The New Globetrotters:
Watch the Women Entrepreneurs in the 21st Century

by Laurel J. Delaney, Founder
GlobeTrade.com
October, 2002
# The New Globetrotters:
*Watch the Women Entrepreneurs in the 21st Century*

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OVERVIEW

This study presents an overview of Laurel Delaney’s work in the area of women in international entrepreneurship. It is adapted, in part, from a book Ms. Delaney is currently working on, “Women Entrepreneurs Take On The World, Not For Women Only.” Several topics in the work of Laurel Delaney are presented: the potential of entrepreneurs in the global marketplace, which enterprises are going global, what are the incentives, how does one begin, where do you conduct market research, what interpersonal habits are needed, and what steps, can be taken to conquer the world. She elaborates on what it takes to develop a global entrepreneurial mindset and it is at this juncture where she apportions the true depth of her knowledge in the field of global entrepreneurship.
EXECUTIVE AND COMPANY SUMMARY

About Laurel Delaney
Laurel Delaney, MBA, is a renowned global small business expert and founder of Global TradeSource, Ltd., a global marketing, consulting and web content providing company. She serves on the Illinois Board of Higher Education International Education Industry Advisory Council, private sector, and on the board of Illinois Center for International Business and Education and Research (CIBER). In addition, she is a member of the International Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, a recipient of SBA’s “Exporter of the Year” award and has written “Start and Run a Profitable Exporting Business” (Self-Counsel Press Inc.) which offers savvy yet practical global marketing information.

About GlobeTrade.com
GlobeTrade.com is the online arm of Global TradeSource, Ltd., fostering education by providing tools and resources to help entrepreneurs and small businesses go global.

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• Small Business Survival Committee

SBSC is a national, nonprofit small business advocacy organization with 70,000 members nationwide.

Small Business Survival Committee
1920 L Street N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036 U.S.A.
www.sbsc.org
• The International Import-Export Institute

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• Women Entrepreneurs Inc.

Women Entrepreneurs Inc. is a nonprofit association that works to promote economic opportunity and a healthy business climate for women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship through advocacy, networking and educational forums.

Women Entrepreneurs Inc.
P.O. Box 367
Oakton, Virginia  22124  U.S.A.
www.we-inc.org
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In my research, I have found that two significant business developments are taking place in the global economy of the 21st century. One is the explosion of women-owned businesses (Jalbert, 2000). The second is international trade (Jalbert, 2000). Putting these two business developments together creates a powerful force with which to reckon. This force contributes to economic growth, development and prosperity in our world. These imperatives are producing a new business dynamic around the world (Taylor & Webber, 1996). I strongly believe the timing has never been better for businesswomen to get out of their own backyards and transition from local, regional or niche-market-players into global players. It is my desire through my work to become a resource, strength and a supportive place for professional women to ensure they stand out as much needed role models for what it takes to go forward, venture and succeed (Ericksen & Ernst & Young LLP, 1999). If a businesswoman sees that the important people in her life believe in her idea, then that person begins to believe more strongly in herself (Anna, Chandler, Jansen & Mero, 2000). I yearn for all companies to become more aware of their human capital, especially women, and to recognize their contribution to the world of business. This ensures that no (wo)man feels left out as she develops a clear sense of her own capabilities (Kuemmerle, 2002) and works toward living life on her own terms.
The Potential is Infinite

Today, women are starting businesses at twice the rate of men and becoming major forces both in the traditional and the new global e-business marketplace (Cheskin Research, 2000). A snapshot of the facts indicates women make up half of the world’s human resources. There are 9.1 million women-owned American businesses alone, employing over 27.5 million people and contributing nearly $4 trillion in sales annually to the economy (Smilor, 2001). These businesses are increasing at a rate that is nearly twice that of the national average (Center for Women’s Business Research, 2001). Over one in 18 adult women in the U.S., or 5.7%, is a business owner (Center for Women’s Business Research, 2002). There is perhaps no greater initiative a country can take to accelerate its pace of entrepreneurial activity than to encourage more of its women to participate (Autio, Bygrave, Camp, Hay & Reynolds, 2001). Furthermore, observations have been made that American women are just as capable as men in the world of business (Axtell, 1993).

