

Hop the Pond



AI EDITION

A Guide for Expanding Your

EMEA Operations into the U.S.

INTRODUCTION

Do a web search for “moving software company from Europe to the U.S.” and you’ll find meager results. There is, however, abundant content about U.S. tech companies moving into Europe—how-to guides, case studies and more.

Battery understands this challenge well. We wrote the inaugural “Hop the Pond” guide back in 2018, outlining best practices to help B2B tech companies establish operations in the U.S. We updated that guide in 2023 and got great responses from readers. But AI adoption has significantly changed how companies make the “leap” across the pond. AI is knocking down global walls and bringing vendors and customers together faster than ever before. Therefore we’ve updated this guide yet again for the AI era. In the following pages you’ll find an updated checklist, plus AI-relevant best practices to guide tech company leaders through all aspects of an international move.

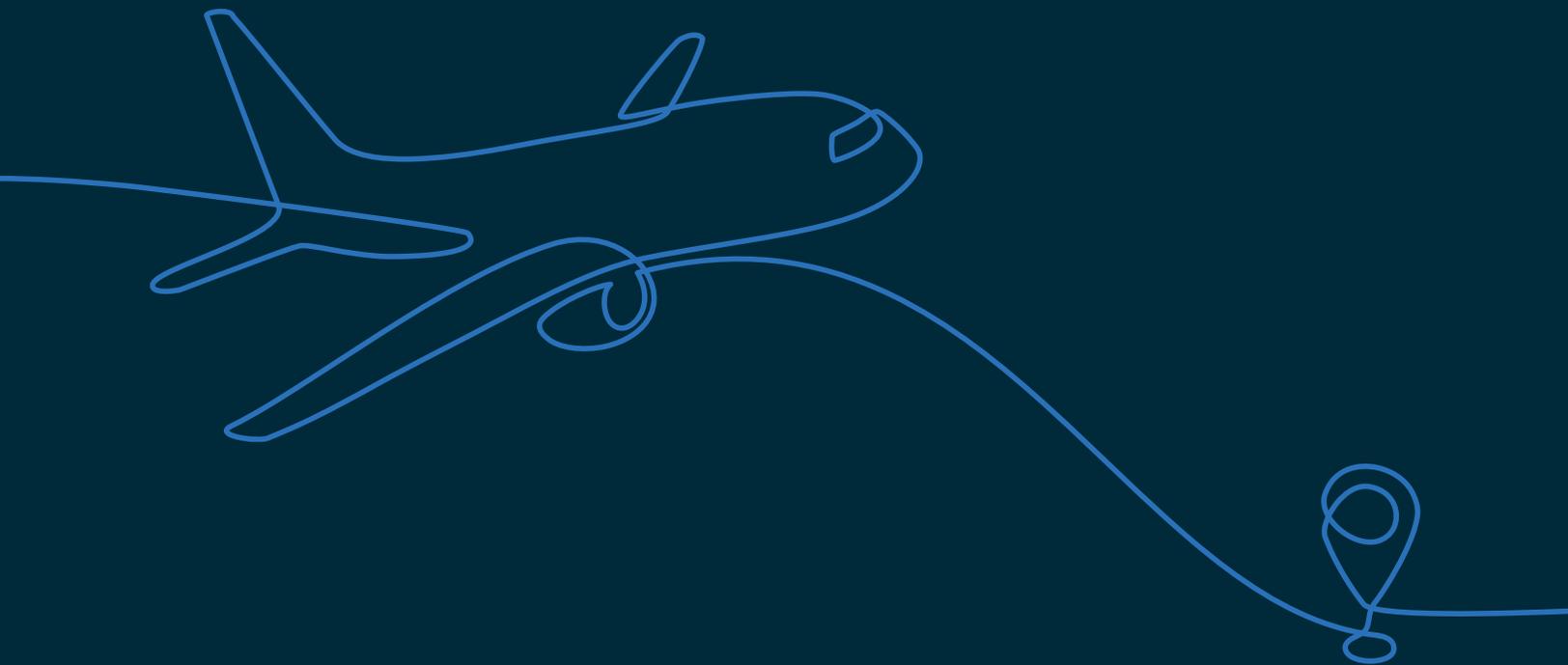
With teams based in Boston, New York, San Francisco, Menlo Park, London and Tel Aviv, Battery is an investment firm with global perspective. Over the past 10 years, Battery has helped many SaaS and now AI-first companies in Europe and the Middle East expand operations into the U.S. and to build themselves into large global brands.

Expanding to the U.S. raises all sorts of age-old questions: Where should our headquarters be located? Should we move an HQ-based exec over to run the



American business? Centralized team or remote? The surge in AI prompts even more questions: How do I plan my initiative for landing in the U.S.? Should we translate our website, content and product? If so, in what order should we do these tasks? Using AI in the expansion strategy enables companies to make faster, better-informed decisions and move more efficiently through the entire U.S. market entry process.

If you've created a company and sold technology across the disparate markets in EMEA then you already understand that entering different countries requires a bespoke approach. This guide is intentionally high-level and aimed primarily at enterprise software companies. Our goal is to help you ask and think through the right questions about your expansion. This will help in the planning phase, particularly around the all-important go/no-go question: Do you make the move right now or not? Battery brings years of experience helping our portfolio companies make critical transitions like international expansions. When you're ready to execute your strategy, the Battery team would be more than happy to help you build a customized plan for the AI era.



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MARKET

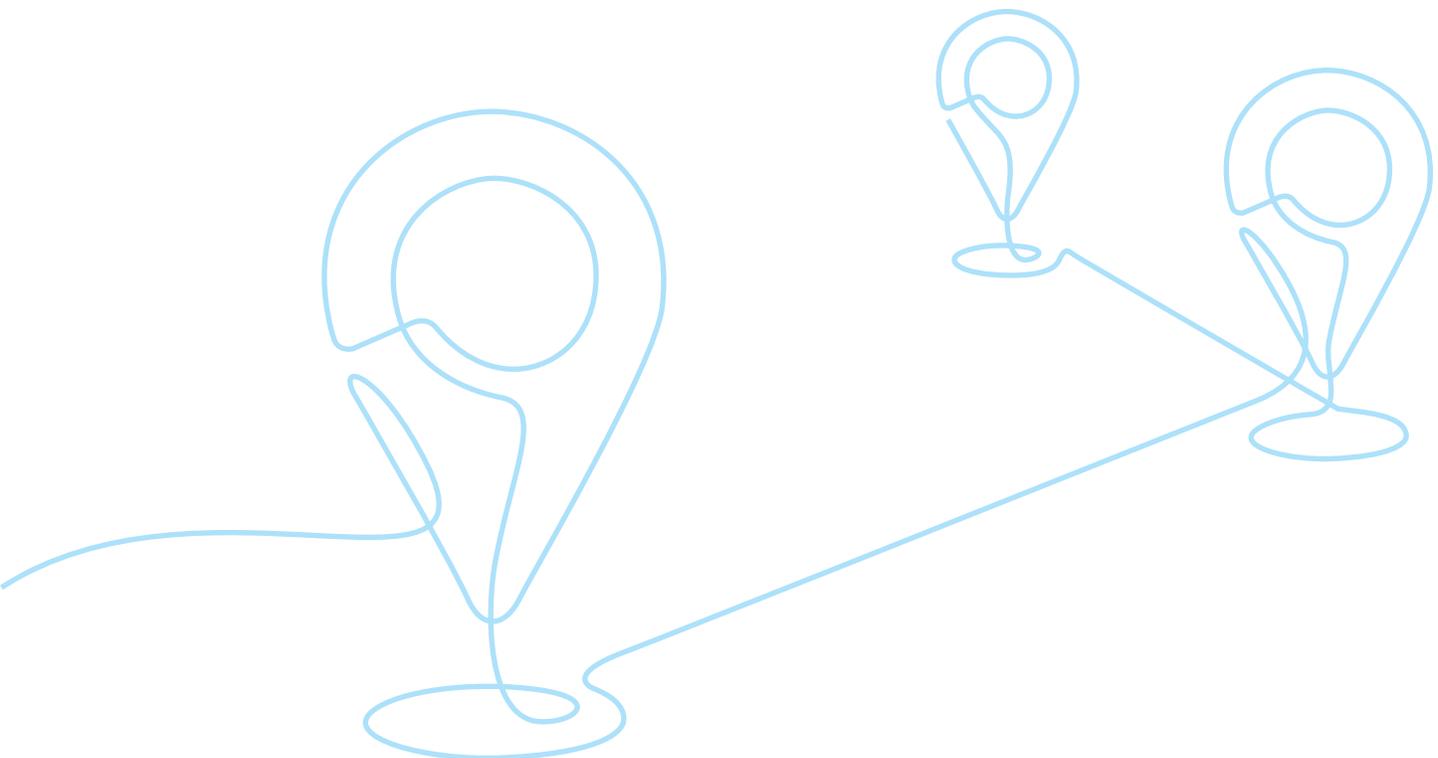
You've already raised money and started selling your product in Europe. Ensuring that your product solves global problems is the first item to validate. We'll assume that the business problem you solve is applicable in the U.S. as well, with that market simply being a new and addressable geographic location.

