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WORLD FIRST

How to prepare for success in the US

Written by [Emma-Jane Packe](#) on Thursday, 11 October 2018. Posted in [Global](#)

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Chasing the American dream? Look no further on how to get it right



There were some key takeaways from The Supper Club's most recent event on expanding into the US. Firstly, make sure you're crystal clear on what makes you different. Secondly, culture - who's going to take that on and embed it into your new business? And thirdly, think about the practicalities and regulations when launching in America.

The point on clarity came from Martin McCourt, chairman of [Glen Dimplex](#), the electric goods company and the former CEO of Dyson, the tech company, who successfully led its US growth despite fierce competition from big local brands. "Marketing your business on a 'me too' basis isn't the way to succeed in the US," he said. "Unless you're taking something in there that's never been thought of before or creating a whole new market, then you're going to steal share from established competition - so you need crystal clarity on why you will stand out."

There were some different perspectives on culture, from exporting yours to adapting locally. "The assumption that Americans are just like the British is an expensive one," warned Allyson Stewart-Allen, the Californian CEO of [International Marketing Partners](#), the business consultancy, who has advised more than 200 businesses in 26 countries on how their brands can succeed in the US. "Americans will really relate well to something that has been adapted for them rather than imposed upon them from the UK. So do your homework, immerse yourself in the culture, because the culture is going to make or break your success."

So how do you adapt a UK business for a US market? "Culturally, you don't need to pretend to be a US business," said Patrick Eve, managing director of [ZigZag Global](#), the return management firm, who successfully led a build and buy strategy to establish his former venture, TransferWise, the transfer scaleup, in the US. "You can remain a British business but you need a very US-centric offering. Only use case studies of where you have succeeded locally, whether it's with local partners or talent, to prove those US credentials."

Dominic Joseph, co-founder at [Captify](#), global leader in search intelligence, moved to the US to launch the company's New York office. "To embed our culture in the new business we looked for people in the US with the same values and work ethic - and there is a great synergy between the US and UK teams," he explained, adding that the company has experienced rapid year-on-year growth, winning major US advertisers such as Comcast, Target and Directv.

This roundtable discussion highlighted many of the practical aspects to consider. For example, research where your investors and customers are and where your talent is - consider time zones as well.

Get a good lawyer and accountant and expect them to have a more active role as advisors on contracts, taxes, and visas - which can vary from state to state. Finally, if you're expecting to travel regularly to the US get yourself global entry and if you're planning to live there, speak to US immigration as early as possible because it can take three to six months to set up a visa.

It's worth the effort to make it a success, as Joseph concluded: "The US is ahead commercially because there is so much money being spent and there are different market dynamics in each region. If you can carve out your place in the US, it helps you understand what's coming next in the UK." 

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About the Author



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Emma-Jane Packe is the managing director of [The Supper Club](#), the exclusive membership community of innovative founders and CEOs of high growth businesses. Since 2003, The Supper Club have enabled thousands of members to realise their growth ambitions. The average growth of its members is 34% year on year with average sales from £1m to £500m.