Between one-quarter and one-third of the world’s businesses are owned by women. In fact, according to the Small Business Administration, the number of women-owned businesses increased 90 percent in the last decade. Further, small firms with fewer than 10 people, tend to hire more women than larger firms (Korn/Ferry International, 2001). Currently, only about 13-15 percent of women-owned businesses are involved in the global marketplace, despite the fact that the global market presents a huge opportunity for women to advance their careers and impact the world of business (Barnett, 2000; Department of Labor, 2002). Even women in corporate America understand the importance of global trade. In a Catalyst survey, 41 percent of Fortune 1000 CEOs named international experience an important factor for advancement to senior management (Catalyst, 2000).
Just like myself, some women business owners are already participating in the global marketplace. In fact, women account for 30 percent of the businesses that export more than half of their products, and their potential to impact the worldwide market has not gone unnoticed (Center for Women’s Business Research, 1995).

“Women-owned firms participating in the global marketplace grow more rapidly than women-owned businesses that are primarily domestic,” former Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator, Aida Alvarez said. “They are more apt to develop a new product or service and expand domestically. At the SBA, we have several programs in place to help women-owned businesses take advantage of the outstanding opportunities available through international trade.”

Who is Going Global?

In a statistical report released last year, the U.S. SBA Office of International Trade indicated that “America’s small businesses are big players in international trade, and their role is growing rapidly.” Export data analysis shows that 97 percent of U.S. companies that export are small businesses (Keating, 2001) and women own 40 percent of all small businesses (OECD, 2000).

Other studies I have examined also make the case for small businesses and women-owned businesses as exporters. Consider, for instance, a case study regarding successful public and private initiatives for fostering entrepreneurship among women that was prepared by the National Women’s Council’s Interagency Committee on Women’s Business Enterprise for the 2000 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference (OECD, 2000). That study
noted the significant role women have played in recent economic prosperity and affirmed the fact that “countries with high levels of economic activity and with the highest start-up business rates are the ones where women are well-engaged in entrepreneurial activity.” The authors also noted that small businesses owned by women and minorities are focusing more intense efforts on exporting than are small businesses owned by non-minority men. The days of purely domestic markets are gone forever (Collins & Lazier, 1992).

A recent report issued by the Small Business Survival Committee made this point, “Small and mid-sized businesses, entrepreneurs, and many U.S. workers are seen as falling short of what it takes to make it in the rough and tumble global marketplace. The thinly veiled assertion is that these folks cannot cut it; they need coddling and protection. Of course, the notion that U.S. entrepreneurs, smaller enterprises and workers cannot compete internationally is as false as it is insulting” (Keating, 2001).

When I explored further, a Canadian study, Beyond Borders: Canadian Businesswomen in International Trade (Rayman, 1999), reveals that most women entrepreneurs start to enter foreign markets soon after start-up. In fact, nearly 55 percent of business owners take their first active step toward exporting (for example, gathering information on a foreign market) within two years of start-up. This finding reflects a global trend towards a narrower time gap between start-up and international activities and is true of both those who already are active exporters and those who are still in the planning stages for exporting. It also indicates that women business owners are cognizant of the global economy and its potential consequences for their firms.
Preparation time for entering a first foreign market is minimal, reflecting the opportunistic nature of many first-time exporters. The average elapsed time between the first step toward exporting and the jump of actually making a foreign sale is less than four months. It is important to also note that in my key findings there are no statistically significant differences in how long it takes product-based firms and service-based firms to enter foreign markets. On average, firms tend to enter close proximity overseas markets (for example, a Canadian company exporting to U.S. or a U.S. company exporting to Mexico) one year earlier than they enter other foreign markets (Rayman, 1999).

Global Incentives

There are a number of realistic incentives for women to take their businesses global. Among them: increasing sales; generating economies of scale in production; raising profitability; insulating seasonal domestic sales by finding new foreign markets; creating jobs; encouraging the exchange of views; ideas and information; establishing educational programs, conferences and other activities to advance women; promoting professional growth, mentoring, education and leadership among women.

If these incentives are not enough, I always emphasize: How about pure and simple business survival? We all know that business is about beating the competition, or keeping up at the very least. These days, you have got a lot more to worry about than your competition on the other side of town. No matter what your product or service, you are now operating in a worldwide market, which means you have competition all over the world. Fortunately, small businesses not
only can compete on a more level-playing field, but also can enter international markets with less financial risk (Oliver, 2000).

