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# GLOBAL WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

MOVING TARGETS

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Simon Kent, Editor,  
The Global Recruiter

“Within this global marketplace of talent, the savvy recruiter can expand their search for candidates and give their clients the prime selection.”

## GLOBAL WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

The world is your oyster. In today's electronically linked workplace, the idea of employing the workers you need in another part of the world has become a reality. Indeed, in some instances exploiting the global workforce is the one sure fire way companies have of securing the skills they need when they need them. The priority for bringing in new talent has little to do with location and a great deal to do with how much an individual can contribute to a business. Put simply, employers no longer care where someone is, they just want to know they can deliver.

Within this global marketplace of talent, the savvy recruiter can expand their search for candidates and give their clients the prime selection. But doing this requires new skills, knowledge and approaches to ensure the arrangement works for everyone and remains compliant whatever the circumstance.

Over the next few issues The Global Recruiter will explore the global workforce. We'll be examining the legalities around arrangements, the possibilities and the potential for recruitment businesses who want to go the extra mile - or even an extra few thousand miles - to please their clients.

Alongside this we'll be talking to recruitment companies who have undertaken their own international expansion, identifying new markets to target and establishing offices overseas. In this way we hope to resolve some of the complexities around employing people in other countries, as well as offering the chance for your own business to take the step at going international. ■

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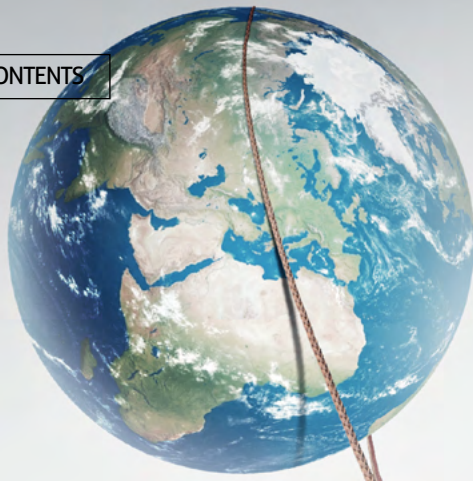
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# GLOBAL STRENGTHS

Sally Hunter, Executive Vice President - Commercial Markets at Cielo, on why building a global workforce benefits business.

We're currently in an age that's witnessing rapid technological advancements. In fact, it's fair to say there's never been an era where technology has moved so fast. However, how our workforce is changing and adapting is not moving as fast as our tech is advancing. >





As markets have expanded worldwide, and some barriers to growth and cultural exchange have come down, companies have increasingly spread across borders, whether through intention or necessity. This shift has seen the world's workforce become truly globalised, opening avenues for innovation and diversity of opinion that have helped to further fuel company growth.

While there are many upsides, establishing and managing a global team is complex and involves more than just hiring from different geographical locations. It calls for a comprehensive strategy for attracting, training, and retaining international talent. To truly create and manage a global workforce, you first need to understand what one actually looks like – and then you can take the right steps to bring it to life.

### What is a global workforce?

There's nothing essentially new about global workforces: many companies have employed workers across the world for years. However, in many cases, the businesses that implement this strategy have established offices where working in person is the norm, rather than working virtually or in locations where there may have no physical presence. The number of businesses operating a global workforce has undoubtedly changed – as has the way these teams are organised and maintained.

At its root, a global workforce means the international employees of a company, who are connected through the company network, no matter where they are located. International workers exist in all industries and within companies of all sizes, so global workforces have become the norm in many sectors.

As multinational and multicultural teams become even more common, businesses must be prepared to navigate the hurdles that could crop up. For instance, employing staff in new geographical locations without solid infrastructure presents a significant risk. HR teams need to stay aware of the potential stumbling blocks that intercultural differences can bring. This means being alert to any divisive elements within the organisation while nurturing those bringing strengths to the business. By handling intercultural differences in a proactive, open way, you'll be able to create a global workforce that's more interconnected and positive.

Expanding on an international scale requires a business to think globally, which may not be as straightforward as it sounds. For example, crafting a truly effective virtual on-boarding process for an employee whose team leader and other team members are located in a different country, or across various countries, is just one of many factors to consider. Managing a disparate workforce comes with its own unique set of complex challenges, ranging from navigating different time zones and varying employment laws in different countries to creating communications that transcend language barriers. >

## The global challenges

While multinational firms will have to get to grips with internal challenges, there are also broader issues to consider when establishing a global workforce. First and foremost, consideration should be given to the pace of change and the stability – or lack thereof – of global markets.

This unpredictability was highlighted most obviously during the pandemic, but the aftershocks have been just as impactful in many ways. The seismic supply chain challenges created are only now being ironed out, while many countries have had to deal with spiralling inflation ever since.

Indeed, macroeconomic forces continue to vary by country and industry, resulting in widely differing patterns of labour demand. You only have to look at the zero inflation rate in Singapore as of May 2023 in contrast to Argentina's skyrocketing inflation at 115.6% as of June 2023 to see this huge difference in reality, as found in Cielo's Innovation in flux and the future of HR report.

This can have a big effect on a company and may potentially highlight a leadership capability issue if workers are spread across different regions, with employees in high-inflation areas potentially demanding higher pay. Have businesses considered that their leaders should have experience leading team members who earn more than they do?

Looking forward, are the current members of these teams equipped to be the managers and leaders of future employees? These are all challenges that need to be considered.

## The benefits of a global workforce

In its ever-evolving landscape, the work of today will not be the same as that of tomorrow. To bridge the gap, companies must leverage diverse sources of talent by embracing a variety of skillsets, backgrounds, and perspectives. This way, businesses can tap into the skills and capabilities necessary to keep up with the ever-changing demands of the digital age. The hurdles might be concerning, but the benefits of a global workforce more than make up for them. Here are just a few of the advantages:

**Choosing from a wider talent pool:** By expanding your candidate search across the globe, you could have access to the world's best. This makes it far easier to find candidates with exactly the right experience and expertise for each role.

**Fostering cultural diversity:** The advantages of having a diverse workforce range from improved creativity and innovation to better decision-making. Companies tend to be more resilient to fluctuating business environments and market changes, while employees will also learn global perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills. >





**Expand into new markets:** By going global, businesses can drive growth and expand market reach. Having employees across the world provides businesses with local insight and knowledge of that region.