AI can help you validate your problem thesis and its applicability to the American market. Start by performing a market analysis, testing your ICP and buyer-intent data, pain points and their existence in the U.S. market; compare competitor messaging and the strength of your value proposition; look for adoption trends of software similar to yours; build your initial target list and begin testing your messaging prior to landing; and research marketing trends of your category to design marketing and event strategy. AI can help accelerate and improve all of these research tasks.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Most companies want to expand in the U.S. Have you performed analysis prior to launching?





TIMING

The typical U.S.-based SaaS company is between four to seven years old before it opens its first European office, by which time they will have already cemented their presence in U.S. markets. But for companies originating in Europe and the Middle East, the timing for a trans-Atlantic move comes more quickly, expedited by pressure to break into the large, U.S. addressable market.

Companies headquartered in the Middle East, such as those in Israel, often begin operations with an immediate eye toward the U.S. Since their primary domestic market is smaller from a TAM perspective, many Israel-based companies start selling their products in Europe but likely build the product from day one with a U.S.-first mindset. European-based companies, on the other hand, often launch within their home country and grow across Europe. After gaining some traction in the primary HQ market, they then undertake the U.S. expansion.

This guide applies to both Israeli/Middle Eastern and European companies moving into the U.S., which will have many overlapping concerns.

AI update: More companies are launching their business with a sales presence on American soil from their earliest days of inception and a value proposition designed from day one for the United States. So founders will need to consider the timing question earlier than ever.

Using AI, research your business problem in the U.S. and current solutions available to solve it. Are you a first mover in defining a new space? Or are you bringing a new and innovative approach to a familiar problem? If you're a first mover in a new space, entering the U.S. market as part of company launch may be the right move, but you may need to alter your analysis—there is likely less data available about your pain points and customer case studies. If you've built a better mousetrap in an existing space, there is more data available to model against.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Is the best action to launch in the U.S. from day one, or build momentum in your primary country?

DEMAND

You've already raised money and started selling your product in Europe. As noted above, ensuring that your product solves global problems is the first item to validate. AI enables you to create scenarios to test this assumption. Test that your use cases transfer to the U.S. market and validate that your ICP and buyer are consistent with who buys in your primary country of business.

Traditionally, European companies entering North America have had lower brand recognition when making the move to the U.S. After creating their product, then they've turned their focus next to building sales momentum in their home market. But today's AI-forward companies are keen to move quickly. Companies are increasingly launching in the U.S. immediately, with no/low brand recognition in the U.S. This means demand will initially be shallow or nonexistent, unless you jump-start your marketing motion in the U.S. at launch.

Our previous guidance was that if sales and enablement was a bumpy cycle with low repeatability in your home country, you may want to re-think the timing of your U.S. expansion. (You can test this by looking back over your last two quarters of bookings and measuring if average sales price and average sales cycle in your primary market are consistent.) But today in the AI era, capturing the U.S. market is more important than ever. Think in terms of pre-emptive moves: Prepare by building your U.S. marketing plan ahead of your formal launch. Analyze your ICP and persona and build the marketing plan. Use AI for sentiment analysis and validate your product fit. A better move is to launch the marketing plan before the company itself to source pipeline to engage with potential buyers. Best yet: Land some customers prior to your formal launch to give you real-world experience, credibility and confidence that you can win in the U.S.

Opening your location in the U.S. will be costly and time consuming, maybe even a bit distracting from your HQ operations. Put yourself in the best position possible and build demand as fast as you can.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Do you have leading indicators that your solution has a buyer?
- Have you built pipeline for U.S.-based buyers?
- Do you currently have trial or paying customers in the U.S.?

HQ RESOURCES

Opening a new location takes a lot of energy and cycles. Is someone inside the company (not usually the CEO) prepared to own this initiative? If not, that can be another reason to question whether the timing is right. The CEO needs to be 100% supportive, or even the driver of the initiative, but specifically not the owner.

Normally this expansion would be owned by the head of revenue. It's critical to note that someone will need to own this daily, staying committed to transmitting your primary country processes into ones that work in the U.S. Be aware that if the head of revenue owns this, it can be distracting from their core geography where they close revenue currently.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

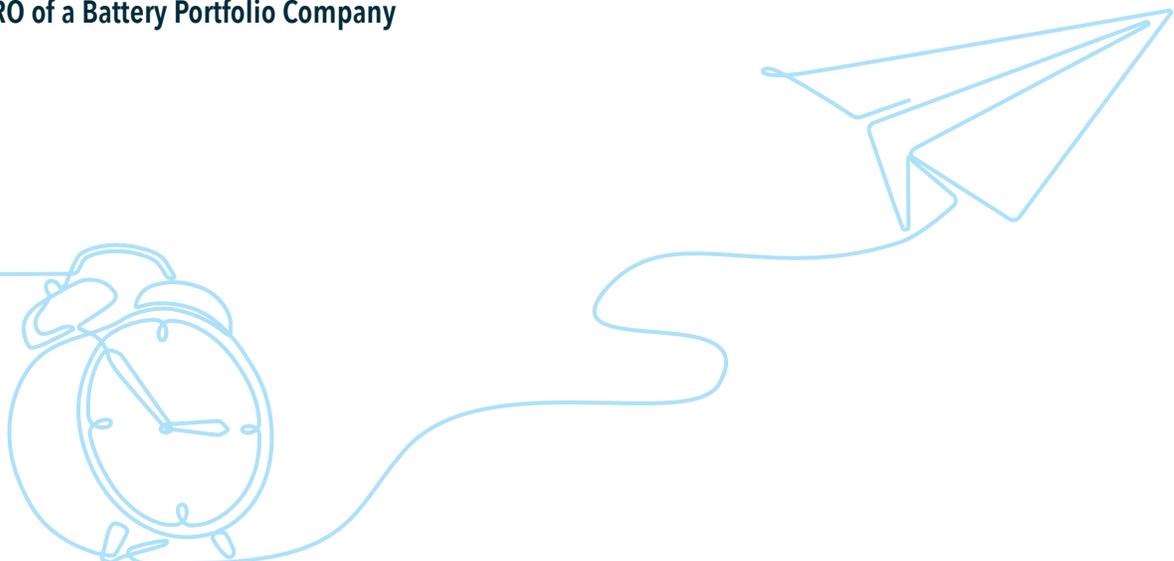
- Does your product solve a global problem, specifically in the U.S.?
- Can you export your primary country processes easily?
- Do you have someone at HQ assigned to own this initiative (who is not the CEO)?