More and more of those competitors are managing worldwide operations, and they are working hard to increase their share of the pie. The question I ask is: Are you? The best and maybe even the only way to stay competitive with this new breed of global business manager is to become one yourself. In running my international business, I found you must act as if you were born to go global (Kanter, 1995). Furthermore, one must consider how your business helps fuel your country’s economic engine. If all of us, including business women, fail to keep pace with the changing world and globalize, that engine will run out of steam. Where will we be if that happens?

Begin With The Basics

To survive in the today’s world, you must seriously consider the step of internationalization. What distinguishes the world class from the merely good is the ability to be a global center of thinking, making, or trading (Kanter, 1995). Once you decide going global is for you, you need to stop thinking that it is a fantasy and begin to make it an integral part of your business plan.

Going global is for life. I tend to look at the basics and examine the “inside job” of understanding what it takes to go global. First, you have to learn how to navigate your business through uncharted waters worldwide. To do that, you need to develop the right mindset, establish special character traits, map out a global strategy and just flat-out take the initiative to take on the world. Secondly, you must stop acting by the old rules and start creating new ones. The question
becomes, “What in the world are you doing with your business today?” Lastly, the single most important element in implementing a successful global launch is you. Only you can unleash your potential to build a dream global empire.

Women Who Go Global Run the World

Women who go global, or run the world, are creative, intuitive, playful and affectionate -- but they know that only the ability to stick to a complex business agenda and never deviate will win their colleagues’ confidence and respect. With this important precaution, let us have a look at the interpersonal habits that women have traditionally been encouraged to cultivate and how absolutely indispensable they are in international business:

• Women are more attentive and supportive toward others. We are socialized to give care and support to the people close to us (primarily husbands, lovers and children), and we often extend this caretaking impulse to people outside our family circle. It can serve you well in foreign business, too. You wouldn't want to upset or offend a foreign associate, but how do you know what offends? All you can do is be gentle, gracious and respectful, and let them guide you. When they see that you are committed to their comfort and happiness, they are likely to forgive your minor blunders and keep negotiations moving forward.

• Women study people, "read" their behavior and make judgments. We are concerned about why people do and say what they do. Men do not always notice. Women do because we want to act effectively in the interpersonal world. We have developed an instinct for taking accurate readings in a hurry, and acting accordingly. Trust that instinct. Where language and cultural barriers hinder
communications, it might be all you have. Do not let anyone disparage your impressions because you can't produce empirical proof. They are based on a lifetime of experience, and that is all the proof you need. Women who run the world let their instincts help them chart leadership directions that can leave their male counterparts far behind.

• Women have enormous patience and capacity for forgiveness. The international business arena belongs to people who can give others the benefit of the doubt and let misunderstandings slide. Frustration, discomfort and embarrassing social gaffes are the rule rather than the exception when you're conducting a complex transaction in a strange environment. Women who run the world stand fast through good and bad times, and ultimately bring out the best in their foreign colleagues.

• It's always been our job to know about etiquette and appropriate social behavior. Understanding foreign cultures, customs and protocol is absolutely essential if you want to succeed overseas. You cannot afford not to learn the local system. If you do not make yourself acceptable, you will not do business. Women have always known this, and they can make it pay off overseas. When you're traveling the globe, you might find yourself beating drums, eating with your hands, even bathing with your associates. Next day you're in on a grueling round of negotiations, and you realize that you're working together better than you dreamed possible. When you respect foreign ways, it is noticed and appreciated.

• Women are raised to be charming and pleasant to be around. Our sincerity and willingness to offer a conciliatory smile can save the day when things get awkward, or even outright nasty. Foreign associates appreciate charm, so smile
warmly but stay on track. And do not indulge in humor. You never know if they will get the joke, or how they will take it. Just because they are laughing does not mean they are amused. It means they are watching what you do and going along with it to keep from rocking the boat. Sound familiar? Of course it does because many women spend their whole lives doing exactly that. Spare your associates the discomfort for everybody is more comfortable when you stick to business. If you eliminate jokes, you can still entertain by storytelling. I do this quite often. It is one of the oldest, purest ways to communicate and always puts people at ease. Try it. Even if your listeners barely understand English, they will at least have had an opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves with you.

