you are selling tangible assets (products) or intangible (software, services), social interaction is critical. If you are not liked, developing business is unlikely.

[Spend time learning about country experiencing local culture.](#) Click on link. I have tracked down the burial place of Evita in the Recoleta at Buenos Aires, as well as fished for piranha in the Amazon. Along with being on national China TV tasting & identifying Chinese food, walking on the Great Wall, Taj Mahal. Dealt with the legendary Larry Hillblom, founder of DHL, on the island of Saipan. Worked with the billionaire Riady family in Indonesia on pay TV project. John Kluge's company, Metromedia in Eastern Europe and former USSR countries. Worked with the predecessors of Liberty Global, UIH and UPC from Europe to Asia on projects. Discovered world class manufacturing in Manaus, Brazil with its 2 million international population. Most would have the impression that manufacturing was primitive and third world sweat shop. Having spent time with manufacturers I was able to make my own observations, they have the latest and best in equipment.

## Execution

International marketing strategy involves a totally different set of parameters from the USA - trying to sell and support directly or through third parties, lack of understanding of the local culture and laws, failure to meet local requirements, underestimating localization, and failure to determine which selling techniques works best – top down or bottom up? Having the relevant contacts and relationships is critical. Something that I have developed and maintain.

Most can't justify the cost of an entourage of specialists. Small to medium companies are more equipped to do top down selling, better at establishing long term relationships, and provide greater flexibility and efficiency in meeting the needs. Having experience with small to medium size companies is very beneficial and transferable to global business development. Swiss Army Knife approach where many people are cross trained and can perform multiple duties – operations, training, sales presentations, marketing, finance, contract negotiations, R&D, and HR. No need for an entourage of people. Smaller companies are more equipped to do top down selling, better at establishing long term relationships, and provide greater flexibility and efficiency in meeting the needs.

Very important to form agreements with integrators and distributors based on USD and USA laws, and then let your in-country partners deal with their clients based on in-country laws, currency, and cultural requirements. Even companies as large as Wal-Mart have run into cultural and legal problems attempting to sell direct (e.g. Mexico). Smaller companies can't afford that mistake.

A satisfied customer is the best international business strategy of all.

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## Results

Establishing the value of a company's expertise by showing the solution can pass large company tests and audits. Easily modified to handle specialized requests. Show that system works and handles all the interfaces to all the necessary equipment. Ability to demonstrate a full functioning system with limited data to eliminate the appearance of vaporware. Remember you are selling your expertise as well as the technology.

Strategy is to work with international company contacts who were expanding their global market, establish relationships with equipment companies who need your products or solutions, and potential in-country hardware, software, and IT integrator distributors. Trade shows are good ways to exhibit systems, make media contacts, and speak on the expert panels.

Since many of the larger technology companies focus on bigger opportunities there are niche markets that are accessible for the smaller market solution. Look for strategic partnerships.

## Resources

Important to identify resources that can help your company efficiently enter the international market.

Today much of the preliminary work can be done via social media and LinkedIn, in particular. Joining Internet groups under LinkedIn or blogs with an interest in your solutions is critical, as well as making timely comments.

## About the author: Herb Lair



Herb is the founder of a cable TV customer care and billing technology company that later was merged with CableData and now is part of Amdocs.

Founded CUO, Inc., and directed all corporate functions, including finances, operations, customer service, R&D, and business development. Formulated all policies and procedures, recruited personnel, and guided company's growth and market penetration.

Developed advanced CRM strategies to manage subscriber marketing, sales, and relationships.

Founded and operated technology consulting firm specializing in business development, customer care and billing, business process improvement, and technology assessment for domestic and international cable, telephony, and ISP businesses.

To view his short bio, click [here](#)

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