AI ADDITION:

Use AI to build a project-management template. Create the dependencies, needed cross-functional support, plus timing/milestones for your expansion.

***"To conquer a new market isn't a one-hour-a-day job;
it's a 24-hour-a-day job."***

CRO of a Battery Portfolio Company





CENTRAL VS DECENTRALIZED MODEL

Before you open up in the U.S., you'll need to decide if you're aiming for 1) a central or decentralized location, and 2) an in-office or remote model. While we're framing these as two separate decisions, they're actually closely intertwined.

Before you select a U.S. HQ location for your business, you should determine your model. Are you going to centralize all your hires in a single location, or employ a more remote workforce? The benefits of the centralized model are concentrated learning and culture. It's harder to export your ways of doing things seamlessly when everyone is spread across locations.

Exacerbating this choice are work-from-home considerations. Even if you select a central location, are you going to mandate an in-office model? Typical models today require that team members work three or four days a week in office. This has implications in major commuter cities like New York and San Francisco.

Additionally, payroll and taxes in a decentralized model tend to be more complex, which we'll discuss in the legal section below.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Determine the city where your U.S. headquarters will be based.
- Plan whether you are centralizing all hires in a single U.S. city.
- Are you going with an in-office model or remote? If in-office, how many days per week?

AI ADDITION:

Preparing cost models by city is more easily accomplished today with AI. You can determine real estate costs, talent costs, taxes, benefits, et cetera with good accuracy.

Additionally, new AI platforms can accelerate both onboarding hires plus ongoing training and enablement. This aids the speed of ramping for new U.S. employees, plus helps with the transfer of culture.

ACTIVE BATTERY SOFTWARE COMPANIES THAT HAVE HOPPED THE POND

COMPANY	FOUNDED IN	NORTH AMERICA LOCATION
8fig	Tel Aviv, Israel	Austin, TX
AdaCore	Paris, France	New York, NY
BigPanda	Tel Aviv, Israel	Redwood City, CA
CHEQ	Tel Aviv, Israel	New York, NY
Collibra	Brussels, Belgium	New York, NY
Dataiku	Paris, France	New York, NY
Gong	Tel Aviv, Israel	San Francisco, CA
Guardsquare	Leuven, Belgium	Boston, MA
HiBob	Tel Aviv, Israel	New York, NY
HoneyBook	Tel Aviv, Israel	San Francisco, CA
hyperexponential	London, U.K.	New York, NY
imper.ai	Tel Aviv, Israel	New York, NY
Matillion	Manchester, U.K.	Denver, CO
Mews	Prague, Czech Republic	New York, NY
Nexite	Tel Aviv, Israel	Distributed in U.S.
Novidea	Netanya, Israel	Distributed in U.S.
Plain	London, U.K.	San Francisco, CA
Quantum Machines	Tel Aviv, Israel	Distributed in the U.S.
Quinyx	Stockholm, Sweden	Boston, MA
Shippeo	Paris, France	Chicago, IL
Titian (now Cenevo)	London, U.K.	Westborough, MA
VertiGIS	Munich, Germany	Victoria, British Columbia & Richmond, VA
Weaviate	Amsterdam, Netherlands	San Francisco, CA



LOCATION

Northeastern cities, such as Boston and New York, make logical sense for your U.S. expansion. Northeast time zones align best with European/Israeli companies, and there are more readily-available direct flights between the Northeast and the two regions. Most importantly, the Boston and New York markets are ripe with SaaS talent. While Boston and New York are expensive, for both real estate and people, the talent element often makes the extra cost worth it.

You could also consider the San Francisco Bay Area, which has an abundance of technical talent. However, unless you're looking to build out your AI development team, the costs of hiring and of real estate in the Bay Area are particularly high. Plus an additional downside: The time zone is three hours further behind NYC/Boston. Most expansions start with more of a go-to-market team, so consider that in your planning.

For your first office, it's likely you'll start in a shared space. You'll want to plan for 100 square feet per person in a coworking environment. If you choose to lease a dedicated office space, you'll likely need to plan 150-200 square feet per person. In tier-1 cities like Boston, New York and San Francisco, you can expect a high cost of price per square foot.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Boston and New York have the closest time zone for EMEA and great talent but are quite expensive.
- San Francisco has the best abundance of talent, particularly for technical AI skills, but is an additional three hours of time change from your HQ.
- **Note:** Your targeted industry or buyer could also influence location. For example, if you sell to energy customers, maybe Texas is the right location.

AI ADDITION:

Use AI to compare availability of role-specific talent, salaries and cost of living, as well as productivity assumptions. You can also model competitor locations and where their customer base is located to inform your location decision.

Also, if your primary R&D team is based in Europe and you plan to hire developers in the new U.S. location, consider how the time difference will impact engineering velocity, customer support and service level agreements (SLAs).



LEGAL ENTITY

Historically, most European companies moving to the U.S. would pick one city and form their legal entity there. That model is still logical if you're opting for an in-person, central-location model. Under this model, you incorporate your business in a specific state to create an EIN (Employer Identification Number) for tax purposes, fund your bank accounts and sign up for a health-benefits provider. You'll also need localized help with accounting and taxes. This process normally takes four to 12 weeks.

The last few years have given rise to the "employer of record" (EOR) model, designed for remote and decentralized teams. Companies like Deel, Papaya Global and OysterHR have grown based on this business trend by providing services to help companies expanding to the U.S. with hiring, payroll and benefits across multiple geographies. This model offers advantages for speed, but can become costly as you grow (EORs are software subscriptions plus fees for payroll and expenses).



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- In the AI age, you will still need to establish your legal entity, bank accounts and benefits provider in one geographic area.

AI ADDITION:

AI legal assistants and apps can automate entity creation, review your incorporation details, help you determine state/city regulations, plus help with predicting tax implications. You can also compare the EOR model versus the traditional model for costs over three to five years.

SPOTLIGHT:

HiBob*

New AI-native HR platforms can help with your expansion into the U.S. Battery portfolio company HiBob is a core HR platform that assists with onboarding, workflows, payroll, performance management and compensation, enabling your company to operate efficiently and quickly. HiBob also includes AI automations for compensation planning, policy and compliance management and streamlining your HR processes.