### What should your strategy look like?

Inevitably, globalising a business brings a range of challenges along with numerous benefits. To deal with these highs and lows, you must implement a plan to ensure your global workforce succeeds. But what does that plan look like?

First, you should have an overarching vision that defines what your company aims to achieve with a global team from the outset. As part of this, you need a detailed talent-acquisition strategy that includes globally announced job vacancies, partnerships with international recruiters, and a geographically diverse hiring approach. Make sure you have a culturally sensitive hiring process in place as well. Like any other strategic plan, this should be coupled with a detailed analysis of local labour laws, taxation, and regulations.

When developing your plan beyond acquisition, consider building a robust orientation, training, and development process, accounting for diverse learners and formats that work across time zones. Also include employee-retention strategies, such as providing competitive compensation, growth opportunities and recognition programs.

At Cielo, we recommend a face-to-face visit or video meeting with new colleagues early in an employee's tenure to ensure strong working relationships and onboarding processes.

Acknowledging differences is essential, as is clear communication that everyone will be respectful of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Here, having a message from the CEO, which you can broadcast to team members around the world, can be helpful.

### Conclusion

The journey towards globalising a workforce is multifaceted – a mix of promising opportunities and formidable challenges. It stretches beyond the simple premise of hiring internationally to learning more about different cultures, becoming more adaptable and planning strategically. It also requires a close analysis of global macroeconomic and geopolitical trends.

But despite the challenges, the rewards of a global workforce are undeniable. As the future of work continues to evolve at a rapid pace, the skills possessed by today's employees may not always meet the needs of tomorrow's tasks. Embracing a diverse and global workforce allows businesses to access the skills and capabilities of the future. You'll have access to diverse talent and be able to build a multicultural team while expanding into new markets. This not only boosts creativity and innovation but also improves decision-making and gives your company a physical worldwide presence.

For it to work, planning and execution are crucial. You need considered recruitment strategies, effective orientation and training, leadership skills, and strong communication as core components. Balancing these elements with an inclusive work culture and a sensitive approach to diversity will give you the desired results. ■



# CLEARED FOR WORK

Chris Harber, Head of Immigration at Boyes Turner outlines the legal challenges that come with recruiting abroad.

From economic and geopolitical pressures to shifting legal landscapes, global recruiters are anticipating new headwinds and uncertainty as we head into 2024. At the same time, the war for talent means that international hiring is essential for global organisations looking for growth and expansion in 2024- and beyond. >



As with all things recruitment, the market outlook for international recruitment shifts from sector to sector. Let's take the hospitality sector industry. It will be irretrievably hit by the government's recent decision to increase the minimum salary required for a skilled worker visa in a bid to slash migration targets. At the same time, the tech industry - always reliant on highly skilled candidates - remains confident when it comes to experienced hires, however the increase in the minimum salary threshold means that accessing younger talent is going to be difficult going forward.

Regardless of industry, however, it's a tough market, as the costs of recruiting continue to rise. As an example, a five-year Skilled Worker visa has increased from c£9,500 to c£11,900 in a little over three months. Yet in a country like the UK, which is increasingly poor at developing and growing vocational skills, most sectors will struggle with a huge talent gap, making international hiring their best solution to ensure a competitive and diverse talent pipeline.

### Global hiring landscape

- The rise of the digital nomad – Post-Covid the trend of the digital nomad, location-independent talent, using technology to enable their profession, continues to rise. This will give more flexibility for recruiters and open the talent pool.
- Climate urgency – The climate agenda is going to massively drive recruitment patterns over the next few years. This goes beyond paying lip service to minimising air travel and carbon footprints to transparency demanded in ESG reporting within organisations. At the same time, it will open a whole new category for candidates with climate experience.
- Changing patterns in the global workforce – A few factors are at play here, as the global mobile workforce matures. Much of this is rooted in geopolitical elements, with politics (let's say, hypothetically, Trump America) gradually giving people the desire to choose where they want to live. Elsewhere, events such as the war in the Ukraine has flooded the market with candidates looking to leave both the Ukraine and Russia.
- Remote working here to stay – Despite RTO strategies being put into play in 2023, the rise of remote and hybrid working has made it easier for companies to attract and accommodate talent regardless of geography, particularly when it comes to more specialised skills outside of the local talent pool. Recruitment agencies with networks and presence in emerging talent hubs such as Poland, parts of Latin America and India, can play to their strengths this year.
- The long-tail of Brexit – The true impact of the UK leaving the EU sits deep in the fissures of our economy, our competitiveness, and our talent pool. Europe now has a single fair immigration system that caters for everyone regardless of where you're from and ensuring a great flow of talent. Meanwhile in the UK, businesses are still navigating the aftershock, with a massive catch-up on upskilling locally as the government continues to make it harder to access global talent. >

● New immigration measures – Last year, the Home Office announced its immigration targets, with measures to reduce net migration by 300k a year. Some exceptions have been made, for example the care sector which is overwhelmingly dependent on international employees. And despite these moves – and a potential dip in net migration in 2024 – we now live in a globally mobile economy, with organisations and their people wired and open to working internationally. I believe this essentially will prevail in the future.

### Hiring into the UK internationally

So where does this leave global recruitment agencies supporting clients hiring into the UK?

First off, accessing talent will be straightforward enough. Despite the picture above, the UK remains an attractive place to live and work for candidates, with London frequently polling at the top of global cities. Our stable political and legal system and the accessibility of being English speaking, makes the UK super-attractive for candidates with a globally mobile outlook.

Our geography helps us too as the UK sits in the centre of the world from a time perspective. This makes relocation adjustments easier for a candidate moving from the Far East, for example, as the time difference is easier to navigate in terms of staying in touch with friends and family.

This is true at all levels, starting with graduates, often already in the UK talent pool because of our (still) globally recognised education system. And while immigration and global recruitment tends to be skewed towards the big cities, the UK is an attractive location for established employees too. >



# Visa Application

## The agency view

Agencies will keep cost and complexity top of mind in 2024. Because clients, particularly those with ambitious global mobility programmes, will be focusing on finding great talent and placing the right people, considerations such as tax and payroll issues simply aren't priorities.