Have I convinced you that the lucrative and wide-open world of international marketing is the businesswoman's natural habitat? That our gentler qualities are powerful assets that can transform the way the world does business? "Nonsense!" you might say. "Foreign businessmen don't take women seriously!" It is certainly intimidating to head over to a country where women walk ten paces behind their husbands, but take heart. Many savvy international businesswomen have been pleasantly surprised by their reception, and have discovered that these factors are significant:

1. *They are a novelty.* Because businesswomen are unusual in some countries, they are highly visible. Think about it -- there's something unremarkable about men doing business, domestically or overseas. So a woman doing the same thing automatically stands out. She gets attention, deservedly so, for her confidence and professionalism as well as her gender. Use your status as a relative novelty to your advantage. Be confident, act confidently, and know your stuff. Then do what you came for.
2. *They are educated.* Even in countries where women are indisputably second-class citizens, educated women command respect.

3. *American women have a particular advantage in international business.* They are known for seeking top management positions and aspiring to break through what is commonly referred to as the "glass ceiling." In struggling against these invisible barriers to advancement, they have had to become superbly competent, creative and resourceful -- all of which adds up to an exceptionally fine businessperson. In time, women in other parts of the world, such as Japan and many parts of Europe, will have taken similar strides toward equality in the workplace, and to become a familiar presence in the global arena.

For right now, though, America continues to stand for equality and for a strong work ethic. People expect Americans, men and women, to be smart, gutsy and aggressive, and to mean business. Consequently, an American businesswoman overseas tends to be viewed first as an American, then as a representative of their own or someone else's company, and lastly as a woman. So an American global businesswoman can hope in most places to be understood and respected on her own terms -- and the more women who enter the global arena and make it their own, the better the chance of shattering that glass ceiling for good.

If you still find yourself feeling intimidated, call on the old-fashioned "masculine" qualities of singlemindedness, confidence and determination. First of all, remember that you have got a product they want, or you would not be there. Second, put your knowledge on the table. Look your associates in the eye and tell them what you know. No need to be an arrogant know-it-all; just state your case
and stand your ground. Natural confidence commands respect. Finally, if you stay focused on doing the job you flew halfway around the world to do, nobody else can stop you.

A woman who runs the world is a whole human being. She calls on both masculine and feminine traits, and can be gentle and powerful at the same time. She knows how to adapt her interpersonal instincts to fit smoothly into the professional environment, and how to show authority and inspire confidence without intimidating and alienating others. A woman who runs the world adds value to any business, whether it's her own or her home corporation's -- pushing limits, shaking things up, competing vigorously in the world marketplace, and making the world a better place to live.

Twelve Keys to Developing a Global Entrepreneurial Mindset

When I began my global consulting company, I did not think I had a particularly unique perspective on the business world. I felt sure I could make all kinds of things happen if I just kept at it and I did not think being a woman would create any obstacles. I started my company because I needed to do something on my own or be my own boss (Moore, 2000). I wanted personal freedom, more opportunity for creative expression and the excitement of encountering diverse cultures. And, I craved to reinforce that important element of the free agent work ethic of putting myself on the line (Pink, 2000). I had been trained in the basics of exporting at my former job, and I wanted to put this know-how to work on a larger scale that would offer daily challenges and boundless potential for growth. Now, after running the company for over fifteen years, I remember the remarks people
used to make when I would tell them how I built my business. They would exclaim, “I cannot believe you did that!” or “and then what happened?”

I have never been lacking in guts and I have always been eager to take on the world so that is why I decided to reach out to others to enable them to go global too. My temperament and my early export experience gave me a habit of thinking about the global marketplace in a big, broad way that continues to shape my operations today. I have never been intimidated by flying alone to conduct business in distant places, nor am I afraid to call up presidents of major companies to talk to them about what I do. I remember sending a fax to the founder of Sony Corporation to see if I could meet with him during my next trip to Japan to introduce myself and talk to him about sourcing American products for Sony. I thought it was important that he knew me. It was just an idea, and my attitude was and still is “why not?”

It has always seemed natural for me to act in these ways. I find it is most satisfying to live according to the rules you create for yourself. I ask you to stop right now and ask yourself this: Do these ways of being come naturally to you? Perhaps not yet. But I invite you to take stock of yourself and decide if you are ready to develop the dynamic outlook that will enable you to take on the world.

