

– CASE STUDY – Wordshop's Entry into the U.S. Market

Background

In 1994, Peter O'Connor and Philippe De Clercq created Wordshop, a translation company specializing in technical translation. Over its 20 years of existence, Wordshop has expanded its services to a wide range of fields such as legal, financial, communication and marketing, banking, insurance, medical, pharmaceutical, and engineering documentation. In 2015, Wordshop launched WS Translations, its subsidiary in the United States.

WS Translations' successful entry into the U.S. was guided by a partnership with the following organizations:

- The French-American Chamber of Commerce - Philadelphia Chapter (FACC-Philadelphia)
- The Chamber of commerce and industry of the Paris region Ile-de-France (CCI Paris Ile-de-France)
- The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians (Welcoming Center)

Global Access PA began in 2014 as a partnership between FACC-Philadelphia (supporting businesses in Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and Delaware) and the Welcoming Center. The program supports foreign researchers, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized businesses as they invest and launch their enterprises in the United States. Global Access PA provides mentoring and guidance on how to navigate various hurdles, such as the American business climate, immigration, cross-cultural differences, and capital investment.

FACC is a nationwide network of non-profit organizations supporting economic, commercial, and financial development between the United States and France. FACC is a member of the global French network of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCIs). In France, the CCIs are semipublic organizations that represent the interests of businesses, serving as an intermediary between private companies and public authorities. They perform various tasks such as foreign trade promotion, vocational training, and regional economic development.

The Welcoming Center's mission is to connect newly arrived individuals and immigrant entrepreneurs from around the world with the economic opportunities that they need to succeed in the region. Since opening its doors in 2003, the organization has assisted more than 13,000 people from over 140 countries.

In June 2014, Wordshop sought out the support of CCI Paris Ile-de-France and FACC-Philadelphia to plan the creation of its American subsidiary.

Initial Market Approach

Wordshop's Partnership with the CCI Paris Ile-de-France

Wordshop's founders decided to target the U.S. East Coast and open their subsidiary in Philadelphia, PA for two reasons. First, the city is strategically located along the I-95 corridor between New York City (70 min by train) and Washington D.C. (90 min by train), which offers opportunities for growth at a lower investment risk. Second, their employee Ms. Lianna Sanford-Kazarian is a native of southeastern Pennsylvania and was hoping to return home after living in France for several years.

From June 2014, Wordshop prepared its entry into the U.S. market and took the following steps:

- Participated in workshops organized by CCI Paris Ile-de-France on "preparing for the US market: business contract, intellectual property, intercultural negotiation, immigration" and "Preparing your Elevator Pitch "

- Developed an entry strategy and timeline
- Recruited a young professional under the Volunteer for International Experience (VIE) program and trained him through the platform of CCI Paris Ile-de-France in order to help Ms. Sanford-Kazarian in launching the U.S. venture
- Participated in an exploratory trip to Philadelphia to meet FACC-Philadelphia's network and to select a local incubator
- Incorporated the U.S. subsidiary under the brand name WS Translations

In June 2015, Ms. Sanford-Kazarian moved to Philadelphia as the new U.S. Operations Manager of WS Translations and joined Global Access PA at the Welcoming Center. The VIE young professional followed her 2 months later.

U.S. Launch

WS Translations' Partnership with FACC-Philadelphia and the Welcoming Center

Thanks to Global Access PA's support and the determination of Ms. Sanford-Kazarian, the company was able to start its activity in early June 2015. Over a 6-month period, WS Translations accomplished the following:

- Gained a better understanding of American business practices through FACC-Philadelphia's guidance and network
- Developed a business plan with the Small Business Development Center at the Fox School of Business, Temple University
- Created a local identity throughout the Philadelphia business community
- Received logistical support and mentorship for its VIE professional (under a 12-month J-1 intern visa) from the Welcoming Center
- Signed its first clients in the U.S.

Results and Impact

After several months of collaboration, WS Translations officially launched and signed its first clients. The next step is to hire another American employee to help develop business activity and expand its services throughout North America.

Philippe De Clercq, Co-founder of Wordshop, commented on the successful launch of WS Translations:

"CCI Paris Ile-de-France, FACC-Philadelphia, and Welcoming Center... 3 key ingredients for an SME like Wordshop to successfully move into the American market. Thanks to their networks, we were able to lay the groundwork to open our subsidiary well in advance and find our first clients. Now it's up to us to build on that foundation... Definitely the right choice for an SME that's looking to expand internationally!"

Thank you to all our partners