Understandably, when you're trying to encourage a candidate into a huge life decision like taking an out-of-country role, factors such as logistics and relocation packages take priority. The legal part – visas, tax arrangements and so on – are often an afterthought.


My take-away is always start the visa conversation as soon as you can in the hiring process. Where required, this also means ensuring your client has a sponsor license in place before they need it, ideally at offer stage. Last minute complications can ultimately leave your candidate, client and agency exposed to a lot of risk, not least missing out on great talent.

As a final thought, when it comes to the UK's immigration system it's always important to remember that consistent change is very much the norm. Since 2008 there have been at least six fundamental course corrections from the Home Office, quite often in response to the political mood music at the time. Considering that we have a General Election coming up later this year, expect more change to come. For global recruitment agencies, adapting to change is par for the course. Staying ahead of incoming changes, adapting to curveballs, and responding in a way that best serves your clients will keep you agile, relevant and competitive. ■

**If you would like to discuss how the upcoming changes to the salary thresholds, or indeed any other aspect of the immigration system, affects your clients and candidates, please feel free to email me at [charber@bovesturner.com](mailto:charber@bovesturner.com).**

# NAVIGATING THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE

Sim Hall, Managing Director of Populus Select Recruitment discusses the importance of taking a strategic approach to expanding operations around the globe.

A portrait of Sim Hall, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a blue blazer over a light blue shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

No matter where in the world you are hiring, recruitment is a balancing act of negotiating the requirements of the hiring organisation and the candidate. This applies across all borders and industries, but those requirements do require you to do a bit of homework on the expectations, regulations and cultural practices of every side. >



Managing a global workforce requires embracing cultural diversity. Before hiring, it's crucial to understand and respect the target country's cultural norms, communication styles, and work ethics. This goes beyond avoiding mistakes; it's about recognising what motivates people and showing genuine respect for their background. Embracing this principle fosters a collaborative and effective team.

In an era where international borders become increasingly porous in the corporate world, the challenge and opportunity of managing a global workforce has never been more pronounced. Populus Select, a leader in international recruitment and specialising in highly-skilled science and engineering-based roles, stands at the forefront of this dynamic, navigating complexities with a unique blend of expertise and innovation. This comprehensive exploration delves into its strategies for recruiting, managing, and retaining global talent, shedding light on successes and the lessons learned along the way.

### The language to grow

Populus Select's team reflects the global tapestry of the workforce it manages. With operations spanning from the USA to the Far East, and from India to the Middle East and Europe, its recent expansion into Central America marks another milestone in the global journey. This geographical diversity is complemented by an impressive array of language skills within the team, including Mandarin, Korean, Japanese, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Russian. Such linguistic prowess is not merely a functional tool but a cornerstone of the

strategy, enabling deep cultural understanding and effective communication across borders.

However, it's important to know that effective communication in a global setting goes beyond language proficiency. It involves understanding the nuances of non-verbal cues, the significance of context in different cultures, and the adoption of technology to bridge time zones and geographical barriers. Mastering effective communication is a continuous process and requires a deliberate, thoughtful approach.

### Identify, attract, hire

The essence of Populus Select's recruitment philosophy lies in its research-driven approach, encapsulated in the 'Identify, Attract, Hire' model. This methodology is consistently applied across all regions but is adapted to respect and leverage local cultural and economic nuances. This balance ensures that its recruitment process is not only effective but also culturally sensitive and respectful. The process extends beyond hiring, with onboarding and partnership playing critical roles in ensuring long-term employee engagement and retention.

An acute understanding of local contexts is vital which means recognising the economic and labour dynamics of each country. It is important to delve into how geopolitical shifts affect job security perceptions, compensation expectations, and candidate motivations. This insight allows the recruiter to navigate complex employment landscapes, advising clients on intricate issues such as benefit structures and taxation in different regions. >

Among the challenges faced by global recruiters is managing varying time zones and coordinating activities across continents. These logistical hurdles need to be met with flexibility and commitment to client service that transforms potential obstacles into opportunities. This approach is crucial in providing seamless, high-quality service to both burgeoning start-ups and established global entities.

#### Legal and regulatory

Navigating the myriad legal and regulatory landscapes is a significant challenge in global workforce management. From employment laws to data protection regulations, organisations must ensure compliance to avoid legal pitfalls. This requires not only an in-depth understanding of local laws but also a proactive approach to stay abreast of changes and updates in these regulations.

The global market is ever-evolving, and so are the challenges in managing a global workforce. Organisations must commit to continuous learning, staying ahead of trends, and being adaptable to change. This agility is what sets apart successful global enterprises.

Working globally with candidates and clients across borders can make providing consistent service a challenge – especially when expectations vary from culture to

culture – and even industry to industry. There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, embrace the need for local market understanding, economic awareness, and cultural sensitivity. For instance, strategies in the Far East differ significantly from those in Central America, taking into account differences in business etiquette, communication styles, and regulatory environments. In both of these regions it is customary to provide thirteenth month bonuses, not hugely different from the British Christmas bonus. But it's important to know that in some countries it is just a standard benefit that employees expect, whereas in others, employment laws dictate the minimum amount and timing of payments – falling foul of the regulations could see clients landed with a hefty fine and a reputation which may pose as an obstacle to future recruitment drives.

It is the recruitment firm's responsibility to act as a translator for the client, interpreting laws, best practices and culture to ensure that everyone's expectations and understanding of the hiring process is clear.

A critical aspect of managing a global workforce is developing leaders who are equipped to handle the complexities of a diverse team. This involves training in cross-cultural communication, ethical leadership, and conflict resolution. Global leaders must be adept at balancing local concerns with the overarching goals of the organisation. >





In a world marked by rapid geopolitical and economic changes, Populus Select prioritises continuous engagement with clients and candidates. Understanding their changing motivations and priorities is crucial, especially in the face of the mixed economic outlook for 2024, with concerns of stagflation in Europe and other global markets. This ongoing dialogue is not only about staying informed but also about being a proactive partner in navigating these changes.

A cornerstone of Populus Select's success is their emphasis on listening. They engage in deep conversations with clients and candidates, understanding their unique needs and perspectives. This process goes beyond mere information gathering; it involves educating and guiding both parties, fostering a mutual understanding that is critical in successful placements and long-term partnerships.