Entering the global market requires a special way of understanding the world but only for those who are willing to give up their old ways of thinking (Ohmae, 2000). It requires an ability to see things that others do not. It is not a lifestyle; it is a mindstyle. The following are twelve key aspects that I developed reflecting this powerful worldview. These are your prerequisites to taking on the world, and
your foundation for starting and running a profitable international business (Delaney, 1998).

1. A global entrepreneur must be comfortable with change.

He knows that the world is rapidly changing, and that change always includes the potential for positive developments. International sellers learn to enjoy the challenges of the unknown and to watch for emerging opportunities.

Let us face it, every nanosecond something new is happening in the world. We must take that into account in our global dealings because it affects the outcome of all our efforts. The more connections you create with other human beings worldwide, the more acute the need to be comfortable with change.

2. A global entrepreneur must continuously welcome new experiences, even crises, for they bring about a positive confrontation between different perspectives.

These challenges to your perspective should be used to map out new directions for your creative energies. As a global entrepreneur, you must always seek to improve yourself, your product, your business and your world.

A global entrepreneur is never content with the obvious explanation when she suspects there’s more to it than that, never satisfied with one task when she can manage a project, never happy with a project when she can manage an organization. Similarly, global entrepreneurs are constantly scanning the geographical horizon to learn more about potential markets and competitors, new
technology and new suppliers. Achieving excellence in any activity is always much, much more fun than doing just okay.

It is good to expect surprises, but even better to seek them out. Even a relatively ordinary life will teach you that the world is full of surprises. When you welcome them, you are light-years ahead of those who have been trained to guard against them. In the business world, the fittest will survive and thrive. Evolve, and you will be one of them.

3. A global entrepreneur must be adaptable, take risks and innovate.

She must be nimble-minded and take nothing for granted. He must do whatever he can to extend his global reach. Did you know that Americans are generally viewed around the world as narrow-minded, parochial people who insist on having everything “the way we do it back home,” and always seem to be trying to recreate the world in America’s image? This is not only bad etiquette but it is bad politics and bad business. If you want to take your place in the global market, you must rid yourself of this attitude immediately.

Your adaptability means that you know how different markets operate, and are sensitive to the cultural values of other countries. If things appear one way today and another tomorrow, you shift gears and work with conditions as you find them. Learn to create your strategy on your feet. That is the only way to do global business. The more you risk, the greater your chances for success or failure, but either way, you are pushing your limits and extending your reach. Remember, you learn the most from failure, so take what chances you can afford. There always
comes a point where you realize there are risks, acknowledge them and then move forward anyway.

Keeping the mind fresh, fertile and open to new perspectives is a must if you want to conduct business effectively worldwide. You must not merely innovate, but transform the way you do business so boldly that you inspire everyone around you. There are endless ways of opening your mind that you can get to work on right now. Visit your library and try some completely different reading. Take long walks in unfamiliar neighborhoods. Look out at a body of water. See foreign films. Meet people in other professions. Join social groups that attract members of other nationalities. Challenge your own preconceptions about what is and what can be. Do not withdraw when confronted with cultural differences. Instead, hang in there and ask yourself why you feel the way you do. This is real learning. Give yourself a chance to discover your own unexamined values and assumptions, and you will find it a lot easier to accept others’ unfamiliar ways.

4. A global entrepreneur must be willing to learn as much as possible about the culture in which he is about to do business.

She must pay attention to etiquette and protocol, and behave exactly as interpersonal situations dictate. One day you are a diplomat, the next a leader, sometimes both. When your every move is subject to interpretation, it is best to come equipped with the knowledge that will put you ahead of the game.

You can start by thinking about what makes you different from your next door neighbor. Then form the habit of doing the same thing on a citywide,
nationwide and worldwide scale. Try to understand how and why people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds think and behave the way they do.

Then focus your investigations by reading all you can about the culture of a country you plan to visit. For a real jump-start, call up a local foreign consulate and set up a meeting. Explain that you want to know more about their national culture before visiting. You will be amazed at how receptive they are, and how impressed that you would take the time to learn about their ways. In addition, they may offer to assist with your trip in any way they can, and will probably have some excellent books on hand for you to read.

