

Welcome to International Perspective.org



InternationalPerspective.org is “a site for insight” from an international business perspective.

After over a quarter-century in international business in the medical industry, I have learned that besides a good product and good general business skills, the real key to success in the international marketplace is an understanding of the language, culture, history, economics and politics of your target market. This is not only true just for businesses but

for any type of organization or individual seeking a successful engagement overseas.

In the decades after WWII, the U.S. was the dominant global economic and military power, and with this, wielded extraordinary political influence as well. There was little foreign competition either at home or in overseas markets – in terms of products or services. American companies could sell with little need to adapt either their products or marketing strategies. It was a wonderful life.

In the 21st Century, with the U.S. share of the world economy shrinking and U.S. economic and political influence weakening as a result of many factors, U.S. companies can no longer count on any intrinsic advantage simply by being “an American company” in the global marketplace. In fact, they can count on fierce competition in products, services and pricing from foreign competitors better attuned to increasingly demanding and sophisticated foreign markets. Foreign competition is often strengthened because they are more used to having to adapt to international standards, languages, local customs (among other things) and so consider each market as just one more iteration of adaptation and application of their business model. Unfortunately, this is not so for many of the smaller American companies, especially those trying to carve out an international market with limited resources and experiences gained only from a domestic U.S. market.

How then to compete? Just “building a better mousetrap” today won’t cut it. Businesses today must not only have that better mousetrap with very competitive pricing, but also understand how to outsell their competition in the local markets. That takes a greater understanding of the local politics, history, language, culture and business environment than ever before. With that understanding, however, must come a commitment to adapt.

Small businesses can’t always adapt their products 100% to

every market they target, and their employees can't be "fluent" in all the aspects of each of those foreign markets. That's not possible. But by learning how to "think, act and speak international" they can create a framework for analysis that will work for nearly every situation. By doing so, they will drastically increase their effectiveness and chances of success.

That then is the focus of this forum: to provide a framework of understanding and analysis in order to make those adaptations.

I emphasize that this forum is neither "liberal" or "conservative." The topics I will cover might occasionally challenge beliefs and assumptions in both camps, but the objective is to help small- and medium-sized U.S. companies and business people be more competitive in the international marketplace of the 21st Century.