### Wellbeing priority

Employee wellbeing has taken centre stage in recent years, and it's even more crucial in a global setting. Ensuring that employees feel equally as valued and included, regardless of their location or cultural background, is key to retention and productivity. If one country or nationality feels it is getting the raw end of a deal, they will be quick to look elsewhere. This includes providing support for mental health, fostering

a sense of belonging, and recognising the unique needs of a diverse workforce – and of course taking a relaxed view on local working times and holidays. For example, a business with workers in the US and Belgium might see some tension develop around working time practices and the availability of colleagues. American employment laws are known as some of the most pro-employer in the world, with some of the least paid time off and sick leave allowances in the developed world, but Belgians working more than 40 hours - rather than the standard 38 per week - legally require a 'rest day' a month.


As Populus Select continues to expand its global footprint, the commitment to a research-driven, culturally sensitive, and adaptable approach remains steadfast. It stands as a model for how businesses can successfully navigate the complexities of a global workforce, turning challenges into opportunities and diversity into strength.

Overseeing and growing a global workforce is an intricate mix of cultural sensitivity, legal diligence, effective communication, and technological integration. It's about building bridges across cultural divides and fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated, and global collaboration thrives. As the corporate world becomes increasingly globalised, these principles serve as beacons, guiding organisations in their journey towards global excellence. ■



# MOVING TARGETS

The global staffing industry is set to face a number of challenges in 2024. Charlotte Wills, Partner at global immigration and mobility law firm Fragomen, outlines some of the up and coming immigration and mobility changes.

A close-up portrait of Charlotte Wills, a woman with long, straight blonde hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark-colored top. The background is a neutral, light grey.

The immigration and mobility landscape is changing. Costs continue to rise, adding additional pressure on business. Borders, including the UK's, are set to become more digitised, adding another step to the process for many prior to travel. A battle for talent and skills remains amidst ongoing shortages and many are still pondering flexible work policies. All in what's likely to be a hotly contested election year ahead of us in the US and most likely the UK, as well as many other regions around the globe. >



## UK immigration rule changes

Proposed government changes to the UK's immigration rules will likely cause significant difficulties for recruiters and employers. At the end of 2023, the UK Home Secretary announced a five-point plan to restrict work migration to the UK. The changes, effective April 2024, aim to deliver the biggest ever cut in net migration.

The five-point plan includes increasing the minimum general salary for occupations under the Skilled Worker route from £26.2k to £38.7k (representing a 47.7 per cent increase). Whilst health and social care visa workers are exempt from this increase, other sectors such as hospitality, which rely on the lower minimum salary, are likely to struggle. Sectors that generally pay higher salaries, such as financial services, are expected to be less affected.

Measures also include removing the 20 per cent discount of the going rate salary level for occupations on the Shortage Occupation List. The Shortage Occupation List will be

replaced with a condensed 'Immigration Salary List', retaining a general threshold discount, although details of the roles to be included in that list are not yet released.

These measures are introduced to intentionally reduce net migration levels, by making it more expensive for both employers and foreign nationals to immigrate to the UK. The plan also aims to increase the domestic workforce through its 'Back to Work Plan', which focuses on helping UK nationals get off benefits and move into the workforce.

The proposed changes will likely cause significant difficulties for recruiters and employers who are still adjusting to labour shortages post-Brexit and whose sectors have not yet reached the point of benefiting from alternative strategies to migration, such as increased grass roots training. The changes could also potentially undermine labour sector growth and reduce the contribution businesses and migration make to UK GDP. >

Businesses should assess their 2024 workforce planning with these changes in mind to ensure they know ahead of time what roles and salary levels they are likely to need and the impact the new policies will have on those needs.

Steps companies and their recruitment advisers should take now include:

- Reviewing the roles and salary bands that could be impacted.
- Seek headcount approval now to bring forward moves that require sponsorship ahead of the changes.
- Consider alternative non-sponsored visa routes moving forward where possible, for example Youth Mobility Scheme or Ancestry visas.
- Review options to recruit for the impacted roles from within the UK settled workforce.
- Communicate the impact and proposed workforce plans to key stakeholders, including the board, current sponsored population, recruiters, graduate recruitment, talent and reward teams.

This announcement does appear to be a politically driven reaction to the high net migration figures and a long-held desire by the UK government to significantly lower the numbers entering the UK. However,

there exists a real risk that these changes, along with the recent announcement to the significant increase to government application fees (making the UK one of the most expensive places to sponsor a visa), will do serious long-term harm to the attractiveness of the UK for both businesses and the 'brightest and best' individuals.

### Increasingly Digitised Borders

The UK government is implementing an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme as part of its ambition to make the country's border fully digitalised by 2025. It requires travellers who don't usually require a visa to visit the UK to obtain digital permission to travel or transit through the country. The scheme applies to Qatari nationals now and will roll out to other nationalities in 2024 in phases (starting in February with nationals of Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates).

The government has said ETAs will allow accurate information gathering regarding the number of people travelling to the UK and where they are travelling from. The intention is that border security will be enhanced by screening passengers before they travel and therefore allow for potential threats to be identified earlier. >





The UK is not the first country to introduce such a scheme. Most readers will be familiar with the ESTA scheme in the United States, and other countries such as Canada and New Zealand already have their own established schemes. The EU will introduce its version, ETIAS, in mid 2025.

### Remote working – expanding horizons

From 31 January 2024 the UK Government will ease current visitor visa legislation to allow a form of remote working, developments that recognise changing working patterns opens the door to ‘work-cations’.

UK legislation has not previously made any reference to remote working, however guidance notes that those visiting the UK

can, sensibly, respond to work emails, participate in remote meetings and calls. Updated rules will now specifically allow visitors to “undertake activities relating to their employment overseas remotely from within the UK, providing this is not the primary purpose of their visit.” The move represents a significant relaxation of the visitor visa rules allows an individual to, for example, tag on to a holiday a one- or two-week work window without having to obtain a work visa.

The rules will be welcomed by the many thousands of visitors to the UK each year including those from the EU, opening the door to remote working, albeit in a limited way. It remains to be seen if other European countries follow suit with their own immigration frameworks in the months ahead. ■

# HIRE EVERYWHERE

Neil Armstrong, Chief Commercial Officer, Tribepad discusses how to hire to reflect the communities you serve.