5. A global entrepreneur must have enormous reserves of energy along with patience and the ability to stick with it.

It is great to be an aggressive, energetic mover-and-shaker, but just as important to know when to slow down and let a negotiation take its own course. You must be more than a regular go-getter to face the world market. The work you must do is difficult and draining. Real business breakthroughs do not come easily or quickly on the domestic front, and in the global market it is a thousand times more difficult. You must deliver long-term value in terms of product quality and customer service while building and maintaining the alliances a global market demands, and you must expect it to take a lot of time. You can be a little greedy, which global entrepreneurs tend to be, but do not be impatient. You will not get far with a narrow focus on boosting next quarter’s sales figures, or with slick hard-sell tactics. The kind of short-term, bottom-line, quick-return thinking we tend to use in our domestic operations shows a basic lack of understanding about the demands of global business. It is a slow process, and it requires patience.
The ability to stick with it is vital if you are going to maintain the committed effort needed to make things work. Do not quit before you have to just because you lack the nerve to keep up your efforts when there is no payoff in sight. You must get through the discouraging, nerve-racking times. Your perseverance will give you strength and confidence that carry you through even bolder efforts in the future.

6. A global entrepreneur must be comfortable with himself before he can present himself well in the international arena.

You must know yourself well enough to anticipate how you will react in new and difficult circumstances. You must be able to exercise self-control. You must develop inner security by counting yourself as valuable apart from your successes or failures. When you know yourself well, you are able to build connections with others by listening, empathizing and understanding. The people skills that are so essential for cultivating relationships in the global marketplace start with the positive relationship you cultivate with yourself.

Sure, you will make mistakes now and then, but only one is always disastrous: global entrepreneurs must never take the position that they are always right and the other person is wrong. They must remain open-minded, thoughtful and sensitive. People who are personally secure and can allow others to be themselves have by far the best chance of creating the harmonious business relationships that global dealings demand.
7. A global entrepreneur must have passion, enthusiasm, playfulness and curiosity.

You need to be alive, alert and exquisitely aware of the world around you. Show your business associates that you value every negotiation as if it is a matter of life or death. Let your body language communicate how intensely you care. Whether standing or seated, keep your posture straight, but lean forward ever so slightly and gesture with your hands to convey urgency. Look your listener straight in the eye. Let them see something in you that they have never experienced in the course of a mundane business transaction and make them want more of it. Let them see that you are passionate about what you are building together. Enthusiasm makes your passionate involvement friendly and accessible. Smile, let your eyes light up, let your energy flow through every gesture you make. Make your listener want to bottle up your energy and use it themselves. Or, make them want to put up a shield to ward it off. Enthusiasm is contagious and irresistible and tends to draw people to you no matter where in the world you are.

Want to fill yourself with passion and enthusiasm? Remember what it was like to be a kid? Spontaneous, free, not a care in the world? Let some of that powerful playfulness show. Use it carefully because there is obviously a time for play and a time for seriousness. Bringing a judicious helping of childlike joy and high good humor to your business ventures can sometimes make or break an international deal.

Finally, show your eagerness to discover more, to do more, to push the limits of the known. You need curiosity to drive you in search of “more.” Your
passion, enthusiasm and playfulness need somewhere to go. Take the next step, go the extra mile, and wonder what if, what is next, what is possible.

8. A global entrepreneur should have traveled to at least one foreign country and stayed for several weeks with a native family and a desire to return.

Get on a plane and head for a place you have never been before. When you get there, make yourself at home. If you can do that, you are on your way to becoming a global entrepreneur. If you have not exposed yourself to foreign travel, make yourself a promise to do it soon. And when you have landed yourself somewhere far from home, teach yourself to adjust, interact with the locals, cultivate friendships and ask a lot of questions. This is the best possible training for becoming a global entrepreneur. Many people are reluctant to try it because it is expensive, they do not want to take the time, they do not know anybody in other countries, or they are nervous about the unknown.

They need to challenge this fear. By making a trip like this, you stand to gain invaluable international experience and quite likely, will have the most fun you have ever had in your life.

9. A global entrepreneur must value the relationship more than the deal.

When cultivating a potential client, never forget that that individual is more important than closing the deal under discussion. You can only do so much to make it happen and then you have to let it happen. If a relationship is meant to be, it will develop itself over time and at its own pace. I find it is analogous to cultivating a garden: in time and after much care, good things will begin to grow.
You must become a true insider wherever you decide to do business, and the only way to accomplish that is to get to know the person with whom you wish to have a relationship and forget about how much time it takes. To have a genuine relationship with anyone, you must develop a history together or “grow up together,” as it were. You have to deal with someone from time to time over a period of years, and learn to see them clearly. Trust and respect your contact, because otherwise there is no point in continuing the relationship next door, let alone across international borders. If it does not work out, you will survive. And, who knows, you might even meet someone else with whom you can do your best and most inspired business.

