



Marketing globally when you're not there: Notes for LMA Midwest Roundtable Discussion

Cultural Considerations

- *Cultural sensitivities* very significant, but "cultural" much broader
 - Ways business is done
 - Ways business development is done
 - Ways marketing is done

In other words, you need to be aware that it is different, very different, even if it seems the same. The people in the location where you are going have different practices, different histories, different perspectives on doing business, and you cannot get around them nor can you pretend like they do not exist. You need to know what they are, and act accordingly.

- *Regulatory issues* come into play
 - Rules governing the practice of law
 - Rules governing legal marketing

Regulatory issues are not easy. Fortunately, most firms going into international locations either practice international law not local law (which allows them to stay within the bar admittance guidelines) or if they do practice local law, they team up with local lawyers who can advise them on what is done in that market. Marketers need to know those rules.

- *Business etiquette* a factor
 - How do they buy legal services?
 - Who makes the decisions?

What's proper in Japan? In Brazil? In Russia? How are business meetings run? Do they want to cut to the chase, meet and make a decision (like Americans) or do they want to meet, exchange pleasantries, not talk about work but get to know each other first (like Japanese)? Is the quietest person in the room the most powerful or the least? Again, most firms going into international markets do so with lawyers experienced in those cultures, but that is not always the case (or the information does not always get communicated to all lawyers in the firm).

- *Logistics and mechanics* need to be addressed
 - From most simple: paper size, business cards,
 - To most complicated: sourcing materials locally, staffing events, etc.
 - Language is never neutral: web site, communications, etc.

A lot of simple decisions become significant. Like creating two sets of proposal materials, in Letter and A4 size. Like developing bilingual business cards, and finding a printer that can print in Chinese characters.

Marketing operations considerations

- *Basic marketing concepts* the same, but magnified
 - BD / Marketing plan must have buy-in from everyone involved
 - Home office dictates do not translate well in far-flung offices
 - Need to "get things right" more quickly: can't run down the hall and double-check
- *Targeting* less obvious
 - Who are your client targets and where are they located?
 - How do they buy legal services?
 - Who makes the decisions?
 - What are their legal needs?
 - How do you get / stay in touch?



Internal Considerations

- *Cost* always a big factor
 - Duplicate supplies (eg paper stock)
 - Duplicate materials (eg brochures)
 - Communications costs (telephone)
 - Website costs
- *Communication* crucial to success
 - Regular and open communication requires significant effort but cannot be ignored
 - Integration is key: people need to know each other
 - Objectives: everybody has them and they're all different (even conflicting), but common objectives are great way to build trust