## RECRUITMENT

Diversity and inclusivity are key to a business's success. Time and time again [research has shown that organisations](#) that have a diverse workforce and are reflective of the communities that they serve are more successful, more innovative, and more profitable. Recruiting internationally in a way that ensures diversity and inclusivity while reflecting the communities served can be hard, as many businesses have a certain format and formula for talent acquisition which may not be appropriate for different countries and cultures. Here's a guide on how to bring positive change to your recruitment strategies. >



First off, start with your board and policies. Stakeholders should be fully bought into a strategy of fairness, inclusivity and diversity, and understand the value this brings. Having a company commitment to recruiting in a representative way will make creating a recruitment strategy that represents communities and cultures an organisational priority that will get resources to execute it. Set targets and ensure that everyone is aligned to achieving them – and understands the broader vision of why it is important to be doing so.

### Geographical understanding

It's essential to understand the country and context. Each community has its own cultural, social, and economic dynamics and smart companies research and understand these aspects, and then tailor their recruitment strategies accordingly. For example, in Chinese communities, relationships (guanxi) play a crucial role in business and recruitment. Networking and personal connections often influence hiring decisions. In the UK, there's a stronger emphasis on formal processes and qualifications, with a focus on fairness and transparency.

These formal processes lead to specific ways of advertising, such as via LinkedIn and job boards like Indeed. However, this limits the audiences to specific demographics who are well-versed in the ways of Western-style recruitment. If you want a more diverse workforce you need to use a variety of channels to advertise vacancies. This includes international job boards, social media platforms, local community groups, and professional networks. Engaging with local universities and educational institutions can

also be a great way to attract talent in markets you're less familiar with, as they will be tapped into enthusiastic graduates looking to enter the world of work. We're seeing a growth in organisations wanting to hire older workers, who may be more likely to see adverts in local media rather than LinkedIn for example.

### Inclusive from the start

Craft job descriptions that are inclusive and welcoming to all. Avoid language that might be unconsciously biased towards a particular gender, race, or cultural background. Research has shown that words such as 'ambitious' and 'dynamic' tend to attract male candidates and as such **perpetuate inequalities**, so really look at the language and phrasing to ensure that there is no bias being perpetuated even at this early stage of the process.

Diversity in recruitment teams is absolutely key. If your recruitment team all look the same, not only will there be a level of social conformity when it comes to making hiring decisions, potentially perpetuating bias, but candidates will question your commitment to diversity. It can be very difficult when attending an interview to see that no one looks like you, and could make job seekers nervous. There should also be training in cultural competence to understand and respect different cultural norms and practices. German culture is known for its direct communication style. Questions in interviews are often straightforward and focused on assessing the candidate's skills and suitability for the role. British culture has a reputation for politeness and an indirect communication style. Questions might be posed more gently, and feedback may be less direct. >

One thing that can be pivotal is anonymous recruitment where personal identifying information is masked, enabling decisions to be made based on skills and experience rather than personal details that might lead to unconscious bias. Coventry City Council has achieved greater diversity and inclusion seeing an impressive increase in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic candidate applications, with a rise from 18 per cent to 39 per cent, since adopting a variety of new techniques to attract ethnic minorities, as well as Tribepad's Anonymous Applications feature which helps reduce unconscious bias in the recruitment process.

### Going local

Leveraging local networks is crucial for inclusive hiring in international contexts. These networks, including universities, professional groups, and community organisations, offer access to diverse talent pools, enriching the recruitment process with candidates from various backgrounds. Local networks enhance employer branding within the region, establishing the company as an inclusive and desirable workplace. They also facilitate referrals, a powerful recruitment tool in many countries. It's also great for branding, demonstrating a commitment to the community and aligning with broader goals.

Remember to abide by local laws. Local networks can also assist in navigating language barriers and ensuring compliance with regional employment laws. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has significant implications for recruitment as it places strict limits on the collection and processing of personal data. Recruiters must have a lawful basis for processing candidates' data and must be transparent about how this data is used. This affects how resumes/CVs are handled, how long candidate information can be stored, and what information can be asked for during the recruitment process. In India, however, while having data protection laws including The Information Technology (Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive Personal Data or Information) Rules, 2011, which governs the handling of sensitive personal data, there are no rules as specifically tailored to recruitment. As a result, Indian-based recruiters may have more flexibility in the types of data they collect from candidates, although this is also evolving with new privacy laws being proposed. >





## What are you looking for?

Be flexible with requirements like language proficiency or understanding that educational and professional experiences can vary greatly across different countries. In 2022 around 53.1 per cent of the UK population had a degree. Compare this to South Africa, where just over 1.7 million people have degrees, or about 2.8 per cent of the South African population. There are moves to drop the almost ubiquitous request for degrees in the UK, and focus more on skills and aptitude. Ask yourself what the job and your business requires, and what the local community can offer.

Measure and monitor – then make changes. Data is key. You can utilise AI and data analytics tools to explore recruitment processes for any biases and revise and review as appropriate. Regularly monitor diversity metrics in the recruitment process and share these reports with stakeholders to ensure transparency and accountability. Then do something about them if they're not in line with your overall ED&I strategy.

By exploring new ideas and thinking beyond a cookie cutter recruitment approach, companies can create a more inclusive recruitment process that not only attracts a diverse range of candidates but also contributes to a work environment that is reflective of the communities they serve. A work environment that is tapped into the culture in which they exist. An organisation integrated into its environment, making the most of the talent on offer and contributing to the society in which they operate. And a business setting itself up for success – all around the world. ■



# STARTING WITH THE WORLD

TritonExec had an international client from day one and so has always been ready to make waves abroad.



Specialising in executive hiring for finance, technology and professional services firms, 65 per cent of TritonExec's revenues come from abroad. The journey overseas began with the USA and most recently APAC. Today, the firm employs 67 people and has presence in all major global regions. The firm was co-founded by entrepreneurs Jonathan Morris and Ben Graham and is headquartered in central London. >



## Where it all began

Close friends since the age of five, in their early 20s Ben Graham and Jonathan Morris both worked in recruitment, yet were keen to go it alone. In 2011 they teamed up and created their fledgling search firm from their parents dining room table – long before working from home was fashionable.

In such a fiercely competitive marketplace they knew they needed a big break, and soon after they launched that's exactly what happened: a contract worth \$500,000 to recruit 35 executives for a multi-billion dollar global digital transformation giant – all roles that would sit across the company's European operations.