10. A global entrepreneur must have all-encompassing perspective.

He or she should be able to function well on both a small and large scale. They should hone in on details, yet always comprehend the big picture, and keep pace with that picture as it changes. One day you will be trying to pin down just why Japanese women like the color pink and the next day you will be sorting out how the drop in the peso will affect your latest acquisition in Mexico. You will need to take in information, see its significance and act on it. Cultivate your perspective and it will keep you at the cutting edge of global business.

11. A global entrepreneur must be an inspired, and inspiring, team builder and leader.

The old top-down, hierarchical, “my way or the highway” business style does not work anymore. The challenges of the global economy are best met by a
new organizational model: a team of highly gifted professionals brought together by a leader who knows how to act as “first among equals.” Such a leader must have an eye for talented people who can contribute something unique and irreplaceable to the group, and must know how to provide an environment in which each member feels recognized and valued for their contributions, project after project. The leader must provide direction, encouragement, vision and inspiration so that, together, the group becomes much more than the sum of its parts. If you can find the right people, trust them and help them grow to do great things, you will be on the surest possible ground. The only resource your competitor cannot duplicate is the unique and winning chemistry of your talented team.

12. Above all else, a global entrepreneur must have courage because freedom in this world is born from courage.

You can page through a hundred college catalogs and you will not find any adult education courses in courage. Even if you did, you might enroll, read, do all your homework, participate in class discussions and complete the course with an “A+” without having gained a single iota of courage. To acquire courage, you must put yourself in challenging situations, either by choice or by accident, and get through them. The one thing to keep in mind is that, since few situations are truly life-or-death, you know you will survive.

Even so, going forward with anything about which you have even the smallest doubt takes courage. Taking the first step on a project which everyone else tells you will be difficult or impossible takes courage. Putting your reputation on the line and making up your mind to deal with the consequences takes courage. Staying true to your vision, and your mission, in the face of criticism and
opposition takes courage. But if you can somehow call it up when you need it, your rewards will be extraordinary. Courage crosses all boundaries and knows no barriers. In the complicated, ambiguous world of foreign business, it is essential for the aspiring globalist.

These are the attributes that I have found a global entrepreneur must cultivate and put to work in the international marketplace. They have been effective for me. Gender does not matter. To take on the world, a world in which only the fittest will survive, you must make yourself one of the fittest. This is hard work, and will test your motivation at every turn. Are you ready to take it on? I hope my words have inspired you and if so, it is time to get started.

How To Choose a Market

Where in the world should you take your business first? That was the big question I asked myself before I began. You could just wait to be deluged with emails from other countries. Better yet, your partner speaks French. How about targeting France for your first market? Wait a minute, did you say you are selling perfume? Do the French need another enticing scent to dab behind their ears? I doubt it but at least when they tell you so, your partner will understand.

It is a little trickier than that to decide which overseas market is most promising for your product. Sometimes, while you are busy servicing the domestic market, you will get lucky and an inquiry will come through, pointing you directly at an ideal new market. But, it is more likely you will need to do your homework to find customers. I believe that conducting market research will tell you where they can be found.
Your first market research project is usually the toughest because it is all unfamiliar terrain. But, take heart, because once you have searched out the data you need to predict how a specific type of product will sell in a specific geographic location, you can use the information repeatedly as a guideline for exports of similar products in the future.

As you build your personal information database on global markets and learn to keep yourself up-to-date on developments in international trade, it will become less of a chore to determine where to take your product. You will find that market research is a powerful tool for exploring, and taking control of, your global territory.

When deciding where to concentrate your sales efforts, choose a market that intrigues you or offers a challenge, and then consider products that you might want to sell there. That is what I have found works best. My first export market was Japan. I felt if I successfully conducted business there, I could sell anywhere. Later, this notion proved to be true because it brought me recognition and respect as a global player as well as an impressive sales record.

Keep in mind you will be visiting the market you choose frequently and getting to know its people intimately, so, just as you should pick a product that will delight you for years to come, you should plan on exporting to a country that delights and fascinates you. Doing this will give you a good place to start. But, remember to use common sense. Do not ignore other countries that offer good prospects for your product, and do not expend too much time and energy on your first-choice market if it turns out to be a poor prospect.
Ten Steps to Take On the World

In summary, I would like to share with you ten action-oriented business principles that have been most valuable to me as an internationalist and invite you to take them to heart as your blueprint for taking on the world (Delaney, 2002).

