How to Utilize China's Workforce to Grow Your Business

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In 2001, Steve Jobs moved the manufacturing of Apple iPhones to China without publicly stating the rationale for the decision. Personally, I'd excuse that to Steve's "insanely" private life. At the Fortune Global Forum sixteen years later, his successor —Tim Cook— explained why China was the perfect solution for Apple's manufacturing needs: the people.

According to Tim, the people of China have extraordinary skills and are the most innovative and entrepreneurial in the world. But Apple wasn't the first. Nike made a similar move 20 years before Apple —in 1981. Walmart in 1996. And several other big companies before and after Steve did. And the process, as you'd guess, was exhaustive.

Today, businesses small and big don't have to spend billions setting up an office in China to utilize their over 900 million working population. More interestingly, as remote working becomes the new normal, you don't even need to move your business. So, how can you follow the footsteps of Nike, Cisco, Apple, and Walmart without breaking the bank?

Do your due diligence

When expanding your practices to a country as large as China, conducting extensive market research is imperative. You can begin by choosing a few potential locations for your business operation and sampling a specific section of your target

market.

Considering the growing diversity of the Chinese population, collecting sufficient data may pose some difficulties. You can take a holistic approach to your research. This will help you get close to a 360-degree overview of your potential consumers.

While the research process may be herculean for inexperienced business owners, you could hire a professional market entry expert to help out.

By accurately interpreting the results of your research, you can find the perfect location for your business as well as how to penetrate your target segment of the market.

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Hire the right staff

The success of any company depends on the quality of its staff. As Time Cook explained, China has a multi-talented labor market that even the smallest businesses can utilize for growth. However, recruiting is not a walk in the part. For a foreign business, the difficulty is tripled.

To increase your odds of hiring the right talents for your business, use reputable China-based professional employer organizations. These organizations know the workforce considerably well. They also understand the government policies and usually help you stay compliant.

In fact, using a PEO lifts a lot of responsibilities off your shoulder and save you cost at the same time. Putting together an HR department to handle the endless staff and regulatory squabbles could increase your turnover. Typical PEOs in China offer payroll and tax solutions.

When Nike entered the Chinese market in 1981, these services

didn’t exist. They incurred excruciating expenses to set up camp in the fast-growing market. Today, even small businesses can proceed at little to no upfront cost.

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Recruit insiders while remaining an outsider

Your business doesn’t have to be in China to have access to its workforce. Innovative employment solutions now exist to make that possible. If you are a software company with Chinese customers, for instance, you can hire local customer support experts without registering an entity in China.

With the advent of remote working, entrepreneurs have access to a global pool of talents. Working with freelancers may not fit well into a company’s operational strategy. That shouldn’t limit you to hiring only local talents. Diversity of talents is the new flex and PEOs could help you recruit a dedicated staff team.

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