## Exporting culture

Years later, with their client base and work expanding beyond the European market, the firm would navigate the complexities of setting up branches in new regions: APAC and the USA. While geography was not a barrier to

delivering valued services to their global clients – nearly two thirds of their revenues were already coming from outside the UK – the key to success in growing their footprint, they found, was focusing on understanding the unique needs of the team in the new location while always prioritising the importance of culture.

Jonathan Morris, co-founder and managing partner at TritonExec, emphasises the significance of relocating an existing team member from their HQ in London to play a pivotal role in hiring and onboarding the US team. “By relocating leaders and culture drivers from our existing team, we knew that the core of Triton and our values would be prioritised throughout our new offices,” he explains. “As we were hiring, growing, and establishing our US team, we had individuals from our UK team travel back and forth between offices, which worked well and helped establish a camaraderie, globally.” The firm used this blueprint for a successful expansion and implemented it in the APAC region. >

## Understanding each market

As was in the US, cultural adaptation was another critical aspect of TritonExec's strategy in India. The company recognised the need to align its recruitment approaches with the cultural nuances and preferences of the Indian workforce, while also having existing TritonExec leadership's presence throughout the hiring process.

Building a local team with a profound understanding of both the company culture and values, and also the APAC market became instrumental in overcoming this challenge and establishing a meaningful and lasting presence.

While the firm took a similar approach to expanding into the APAC region – they were faced with distinctive challenges in India, and choosing the right location emerged as seemingly one of the most important tasks

for success. Identifying one singular city and market was a hindrance, as the talent was spread across the region. Instead, they focused on creating a hybrid work culture, strategically hiring clusters of teams at prime or central locations in India, with the focus on having regular gatherings in major cities.

Francis Padamadan, global head of APAC for TritonExec, discussed the significance of this choice, stating: "Our team operates through their network and connections, and so a hybrid workspace allows for them to tap into their markets across India and the APAC region but also offers the ability to have the feel of an in-office job – we can have both the social and fun elements an office provides along with an accountable, results-driven culture – and also increase our reach and geographical presence. I believe this allowed us to attract the best talent across the country." >





## Focusing on communication

Communication played an important role in navigating each of these expansions. Ensuring global connection through collaboration and communication tools helped aid the process of onboarding the new team. Creating proper outbound communication channels through press and outreach to the local markets – both with clients and with the local networks is important when opening a new location. Finally, successfully navigating the elements of a new regulatory landscape when entering a new market requires a deep understanding of local labour laws, taxation regulations, and legal requirements. By engaging local experts, the firm established a robust foundation for each of their new office locations and team members, ensuring communication, compliance and avoiding potential pitfalls.

## Adapting and expanding

TritonExec's global expansion journey into the APAC and US markets reflects the company's ability to navigate challenges with innovation and strategic thinking and the importance of understanding and adapting to the uniqueness of the new locations. By recognising and respecting the cultural nuances of each region, TritonExec was able to build strong relationships with clients and candidates, fostering trust and credibility.

The strategic relocation of experienced leaders facilitated a smooth transition for local teams, ensuring that TritonExec's values and methodologies were ingrained in each new branch and establishing a strong unified team culture. This approach showcased TritonExec's commitment to seamless integration and knowledge transfer across borders.

"Throughout this expansion journey, consistently prioritising the significance of organisational culture and communication is what paid off in the end," notes Morris. "We understood that a strong and cohesive company culture was essential for maintaining the high expectations for delivery across services and operations and through different locations. By ensuring that the values and principles that defined our identity were upheld in each location and market, the firm could continue to remain unified globally."

## The future: expanding practice areas

"While our global presence is now established in our target territories, we are now focused on expanding our service offering," says Morris. "Our finance, technology and professional services practice areas are well established. Where we are seeing progress is from the growth of our private equity-backed firms hiring needs, and our recently established HR practice." ■

# CREATING A GLOBAL WORKFORCE

Sohan Sidhu, Partner, Solicitor and Head of Immigration at Ellisons examines the challenges and steps to securing a global workforce.





It is often said the world is a small place. It is also often said the United Kingdom (UK) is a service economy and is no longer known for having strong manufacturing sectors. Consequently, many businesses in the UK struggle to recruit suitable workers and hence have to look beyond the UK's shores to secure the appropriate talents. Arguably, Brexit has not helped the situation because no longer do European Union (EU) nationals have the right to free movement to the UK. All of a sudden, EU nationals also require visas to live and work in the UK just like any other overseas nationals. We are constantly hearing of the challenges which the National Health Service (NHS) is experiencing what with the lack of doctors and nurses. Many other sectors including hospitality and catering are struggling.

If a business is looking to recruit foreign workers, then it needs to be in possession of a Home Office Sponsor Licence. The application is document heavy and very much front loaded. The Home Office position is that being in possession of a sponsor licence is a privilege and not a right. It needs to be borne in mind however that the ability to employ foreign workers also attracts many responsibilities and obligations on sponsor licence holders. They have to ensure they have robust HR systems in place, undertake appropriate right to work checks, and ensure they are abreast of Home Office rule changes (of which there are many).

For businesses which fall foul of the regulations, the consequences can be very serious indeed. For those with a sponsor licence, they can find their licence is revoked or downgraded, in which case not only will they be under the radar of the Home Office but their sponsorship ability will also be reduced. The Home Office also has the power to issue civil penalties against businesses which are deemed to have employed workers unlawfully. The Government announced last year that employer fines for illegal working were to be increased from £15,000 to £45,000 for a first breach where an employee is found to be working without a valid visa or working in breach of their visa conditions. For subsequent breaches, the Home Office has now tripled the fine from £20,000 to £30,000 per employee and the increased fine applied to breaches occurring after 13 February 2024. Furthermore, employers are required to pay either a minimum salary of £26,200 or the salary noted in the occupation code, whichever is higher. From 4th April 2024, the salary threshold for new sponsor applicants is increasing from the current level of £26,200 to £38,700 gross per year. >

## Shortage occupation list

Currently, the Home Office operates a shortage occupation list and any job detailed there allows employers to pay a lower salary, subject to meeting the requirements of the rules. However, the Home Office has announced that from 14 March 2024, the shortage occupation list will be replaced with a new immigration salary list and this will remove the 20% going rate discount to the minimum salary for those roles contained within the shortage occupation list. Furthermore, currently, employers are allowed to pay a lower salary to new entrants i.e. recent graduates and candidates who are under the age of 26 at the time of application. At the time of preparing this article, the UK Government has not confirmed if the new entrant salary thresholds will continue to apply.