1. Get company-wide commitment. Every person at a company is a vital member of the international team, from the receptionist through customer service, engineering, purchasing, production and shipping. Exporting is not something you work at one day and forget about the next. It is an investment in your company’s future that deserves your consistent attention regardless of how well you are doing domestically.

2. Research and map out your export journey. Do your homework and perform a global-readiness assessment planning out your strategy all the way to implementation. Just because your service is needed here in the States does not indicate that it will be well received in a foreign country. You must always check with either your prospective customer (let them review it at no charge) or a local foreign consulate to see if they can help you determine if your service makes sense for their host country.

3. Know where you want to go and go there. Know your destination but be willing to make adjustments along the way. Forcing a customer to buy what you have available with little or no willingness on your part to make improvements is not just insensitive but downright hostile. Global marketing has come a long way
since the days of Henry Ford, who said, “The customer can have a car painted any color that he wants, so long as it is black.”

4. Take that decisive step and follow it up with sensible judgment. Jump in with both feet first but keep them firmly planted on the ground. It gets back to basics. Pick one service, pick one market and then stick to it. You need to put on your mental blinders and ignore distractions, channel your energies and define the territory in which you are going to play. It takes a lot of discipline to resist the scattershot approach to doing business and stay focused. Yet, after a while, the discipline becomes automatic. The person who makes it is the kind of person who has the persistence to keep trying until he or she succeeds (Weiss, 1997).

5. Keep your ego in check. Do not let the prospect of going global inflate your ego and cause misjudgments.

6. Trust your instincts. If it smells, looks or feels bad, do not try to rationalize otherwise.

7. Treat other people as you want to be treated. People are basically the same worldwide; it does not matter where you are. Awareness and respect of cultural protocol demonstrates honesty and goodwill, and this leads to trust, which in turn leads to mutually profitable relationships.

8. Make personal contact with attentiveness, courtesy, professionalism and consistency. In-person visits are vital to building a relationship with rapport. You cannot afford not to meet with prospective customers because, without face-to-face
contact, there will be no business. Customers matter, and the personal meeting is
the best way to demonstrate your professional commitment.

9. Factor in a two-year lead-time for world market penetration. It takes time
and patience.

10. In a global marketplace, welcome the unknown. Do not let the prospect
of the unknown frighten you. Rather, learn to welcome it, take it apart piece by
piece and then slowly digest it all. The rewards can be great.

I do not underestimate the challenge of conducting world business, but I
cannot emphasize enough how personally and professionally rewarding it has been
for me. I continue to view new products, breakthrough technology, consumer
trends and global marketing ideas with an eye to how they will work in the world.
I remind myself always of the ongoing efforts that will be required to keep a
foothold for my company and its offerings in this bountiful but competitive
territory. If you have the vision, dedication and courage to accept this challenge, I
courage you to begin cultivating a “garden” of your own, so that you can harvest
rich rewards in the years to come (Delaney, 1994).
Reference Web Sites To Help You Go Global

All of your basic questions about going global can be answered by visiting a handful of online resources. Here, you will find out how to further develop a global entrepreneurial mindset, create a global marketing strategy and locate additional tips for taking on the world.

Businesswomen in Trade
(from the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade)
http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/businesswomen/menu-e.asp

Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
http://www.ciber.uiuc.edu/

Country Watch
http://www.countrywatch.com/

Dun & Bradstreet
http://www.dnb.com/

Export Hotline
http://www.exporthotline.com/

Import-Export Help
http://www.importexporthelp.com/
globalEDGE
(from Michigan State University)
http://globaledge.msu.edu/

GlobeTrade
http://www.globetrade.com

GlobeWomen
http://www.globewomen.com

How To Conquer The World
http://www.howtoconquertheworld.com/

International Trade Administration, US Department of Commerce
http://www.ita.doc.gov/index.html

MyExports
(a public-private partnership of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Global Publishers LLC)

Office of International Trade, U.S. Small Business Administration
http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov/OIT/

Organization of Women in International Trade
http://www.owit.org/
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Delaney, L. (2002). Insanely global!


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