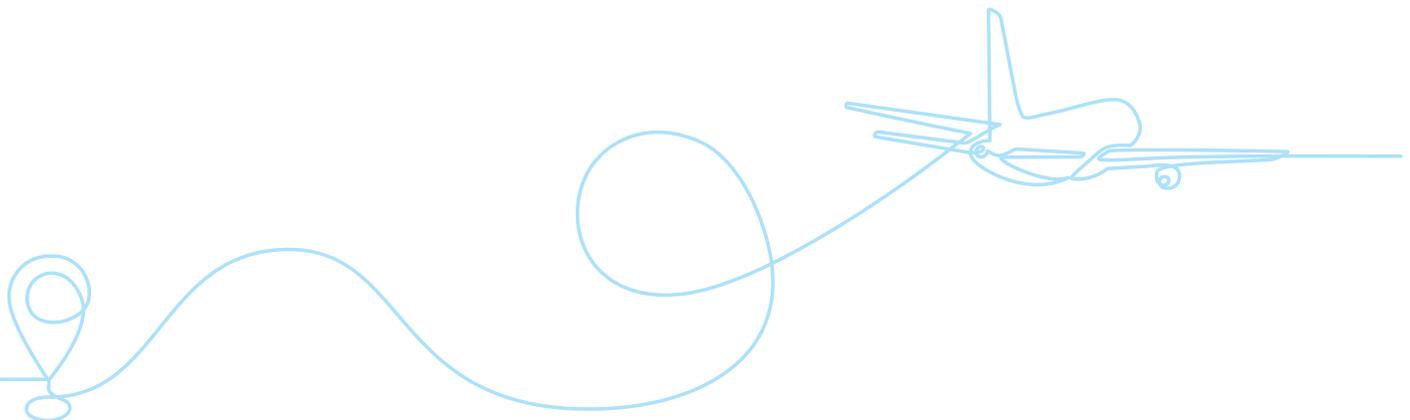


VISAS

The biggest change from our 2023 version of this guide has been in obtaining visas for your employees that are transferring to the U.S. For employees who will transfer to the U.S., you'll need to obtain non-immigrant work visas. This process has gotten significantly more difficult in recent years. New policies initiated in 2025 have created a more stringent vetting process for applicants. When approved, the length of the work term has reduced, in some cases from five years to 18 months. You'll also need to pay additional fees for the process, making it more expensive than in previous years. Meanwhile demand has remained high, with a backlog for H-1B visas as the cap for these visas remains fixed. In recent years over 500,000 registrations have competed for just 85,000 slots.

The process and cost for visas will depend on the country you are coming from. Employees moving from the U.K. will likely need to obtain an L-1 or H-1B visa to work in the U.S. There is a new mandatory fee of \$100,000 per person to obtain the visa. The process time for obtaining an H-1B as of this writing is four to five months, though you can pay additional fees to expedite the processing time. The H-1B visa is still valid for three years and may be extended after that. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) is still available for employees coming for less than 90 days, which permits U.K. citizens to work without obtaining a visa.

For Israeli citizens, there is a 90-day program called the Electronic System for Travel Authorization that Israeli citizens can obtain quickly. For stays over 90 days, the H-1B visa program described applies as well, including the \$100,000 fee.





KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

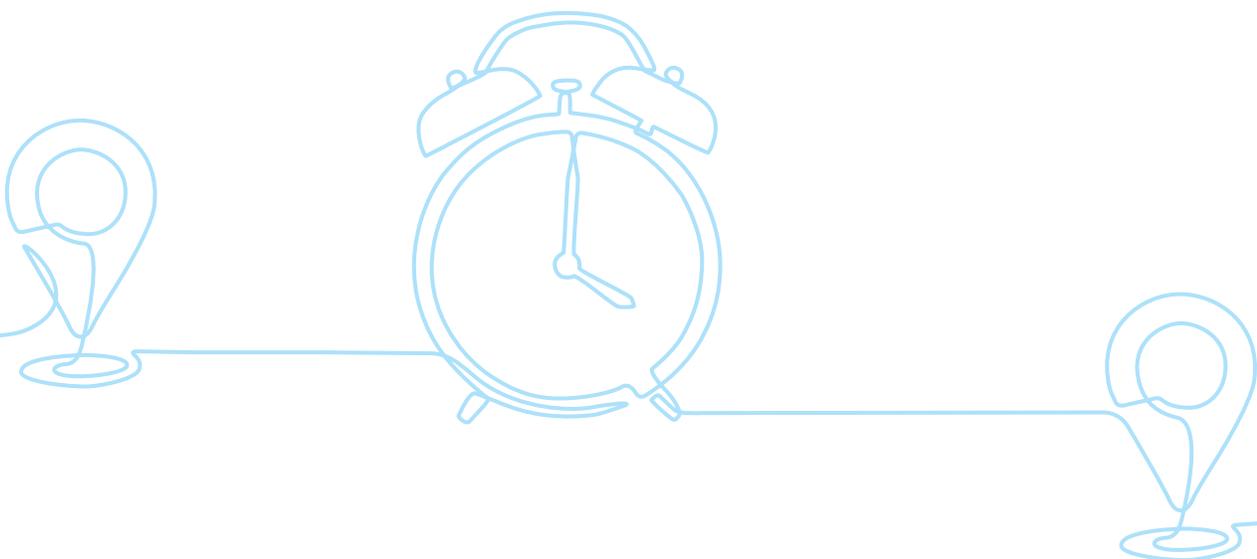
- The cost of visas will cause you to think about the number of people you want to bring to the U.S. And you must demonstrate to authorities that the role you're bringing here are specialized roles.
- Visas take time and money, so when you initiate your expansion, navigating the visa process should be a top priority.
- Have you secured legal counsel to help guide you through the process? Or a professional service to help walk through the process?

AI ADDITION:

AI significantly helps navigate the complex process of obtaining a visa. It can identify the necessary forms, verify you've completed the necessary documents, and advise on the processing times and costs required by country. Tools like Sherpa (joinsherpa.com) help maximize the speed of approval, so leverage them.

"Having a killer operational person handle legal, payroll, visas et cetera was instrumental to our speed in setting up the operation."

Battery Portfolio Executive





ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

You'll want to decide what your team structure will look like in North America. As mentioned above, you'll want someone at your primary location HQ to oversee the international expansion. But you should also decide who the "on-the-ground" leader in the U.S. will be.

There are a few models to consider:

Option one is to hire a U.S.-based managing director (MD)/general manager (GM), with all U.S.-based roles reporting directly to this person. This model is the most efficient for decision-making, but also risky in that the MD/GM is still learning your company processes and ways of doing things, so you'll want to ensure that HQ culture and process transfer seamlessly via this executive. Delegating direct-line functional ownership is a common model, so confirm that your MD/GM has 1) owned functions other than sales before and 2) has participated with the expansion of a non-U.S. based entity previously.



PRO: Senior-level leadership with authority to make decisions



CON: Expensive

Another option is to hire the U.S.-based MD/GM with only sales reporting directly to that executive, and other functions directly back to the functional leader at HQ. Under this model, the sales function reports to the U.S.-based MD/GM but the other functions are dotted-line, meaning for hire/fire and budget purposes, they report back to their boss at HQ. A key advantage of this model is the functional leader at HQ is responsible for knowledge transfer and performance in the new U.S. geography. The downside is this model tends to disempower the MD/GM, can slow down decision-making and might become difficult to manage.