It also needs to be borne in mind that sponsoring foreign workers is an expensive business. For each sponsored worker, an employer needs to assign a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). This attracts a fee of £239.00. However, this is only the start of the journey. When assigning a CoS, an employer is also required to pay an Immigration Skills Charge and this can be up to £1,000 per year for large businesses. A visa fee also needs to be paid and this can be up to £1,500 if sponsorship is sought for 5 years. In addition, the Home Office also requires a contribution towards the UK's NHS. This is by way of an Immigration Health Surcharge. From 6 February 2024, broadly the rates increased from £624 per year to £1,035 per year and the lower rates for students and applicants under the age of 18 increased from £470 per year to £776 per year. The cost therefore can be quite significant.

It is not however all bad news. Once a licence has been granted by the Home Office, it is valid for a period of 4 years. However, the Home Office has now removed the need to renew a licence and it is extending eligible licence expiry dates by 10 years. >



## Fast-changing law

Immigration is no doubt, a fast-changing area of law. Whilst there are many challenges for businesses, there are also many opportunities which flow from sponsoring foreign workers into the UK. However, bearing in mind the many changes on the horizon including from 4 April 2024, employers would do well consider the impact that the changes will have on their recruitment plans and especially in some sectors where salaries are traditionally lower, they may wish to consider bringing forward hiring practices for roles which potentially may not meet the increased salary threshold of £38,700.00. Sponsorship can be for a period of up to 5 years. Thereafter, a candidate can apply for indefinite leave to remain provided all of the requirements of the Immigration Rules are met. Employers may wish to sponsor candidates for the maximum duration possible and in this way, they can be safe in the knowledge that any changes which the Government bring into effect, will not retrospectively affect existing sponsored workers.

The reality is that what with the shortage of skills in the UK, employers will need to continue sponsoring workers into the UK despite the challenges which may be inherent in the immigration system. ■


For more information, please do not hesitate to contact Sohan Sidhu at [sohan.sidhu@ellisonssolicitors.com](mailto:sohan.sidhu@ellisonssolicitors.com)





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# EMBRACING THE WORLD

Quentin Debavelaere, GM UK, Benelux and Middle East at freelance platform Malt puts forward a roadmap for expanding internationally.



The term 'global' in business is a beacon of opportunity and growth. It allows companies to tap into different markets, offer new services and expand their customer base whilst building an international footprint. Start-ups and new business models are built for scalability, with significant upfront technological investments that need to be offset in the long term by growth. >



Expanding in new markets requires, in theory, little additional investments, so it's often perceived as a no-brainer. It's also sometimes a vanity metric for the founders to be present in many markets. However, the venture to expand an organisation is a nuanced art that requires cultural insight, adaptability, and precise planning. From the human capital to legal intricacies, the path to building an international team is as challenging as it is promising.

There's no one-size-fits-all strategy, and the plans keep evolving in response to shifting conditions. However, a set of principles can be applied in any situation.

### Local expertise in operations and communications

Central to the expansion strategy is the incorporation of local expertise. A sound understanding of local market conditions, consumer behaviour, legal regulations, and cultural nuances is non-negotiable. Local talents do not just bridge the linguistic gap; they embody the socio-economic and cultural fabric of the region. Attracting and integrating these invaluable assets into the company requires a deliberate and sensitive approach, recognising the vast differences in employment cultures and practices globally. For example, a local talent acquisition manager (even on a freelance basis) is essential to recruit a local team. They will have a better knowledge of the academic ecosystem, the expectations of candidates, and the implicit rules of interview/recruitment.

Although English may be the lingua franca of global business, specific communication styles, non-verbal cues, and local dialects can significantly alter the meaning of messages. Misinterpretations can lead to inefficiency and frustration among team members. Moreover, translating documents and marketing content word-for-word might lead to inaccuracy in messaging and missed targeting opportunities. Therefore, companies should invest in language and communication training and employ multilingual team members to serve as cultural liaisons. For example, the word 'freelance' has a very different connotation in different countries, and we have introduced the concept of 'independent consultant' in Spain or 'IT contractor' in the UK to position our community in the appropriate way to our local audience. This is especially important in new markets where a company has no brand awareness and cannot benefit from the personal network of the founders and management team.

In addition, each country has its regulatory environment that dictates how businesses must operate. Notably, data privacy, labour laws, taxation, and corporate governance vary dramatically. For example, when it comes to freelancing, UK rules, such as IR35, might significantly impact their ability to find customers – something other European countries won't necessarily consider. The challenge for international teams is to abide by these laws without overburdening the business processes, which requires ongoing education, vigilance, and the aid of local legal experts. >

## Cultural integration: a multifaceted challenge

Cultural fluency goes far beyond the surface-level assimilation of language; it delves into the ethos of communication styles, hierarchical structures, decision-making processes, and more. For example, Spain is very hierarchical, and it's important to respect the reporting line and convince at the highest level; France is more open to a 'test and learn' approach with pilots and deployments, while Germany is very detail-oriented when analysing a solution and then deploys everything on a large scale when trust has been built.

To embody cultural integration, organisations must invest in understanding and adapting to new territories' societal values and work ethics. It's a task that demands attentiveness, respect, and willingness to modify the company's operational blueprint. It cannot be prepared in a room before launch. It can only be achieved on the ground by confronting ideas with reality.

However, with teams spread across multiple time zones, finding a common meeting time can be a logistical puzzle. This can lead to delayed communication and decision-making slowdowns. With remote and hybrid ways of working, people might have different preferences and schedule 'focus times' that are misaligned with international timetables.

Therefore, organisations must create flexible work policies that acknowledge these challenges, employing asynchronous communication. Similarly, recognising cultural holidays and working hours contributes to an inclusive and engaging atmosphere.

