

BEYOND THE BORDERS

Help for growing your franchise across the globe

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Expanding your franchise into new countries can be filled with opportunities and challenges. With the right resources, a solid plan, and a long-term commitment, you can navigate different cultures, regulations, and market dynamics. We've compiled a guide to essential resources and strategies for franchisors looking to expand internationally.

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

The U.S. Commercial Service is a primary resource, offering a range of free and low-cost services. Its Gold Key Service provides customized appointments with prescreened potential licensees while the International Company Profile (ICP) offers background checks on potential partners. It can also organize promotional events, like franchise market entry launches, through the Single Company Pro-

motion service and provide tailored insights into market opportunities through customized market research.

Other valuable government resources include the Small Business Administration ([SBA.gov](https://www.sba.gov)), which offers counseling, training, and financial assistance through export loan programs and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs) provide localized export assistance across the U.S. while the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) offers grants to help small businesses cover costs associated with international expansion.

Online platforms, like [Export.gov](https://www.export.gov) and [Trade.gov](https://www.trade.gov), provide tools, information, and services to assist U.S. businesses in international markets. The U.S. Department of

“SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION OFTEN REQUIRES ADAPTING YOUR BRAND, PRODUCT, OR SERVICE TO MEET LOCAL TASTES AND PREFERENCES. THIS MIGHT MEAN MODIFYING MENUS, PRODUCTS, OR SERVICES TO CATER TO LOCAL PREFERENCES, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY MCDONALD’S OFFERING VEGETARIAN OPTIONS IN INDIA.”



State offers country-specific information on economic conditions, market opportunities, and regulatory environments in its Country Commercial Guides.

FRANCHISE INDUSTRY RESOURCES

The International Franchise Association (IFA) is an indispensable resource for U.S. franchisors looking to go global. Through webinars, white papers, industry reports, educational resources, and legal guidelines, the IFA keeps franchisors informed about best practices and regulatory changes. IFA’s networking events and conferences provide opportunities to connect with peers and experts.

The World Franchise Council (WFC) serves as a bridge to 40 local country franchise associations, offering insights into local regulations, market conditions, and cultural nuances. These associations can assist with market entry strategies, regulatory compliance, and local market insights.

LOCALIZATION

Successful international expansion often requires adapting your brand, product, or service to meet local tastes and preferences. Localization involves tailoring your entire business approach to align with cultural, legal, and economic differences. This might mean modifying menus, products, or services to cater to local preferences, as exemplified by McDonald’s offering vegetarian options in India and Denny’s offering beef or turkey bacon in the Middle East.

Compliance with local regulations is crucial and may involve adapting product formulations to meet local health standards or modifying packaging to comply with labeling laws. Working with local partners can significantly ease this process, providing insights into consumer preferences and helping navigate regulatory requirements. Localization companies can ensure that marketing materials, customer service scripts, and product names resonate with local audiences.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Understanding cultural differences is essential for international franchise success. Resources like the book *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands* by Terri Morrison offer insights into business etiquette, customs, and practices across cultures. Euromonitor International, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Dun & Bradstreet, Kroll, and Nielsen provide market research reports and data analytics to inform your strategy.

International trade shows and expos offer networking opportunities. Franchise Expo Paris and the International Franchise Expo New York can help you connect with potential partners and gain market insights.

TECHNOLOGY AND EXPERTISE

Franchise management software can help manage operations and track performance across international locations. FranConnect and FRM (Franchise Relationship Management) offer platforms for international franchisee onboarding, training, performance analytics, and marketing automation.

Proven international operations and development consultants bring specific knowledge of new markets and offer advice on site selection, market entry strategies, consumer behavior, competitive landscapes, and local business practices.

Legal, tax, and accounting advisors with documented international experience are essential. While legal fees can be significant, these services are crucial for drafting franchise agreements, ensuring compliance with local legal requirements, and mitigating legal risks.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Partnering with global logistics providers involves significant investment but ensures efficient supply chain operations, timely delivery of products, reduced costs through optimized logistics, and consistent product quality.

Accessing reliable information on international markets is vital. The Economist, Finan-

cial Times, Bloomberg, and Harvard Business Review offer comprehensive global reports. Caixin Global provides insights into doing business in China while the World Bank and International Monetary Fund offer detailed reports on economic conditions and investment climates worldwide.

KEY STRATEGIES

Success in international franchising requires thorough market research, cultural adaptation, legal compliance, strong local partnerships, and technology integration. It’s crucial to establish a reliable global supply chain and stay informed about global trends and market changes. Above all, patience and long-term commitment are essential. This is not a short-term revenue source!

Expanding a franchise internationally is a complex process. By strategically leveraging these resources and understanding cultural differences, franchisors can overcome challenges and achieve sustained success. There are no shortcuts that don’t lead to increased legal costs over time. With the right approach, resources, and support, international franchising can lead to substantial growth, global brand recognition, and financial success. ■

William (Bill) Edwards, CEO of Edwards Global Services (EGS), and **Robert (Bob) Jones**, EGS’ chief international officer, have a combined eight decades of helping many companies across diverse sectors successfully expand their businesses to more than 30 countries. For current country rankings as places to do business, download the EGS quarterly GlobalVue™ country chart at <https://edwardsglobal.com/globalvue>. Subscribe to EGS’ biweekly global business update newsletter for the very latest global business trends that can impact your business at <https://insider.edwardsglobal.com>. Contact Bill to evaluate your international franchise opportunities and challenges at +1-949-375-1896 and bedwards@edwardsglobal.com