PRO: Focused on sales only and not as expensive as the full GM model



CON: Non-sales role confusion. Employees reporting outside of sales will be tempted to ask: "Who do I ask for help from: the senior person physically near me and on my time zone or the person 5-11 hours away?"

Yet another option is hiring your first and only revenue leader immediately in the U.S. Some companies start their operation in Europe or the Middle East but choose to make their CRO hire based in America. You'll need to contemplate your structure again: Will this role own sales only, or will they also lead marketing and customer success support? Who runs sales in Europe and the Middle East?

✓ **PRO:** Commitment to sales in the U.S. from day 1

✗ **CON:** The sales leader starts remote from HQ and the rest of the executive team. This can pose cultural challenges. Plus it forces the question: Who focuses on the HQ country sales?

A less-popular option is having functional employees located in the U.S. (sales reps) with their manager based back in the HQ country. We would not recommend this approach for a couple of reasons. First, this model strongly suggests you are not making a commitment to your expansion; you're simply testing the waters.

And second, in our experience that lack of commitment will eventually show through, in underperformance. The other matter is whether your MD/GM will be recruited in North America or shipped over from your primary country. The most common approach is to hire someone who lives in the United States already and knows U.S.-based selling models thoroughly. Some companies combine the best of both approaches: Namely, they hire a local leader and then send someone over to serve as the emissary for the company's culture and processes. More on that in the employee transfers section below.

✓ **PRO:** The European-based exec likely knows how to get things done quickly, knows the product and value proposition and can break down barriers

✗ **CON:** This exec is not on the ground in the U.S which makes effectiveness more difficult. Constant travel will also wear this person down



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Who leads your expansion team in the U.S.?
- What functions do they own versus not own?
- Do you hire your GM/MD in the U.S., or do you send someone over from your HQ org?

AI ADDITION:

Aside from modeling costs of this decision, AI can help you simulate sales growth and test your assumptions into the future. More resources and a more focused team on the ground tend to lead to faster revenue production.

"Expanding to the global remit was massive."

Battery Portfolio Company Executive





EMPLOYEE TRANSFERS

When launching your expansion business in the U.S., it's wise to consider sending a few current employees over to help. First, they bring expertise on how to do things under your existing business processes. Second, they serve as cultural ambassadors and can help transfer the culture you've established in your HQ company.

Transfers tend to be a critical function to your success, and you'll need to select which roles move over. The most common roles to transfer are sales AEs and customer success reps. These are the two heaviest customer-touch roles, so it makes sense that you send over people who have proved successful in your home country. AEs need to be based in the expansion country to stay responsive, speak the language and be able to meet customers in person if needed. Sales engineers are also at the top of the list of potential initial transfers.

While thinking through the transfers, you will also want a local, U.S.-based team on the ground complementing the transferred hires—more on that below in the Sales & Customer Success section.

Marketing roles are so critical that we've created a dedicated section on that below.

Another model that has gained some popularity is moving a senior sales leader from HQ and having this person report to your MD who's from the U.S. Under this model, the MD is a more senior executive who oversees the overall expansion and performance. They understand the U.S. market, have a local rolodex of useful contacts and have experience selling into your persona/ideal customer profile (ICP) in the U.S. The senior sales leader is complementary, bringing the well-rounded knowledge of all areas of your sales cycle—qualify, demo, value selling and negotiation and close. This model is obviously more expensive and may be better aligned with later-stage companies making the move to America. But the benefit is that a senior sales leader knows your sales motion and typically understands the marketing-to-sales handoff, as well as the interlock between sales and customer success. This role often is time-bound, with the exec coming for six or 12 months.

One last consideration on this topic is backfills. We asked a Battery portfolio company that expanded into the U.S.: If you did it over again, what would you do differently? They moved a senior sales executive from the U.K. to the U.S., but they wished they'd backfilled his position asap. The gap it left with his exit from the U.K. was noticeable and they wished they'd anticipated that gap more carefully.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- What roles and how many people will move to the U.S. from your HQ?
- What level of seniority will move over?
- What do you plan to offer in terms of relocation packages and assistance?

AI ADDITION:

The purpose of moving people for HQ to the new location is to bring tribal knowledge—product positioning, customer stories, internal workflow and rules. AI can assist in that transmission by training agents to share this data, and even perform some tasks like advising on business rules, customer case studies and the ROI delivered to customers, as well as helping with technical questions on your product etc.





MARKETING

Continuing the employee-transfer discussion, when a company moves from the U.S. to Europe, their first “boots on the ground” are normally sales and customer success personnel. Marketing seldom makes the first round of people hired/transferred, as your brand has probably earned you some U.S. customers as well as some U.S. reference accounts.

But in moving in the opposite direction—from Europe/Israel to the U.S.—marketing should be factored into the first round. The U.S. market is so big that it’s likely your brand presence in the U.S. is much lower than in Europe/Middle East, so creating early momentum is critical.

The marketing role will need to be a hybrid of some of your HQ positions. The marketing liaison needs to be able to perform demand generation, execute events and perform PR work. AI can assist prior to making the actual entry to the U.S. market. You can test variations of your messaging, identify the best buyer segments, test your value propositions, pricing and positioning ahead of being on the ground.

Prior to arrival, you also can begin any digital-marketing programs, plus attend trade shows or events (with people traveling from your HQ country to attend). These efforts will validate your product fit into the current market and help you secure your initial U.S.-based reference customers.

Since you tested your positioning and messaging, you can start creating awareness around your product or services by utilizing social media, LinkedIn and Google Ads. Traditionally, focusing on the right keywords and organic ranking efforts was the go-to model—particularly as it relates to the competitive environment you may find in the States. With AI, companies are striving to focus on AEO (answer engine optimization) for your company/product. To achieve higher chances of AEO, you’ll want to structure your content into a concise Q&A format, answer those questions with specific answers of less than 160 characters, and build a data schema to make your content data machine-readable. Research the E-E-A-T (experience, expertise, authority, and trustworthiness) model for how you produce your content.

Localizing your branding is important too. We discuss this below in the translations and personalization section.

Lastly, you may need to adjust your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) for selling into the U.S. As mentioned in previous sections, AI makes persona and ICP analysis a bit easier to perform.