## Make your best talents travel

Guidelines, procedures, Zoom calls and planning can never replace the effectiveness of proximity and face-to-face problem-solving. One of the best strategies to launch a new market is to send some of your ambassadors locally – entrepreneurial employees from other existing markets. It goes beyond a knowledge of the processes or the product. It's about attitude and drive. Send culture champions who can spread the company's culture and assist new joiners in navigating a sometimes complex organisation with a foreign culture.

One of the mistakes an organisation can make on its first expansion is to start with the top, hiring a country manager and then their team. Instead, they should open several positions and be pragmatic in the order of arrival. Finding a good senior candidate can take nine to 12 months, and organisations can't afford to lose this time. So, it's best to be pragmatic in their recruitment plan and consider starting with existing team members. >





## The nuances of local entrepreneurial leadership

Localisation does not merely refer to translating content or adjusting the product to match local expectations. Organisations should refrain from implementing a Go-To-Market (GTM) strategy directly derived from the headquarters - what worked in the country of origin will probably not work in a new environment. Instead, they should place trust in the entrepreneurial mindset of the local team. Leverage their unique perspective and understanding of consumer behaviour to devise a tailored GTM strategy.

A company's international employees must benefit from a work environment based on respect and empowerment. There is a profound need for workplaces where differences are seen not as barriers but as pathways to innovation and growth. Balancing the empowerment of local decision-making authority with respect for the company's overarching mission and values encourages trust, dedication, and, most importantly, a degree of forgiveness or acceptance of failure. It's essential to provide some 'red lines' to set clear boundaries on what is mandatory (ex., pricing guidelines, salary grids, HR policy) and what can be adapted (GTM, pitch, client segmentation, product).

## Failure: a catalyst for refinement


Expansion efforts are inherently met with risks and the potential for setbacks. Yet, within these challenges lie the catalysts for growth and innovation. A failed market entry can unravel invaluable insights, provided it's dissected and understood correctly. Building a culture that encourages experimentation and learning from mistakes can transform potential failure into a strategic advantage.

An organisation that leverages such lessons paves the way for a more refined strategy in subsequent ventures, optimising GTM strategies and ensuring higher effectiveness in execution.

The successful expansion of a team across international borders is a transformative journey that requires a harmonious blend of strategy, cultural intelligence, and operational finesse. Each stage – recruitment, integration, and operational execution – must be approached with a fine-tuned balance of structure and flexibility, strategy, and empathy. Yet, businesses that thrive in global markets will be those that see international expansion not just as a business strategy but as an ongoing dynamic process. ■

# SUSTAINABLE EXPANSION

Samual Knight Energy took an international solutions-focused approach to establish a strong service provision to US based customers.



At Samuel Knight Energy they understand the importance of having the right talent in place to support their clients' Renewable Energy projects that align perfectly with their objectives. Samuel Knight's strategic global office locations now include Newcastle HQ, London, Bristol, Spain, and USA sites with Dallas HQ, Chicago & Boston. >



In 2019 after a successful VCT fund raise Samuel Knight launched their US operations in Dallas and over the last few years have expanded into Chicago and Boston, having created long-term partnership relations with their clients to facilitate Renewable Energy projects.

Samuel Knight USA was established remotely from the UK in the middle of the Covid lockdown which came with many challenges however senior management was confident the opportunity within the USA was going to be rewarding so persevered with a strategic growth plan resulting in a record-breaking first-year result achieving \$10.7 million in sales and \$3.9 million NFI.

Samuel Knight USA's mission mirrored that of the EMEA business across Renewable Energy markets, solar, wind, BESS, and transmission & distribution. With their combined expertise and proactive attitude, they knew they could add real value to the USA market sector as one of few specialist Renewable Energy recruiters and they weren't wrong.

In the year 2021, Samuel Knight Energy established an exclusive partnership with a major operator/developer that was purely focused on providing permanent recruitment services throughout North America. Fast forward to 2024 and Samuel Knight Energy now works with three different parts of this global player throughout North America as well as 24 companies throughout their US supply chain.

### Leading from the top

Samuel Knight Energy USA is led by Steve Rawlingson, founder and CEO of Samuel Knight Group which turns 10 years old in March 2024. Steve has created a world-class USA leadership team to support him in his mission of becoming North America's market leading Renewable Energy staffing solutions provider. Kenzie Morris is co-founder and VP of Client Relationships, Dave Allen is SVP who relocated from the UK to help lead the business, Jack Roberts is VP of Strategic Partnerships and Carl Moffett acts as Group CFO each playing an integral role in the growth of Samuel Knight USA.

In 2021 Samuel Knight Energy successfully obtained E2 investment status. This milestone enables them to facilitate the smooth relocation of highly skilled specialists from the United Kingdom to the United States which their clients see as a major USP. Their E2 status has secured them long-term contracts with the likes of EDF, Vestas, Siemens, Orsted and Avangrid to name just a few.

Samuel Knight Energy's focus remains on bolstering the Renewable Energy sector, addressing critical skill gaps that currently exist throughout North America. With this achievement, they are poised to contribute significantly to the advancement of sustainable Renewable Energy solutions on a national scale. >

## Bespoke and innovative

Creating bespoke, innovative solutions for their USA clients was the key to the successful launch of Samuel Knight Energy USA, not to mention their extensive experience and knowledge of the Renewable Energy industry.

Their clients benefit from a consistent, proactive approach from a globally recognised specialist team, who all work closely with their clients to understand the challenges and needs, giving them access to both in-country and global talent pools.

Over the course of 10 years, Samuel Knight Group has created a global following and CRM database of nearly 2,000,000 Renewable Energy experts which gives them a global reach to support clients with finding the very best candidates possible for their projects across solar, wind, BESS, and transmission & distribution.

“We are only just getting started in the USA,” says Steve Rawlingson. “The last three years we’ve been focused on building a specialist brand that stands for Renewable Energy excellence. Fast forward to the present day and we are now achieving economy of scale working with over 50 renewable energy clients who all have a significant pipeline of Renewable Energy projects reaching nearly 100GW of power across the East Coast, West Coast, and Central US. Our time for US dominance is now and I can’t wait to see what we achieve in 2024 and beyond.”

Anyone trying to scale a business will understand the challenges that come with growth especially when you’re trying to launch internationally, but with a clearly defined strategic growth plan, the right financial backing, and a team of individuals all rowing in the same direction, you can dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time. ■

