



Think Big, Start Small, Scale Fast

Think Big, Start Small, Scale Fast. Brilliant advice that applies to your 2020 international business plan. We dream of building a brand like Tabasco or Barilla that is available in supermarkets everywhere from Montenegro to Myanmar. Most export programs capture a modest degree of success, with strong brand development in countries closest to our borders, fading as we cross oceans away from our factories. What happens? Ultimately, companies fail to deploy the fundamental strategies that made them successful in their home market. The biggest gap is that international is always “under funded” in terms of investments in consumer marketing and people. Below are Export Solutions’ ideas for pursuing the spirit of Think Big, Start Small, Scale Fast.

Strategic Services

Contact Us for Export Solutions

1. Identify Best in Class Distributors: 96 Countries
2. Best Practices Export Strategy
3. Distributor Management Workshops
4. Export 101: Let's Get Started
5. New Market Prioritization & Launch Plan
6. Personal Distributor Introductions: 95 Countries
7. Walmart International
8. Distributor Contracts, Margins, & Fees
9. Meeting Speaker
10. International Strategy Expert

Think Big

There are 196 countries in the world. How many are you selling to? Your product is good, shoppers in your home country love it! There are many common threads in worldwide consumer habits in categories like confectionery & snacks, beverages, and personal care. World cuisine demonstrates global demand for Italian, Asian, Japanese, and Mexican food. Or consumers looking for authentic USA peanut butter, German pickles, or British tea brands. There are 7.3 billion people in the world, including more than 6 billion people living outside Europe and North America. There are at least one billion “middle class” consumers in emerging markets that regularly shop in supermarkets, many featuring brands from around the world. All are potential new customers.

Start Small

There is a cost of doing business in every country. Retailers everywhere request listing fees or equivalent investments in return for their valuable shelf space. Naturally, international consumers will want to try your brand before purchasing. The basic idea is to start your export journey in a handful of countries where you can invest at appropriate levels: trade promotion, sampling, and frequent visits to help your distributor. Frequently, the first partner may be a distributor that specializes in brands from your country. This provides opportunities to consolidate shipments and enjoy co-promotion synergies with other adjacent brands. Better to have a handful of thriving countries where your brand enjoys a strong position versus “flags everywhere,” with tiny market shares.

Scale Fast

Most senior executives are willing to financially support a business plan that “pays out.” Establish realistic benchmarks that track category development, market share, and your brand distribution. Institute a regular process of sharing “Lessons Learned.” The distributor model is a universal outsourcing solution that facilitates and accelerates international development. Export Solutions database tracks more than 7,100 distributors in 96 of the top economies globally. The key is to staff internally to manage your expansion. This includes regional distributor managers plus sufficient marketing, supply chain, and other core team members.

Act Now

What does Think Big, Start Small, and Scale Fast look like for your company and your international aspirations? Does this approach require your leadership team to reallocate resources to international to redefine “Think Big?” Are there strategic countries where you are “under performing” and you need to “Start Small” again to regain momentum? What are the results metrics that will trigger a “Scale Fast” expansion?

We are fortunate to be involved in an industry with universal appeal, where most brands appear at their earliest stages of international development. The rules and framework for expansion are transparent, with a common requirement of investing in consumer activities and convincing supermarkets to provide your brand shelf space. Most brands will travel far if they incorporate the capabilities and commitment that created their hometown success story. Good luck!

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