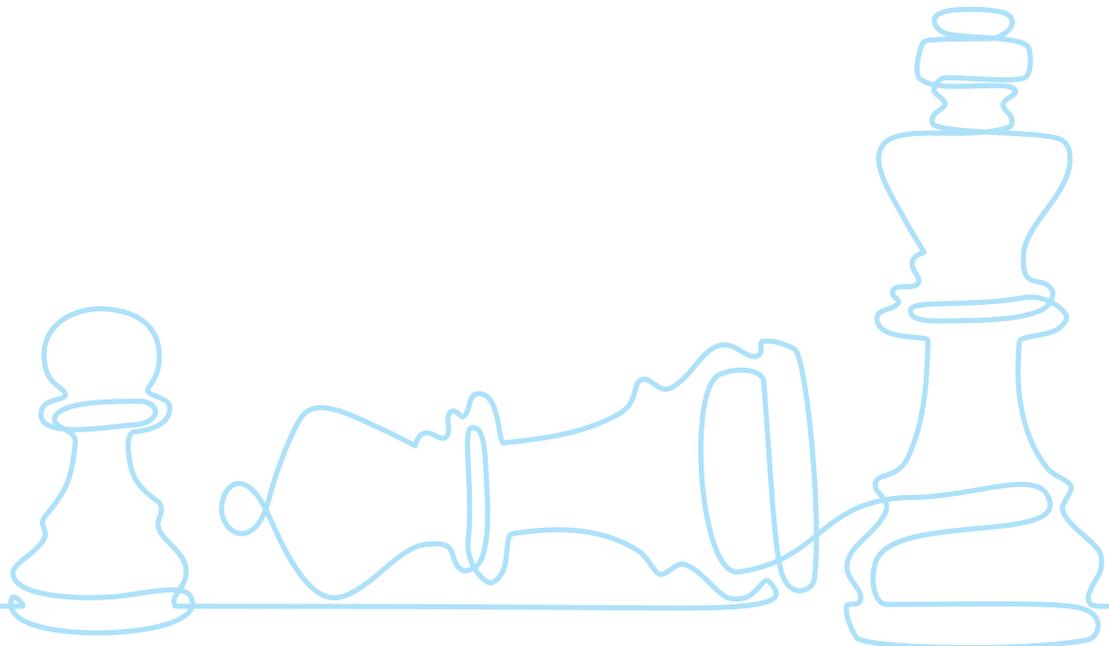


KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- What’s your marketing program today, and how transferable is it to the U.S.?
- Do you have any lead flow and pipeline in the U.S. to jump-start your salespeople?
- Have you localized your pricing?

AI ADDITION:

- Have you trained your model on the current AI models to optimize for AEO?
- Adjust for American preferences—direct, fast and persistent communication.





SALES & CUSTOMER SUCCESS

After your initial land team is established, the early roles typically hired in the U.S. are sales, SDRs and customer success. These roles will oversee the transfer of your current company methods, processes and culture. We discuss rotations below, but the critical step before planning rotations is to have your key U.S.-based hires onboard. A best practice is hiring a U.S.-based salesperson to complement your EMEA transfers. Likewise, you'll want to do the same with customer success. Having a U.S.-based sales or customer success person working alongside your transferred team is a great recipe for success.

Customer success (CS) is critical in making sure your early, U.S.-based customers are successful, especially if your product requires any type of implementation. Customers will want to work with an enablement person in their time zone who speaks their language. Lastly, technical support is a common role to export as well. Lastly, most companies hire their SDRs solely in the United States, meaning they don't transfer this role from their primary country.

For one Battery portfolio company that moved from Europe to the U.S., the team build-out was a huge time commitment. Being new to the U.S. market, they needed to re-calibrate their job specifications, work with recruiters to find candidates, perform the interviews, hire, train and then start selling...all while keeping the lights on back in Europe. Don't underestimate the effort involved in expanding...you need to mind and grow the current business while expanding in the U.S.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Balance your landing team with U.S.-based hires in sales, customer success and SDRs.

AI ADDITION:

Most companies now utilize call recording software like Gong*. These tools are incredibly helpful for transferring your sales playbook successfully to a new region. If you have recorded calls, try to organize them into logical sections of the sales stage: qualification calls, demo calls, pricing/value calls, negotiation calls and closing calls. Once landed on the ground, continue utilizing these tools to analyze patterns, win/loss patterns and objection overcoming.

For SDRs, AI-powered tools like Gong* and Unify* can help with personalized outreach.

For customer success, AI tools like Pendo* and Plain* can monitor customer usage patterns, anticipate churn risk and help predict expansions.



ROTATIONS

Many companies launch their U.S. business and plan a parade of executives to visit. This is indeed helpful as an opening gesture, and we encourage you to do this. But there is a better rotation program to implement longer-term.

Sending execs is helpful, but these trips tend to be one-off, short trips lasting only a week or so. We encourage you to schedule these trips and share the calendar well ahead of time, so your different execs work from the U.S., help transfer knowledge and build bonds with your U.S.-based team.

Consider a rotation plan as well. In a rotation plan, you send people in key roles to the U.S. for month-long rotations there. If your goal is to bring your culture, processes and know-how to the States, this is an outstanding way to embed these skills. Common roles for rotations include marketing, sales reps, revenue operations, finance, customer success and technical support. The best practice is to build a calendar and create the rotation schedule for all the roles you are bringing over. AI will aid in your knowledge transfer too.

Aside from the high level of commitment this demonstrates, this practice also creates true bonds between your HQ team and the expansion team. The people who volunteer to go over grow professionally and develop—many may have never visited the U.S. or a particular state before. The people on rotation benefit by creating personal relationships, which makes them more invested in helping the U.S.-based business thrive when they return to HQ. In turn, the U.S. team develops new professional and personal relationships and gains greater ability to reach out to HQ when they need assistance.

This guide doesn't include a dedicated section for cultural management, but we recognize it's a rich area of discussion for companies that have made the move. Frequently mentioned issues are hiring misfires, people management, iteration of the value proposition, and time demands if managing sales teams in Europe and the U.S. simultaneously. Battery stands ready to explore these issues in tailored conversations with our portfolio companies.

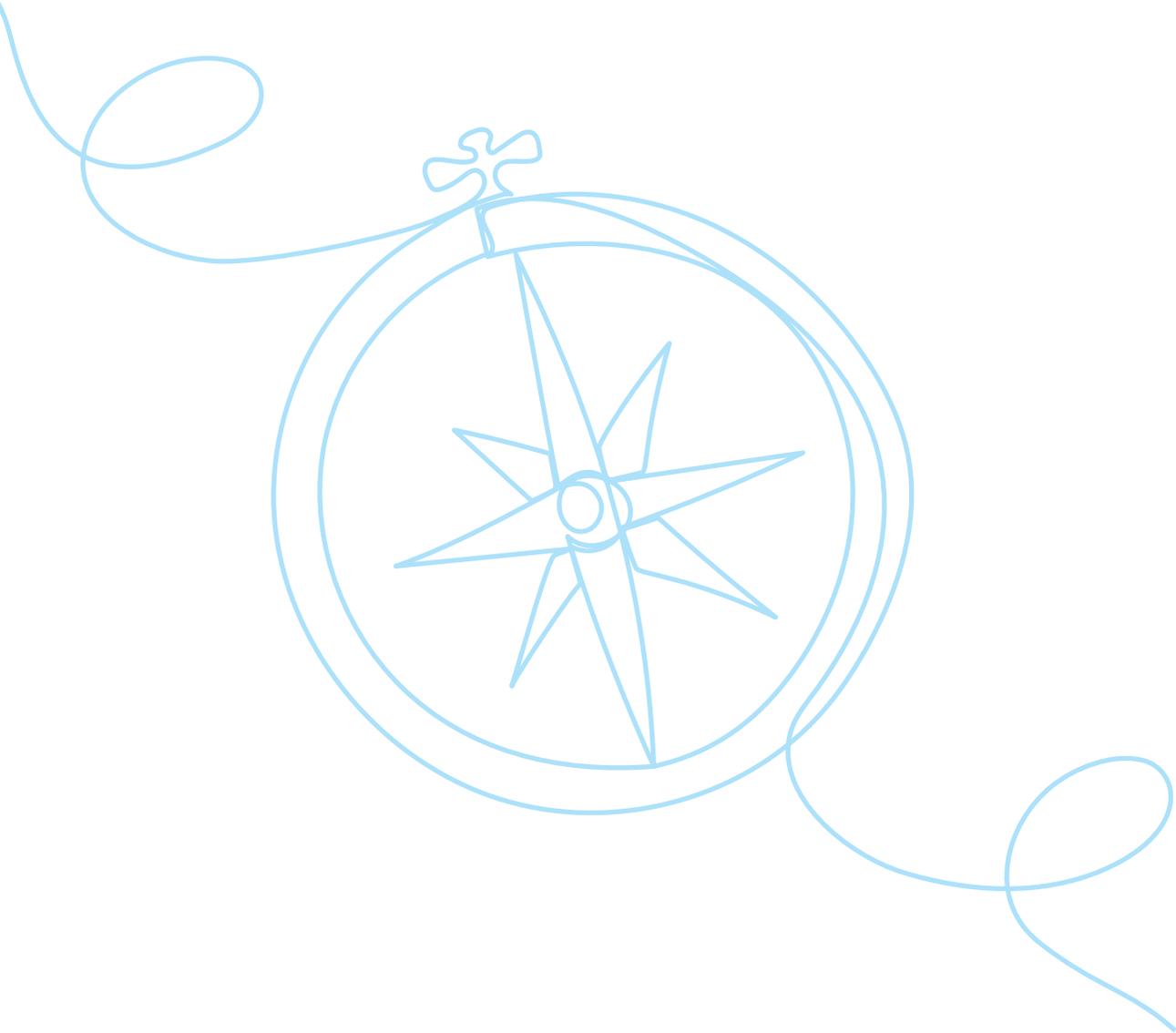


KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Executive trips to the U.S. are a good best practice.
- Better best practice is to rotate key roles over to the U.S. on monthly cycles.

AI ADDITION:

Previously in this guide we've talked about some tools that help bring process and knowledge to your newly formed teams. Take advantage of the many SaaS/AI tools that support enablement and onboarding as well, like HiBob*, Gong*, and Letter.ai*.





COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

The United States is a dense and highly competitive market. Chances are good there's an unknown company (i.e., one not listed on a Gartner quadrant) in the U.S. already offering a product similar to yours. You should expect to encounter competition from established, larger players as well as smaller startups.

In the pre-AI days, this fact seemed discouraging and required a lot of research to overcome. But AI accelerates that research and helps you figure out effective solutions fast. Specifically it opens up the ability to pressure-test that your product solves a real problem, contemplate who the ICP and buying personas are, the use cases your solution can be applied to, plus look at the competition, their value props, their differentiation and their brand strength.

AI can also help you with the crucial task of fine-tuning your marketing and sales pitch to find your niche. Being able to articulate a key differentiator and the value it provides to the buyer remains critical.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Do you offer a key differentiator, more breadth or an industry focus that's new to the U.S. market? Chances are there's an unknown company in the U.S. offering a similar product, so you'll need to dig deeper to differentiate your value.

AI ADDITION:

Previously in this guide we've talked about some tools that help bring process and knowledge to your newly formed teams. Take advantage of the many SaaS/AI tools that support enablement and onboarding as well, like HiBob*, Gong*, and Letter.ai*.



TRANSLATIONS & PERSONALIZATIONS

If you're thinking about expanding to the U.S., it's likely that you developed your product in English. We'll make that assumption here.

But in addition to your product, you need to think about your sales materials, advertising, website and product documentation. Have these materials all been translated and localized to the U.S. market too? Specifically, your materials should reflect American English...there is a difference between *organisation* and *organization*.

"Selling to the U.S. insurance vertical, there was a difference in vernacular; the U.K. had 'rating,' the U.S. used 'pricing.'" We had to learn and adjust our message across many items like this one."

Battery Portfolio Executive

The most critical component is your website and getting it localized for the U.S. market. It's hard to imagine, but we've seen B2B companies based, say, in Germany that simply used the main, German-language site for U.S. buyers as well. The user lands on the site and probably has to click a button to translate the language from German to English. Next, they see all German/European-based companies as the typical customer base. That buyer is likely to be turned off, as the website will look to them like that of a German company with no meaningful commitment to the U.S. market.

Hard to imagine that today with AI, but we still see it. All kinds of doubtful questions leap to the prospect's mind: Will we need to speak with a sales rep whose time zone is five to six hours ahead of us? Where do implementations happen? Are this vendor's customers all based in Europe? What other needs of a U.S.-based buyer are they unprepared to meet?

Your website *needs* to be personalized. If you don't have any U.S.-based company logos as customers, your entry into the U.S. will be bumpy. So ensure that your website is localized when an American buyer visits your site. It's also worth featuring your U.S.-based office address and contact info on your site's "About" section, as this will instill confidence that you've truly entered the U.S. market.

Next, your product demo and sales collateral should be updated. Test these with native English speakers to be sure they are well translated. Your marketing plan likely includes digital strategy, so you'll want to localize and translate keywords, for your digital ads and SEO as well. Lastly, it's not enough to translate only your product into English. Your product documentation must also be available in English.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Your product must be in English!
- Adapt messaging for tone and jargon to align to the U.S market.
- Website, sales material, advertising and product documentation must all be localized.

SPOTLIGHT:

Smartling & Madcap Software**

Battery has two companies that can help you with translation and localization. Smartling is a company that professionally translates and localizes websites, product, advertising and other materials. Madcap Software offers solutions to create, manage and publish documentation, policy and procedures, instruction manuals and similar for both employees and customers.





REGULATIONS & SECURITY

If you've developed your product in Europe or Israel, we'll assume you are already GDPR-compliant—otherwise you are not ready to move to the U.S. GDPR is effectively a global standard that's strict enough to adequately cover the U.S. market's looser privacy and security rules. That said, the United States does have standards for security that vary by region or industry, like the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for healthcare companies.

In addition to GDPR, you'll need to consider system and organization controls (SOC) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certifications, especially if you are selling to enterprise customers.

Talk to your investors and board to source relevant experts and ensure compliance with these regulations. These issues are critical to get right, as failing to comply with these laws could open your company up to lawsuits and literally make or break your company.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- If your company is compliant in the E.U., then you should be good in the U.S., but pay attention to nuances like CCPA.
- Have you certified your product to sell successfully into the U.S., specifically if you're pursuing enterprise buyers (SOC2, ISO levels)?
- Are you factoring in industry-specific needs (e.g. HIPAA for healthcare, FedRamp for the U.S. federal government)?

AI ADDITION:

AI compliance platforms are available to generate SOC2 documentation, monitor for security and ensure adherence to U.S. regulations. AI can also reduce manual work in compiling documentation for certifying for regulatory filings.



DATA LOCATION

Traditionally customers asked if your data centers, and therefore their data, were based in the U.S. It's likely your initial data center is located back in your HQ country, so this could be a blocker to a sale in the U.S., especially if you're selling to regulated industries like healthcare or financial services. And most enterprise companies will also make this a requirement to sell to them. Today, the nature of the data you're collecting, the types of customers you have and the local laws of the jurisdiction really drive your data center strategy. While performance is likely your first priority with your data center location, the advancement of hybrid and edge computing models make being a global provider easier.

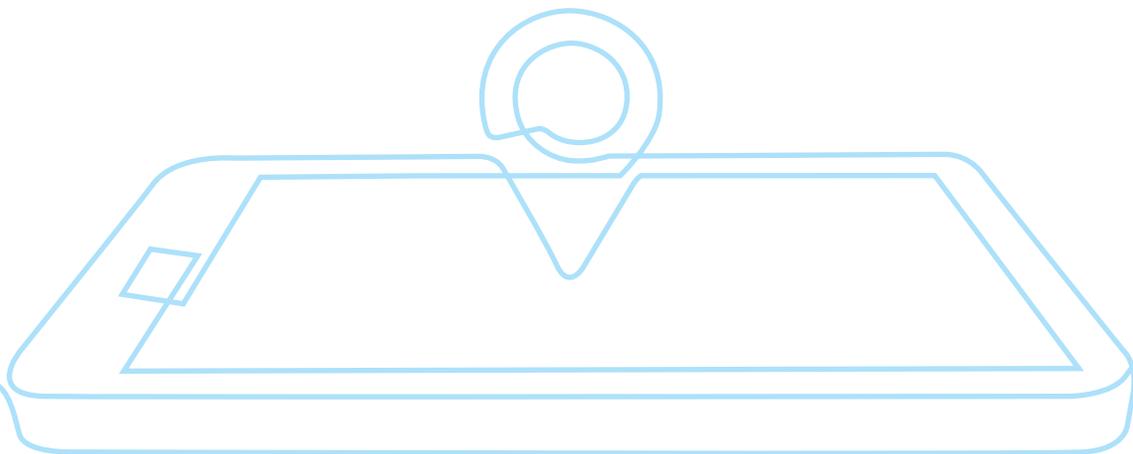


KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Is your cloud data center provider a global operator, with servers based in the U.S?

AI ADDITION:

Use AI to simulate your typical buyer and their needs regarding data location & security.





INTERNAL TOOLING

With teams based in two countries, keeping data synced is important. Using off-the-shelf AI tools, we saw Battery portfolio companies collect change logs, summarize important data that gets shared across teams, and do modeling across the orgs. AI helped these companies close the time zone barrier and work more in unison.

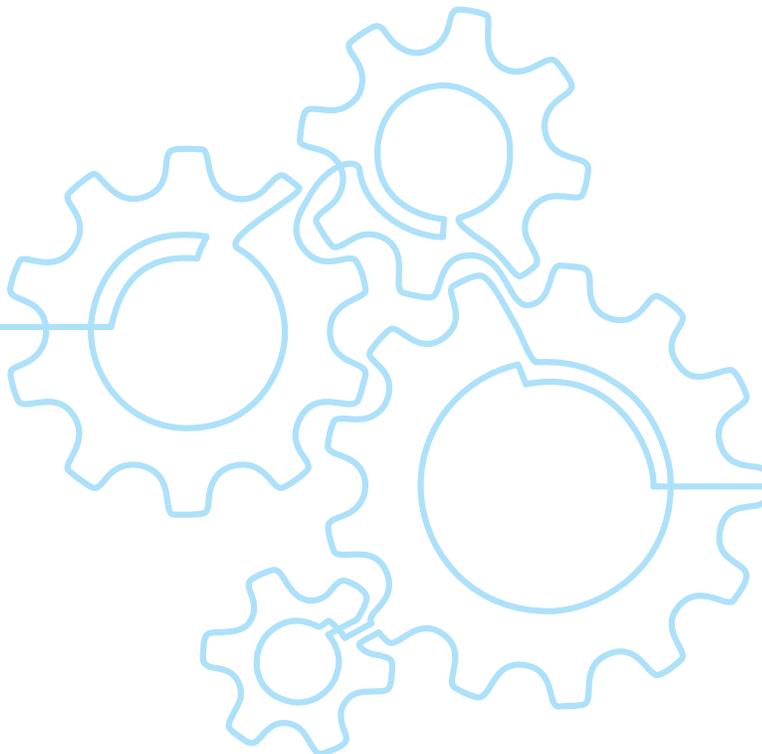
"I think the most overlooked area around AI is building internal tooling."

Battery Portfolio Executive



AI ADDITION:

As mentioned previously, using AI you can do modeling, planning, and create multiple scenarios. Don't forget that data is critical to keep unified inside your organization.





BUDGET

Estimating the cost of entering the U.S. market is difficult, but we can itemize several key areas your budget should include:

- Real estate/coworking space
- Salaries and benefits
- Travel between HQ and expansion city: airfare, hotels, meals
- Cloud-hosting fees (if provisioning a data center in the U.S.)
- Legal fees: entity creation, visas
- Marketing: SEO, demand generation, events and press
- Relocation costs: visas, legal, taxation, moving expenses



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Plan your budget as well as your payback period.
- Have you obtained board buy-in to the expansion plan?

AI ADDITION:

Using AI, you can quickly create sophisticated financial models to pressure-test your company's move to the U.S. You can role-play many scenarios: different headcount, locations, productivity assumptions, marketing investments. Plus you can model in cost of living, ability to hire and even currency fluctuations into your planning cycle.



MILESTONES

Building your team, making some sales and building your reputation in the U.S. will all take time. Many companies build a bookings/revenue model and only measure against that. We'd caution you against making this your only metric, because almost every company that expands to the U.S. initially runs behind against their budget. You don't want to pull the plug too early due to impatience.

AI can help you in building the plan, the budget and the project timelines realistically. We encourage you to add some additional milestones to measure success. These should be pegged against timelines.

Some early-stage milestones include prospect meetings and demos and trials (if applicable). These are all leading indicators good to measure for predicting growth. Once you achieve some good activity, measuring new logos, customers in production, the number of customer case studies published and the number of references secured are all good metrics to gauge continued success.

At that point, you'll also want to monitor the traditional financial metrics too, like customer bookings, employees hired, et cetera.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Measure timelines against leading (meetings, demos, pipeline) and lagging startup milestones (e.g., win rates, logo acquisition).

AI ADDITION:

AI analytics tools can track leading indicators—buyer intent spikes, conversion-rate changes, product usage patterns, churn risk, pipeline quality—and correlate them with eventual bookings outcomes.



EXPERTS AROUND THE TABLE

U.S.-based investors and advisors are critical to your success. Local connections are obviously important as well, such as recruiters, real estate brokers and attorneys. These local experts will have valuable experience with other companies that have set up U.S. operations successfully, which can help you save time and money.

More important, though, is market-specific advice. Your investors and board members can help you think through segmentation, industry verticals, key events and how you approach your U.S.-based buyer.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Can you leverage experience from your investors and board in helping your company make this move?

AI ADDITION:

Using AI you can crunch thousands of data points about industry research, competitors, pricing and packaging changes, as well as product launches to support your decision making.





CONCLUSION

Don't mistake the light-hearted name of this guide, "Hop the Pond". Entering the U.S. market successfully entails a ton of hard work and detailed planning. A lot of decisions go into opening a new geography for your company. Once that decision is made, it'll require much detailed planning and effort to realize your vision.

Our goal was to update this guide to incorporate the impact that AI technology can have. While the core challenges of U.S. expansion remain the same, AI now provides an unprecedented advantage: faster market intelligence, better operational planning, deeper customer insights and more scalable processes. Companies that incorporate AI into every stage of expansion—from market validation to hiring to GTM execution—are proving able to enter the U.S. more efficiently and with greater confidence.

We hope this brief guide and accompanying checklist helps you ask the right questions about optimal timing, structure and other considerations. While this guidance is intentionally high-level, we at Battery Ventures are more than happy to help you tailor this advice to your specific company and expansion goals. Don't hesitate to reach out to me directly.

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