

The challenges that come with scaling globally, and how to overcome them

Most founders want their startup to scale quickly and become profitable or go public. But rapid growth can be both a blessing and a curse, particularly if you're scaling overseas. Fast growth means your business is heading in the right direction and your strategy is working. But when it happens at such a rate where it becomes difficult to manage or unsustainable, it can present a fresh set of challenges.

Temps de lecture : minute

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During the pandemic, my business [Laundryheap](#) experienced unprecedented and fast growth in a number of international markets. Here's what I want you to know about embracing the whirlwind and coming out stronger on the other side.

Expanding globally can be a challenge for company synergy

Creating a shared culture and vision across numerous different countries and time zones is no easy feat. Throw a pandemic into the mix and it becomes even more difficult. But to scale effectively your entire team must be aligned when it comes to the standard of service you offer and your values.

We have a saying at Laundryheap that we must always stay focused on our 'north star' - which comprises our business values and overall

mission. Our 'north star' is quality service and customer satisfaction. Ensuring we provide the best possible service to customers - no matter what the external circumstances are - has been essential to retaining our clients and customers during a time of crisis.

When it comes to onboarding new employees from different countries, we make sure that we standardise our training and onboarding processes to retain a high level of customer service across the board. This is not only to ensure that our customers get the same great service no matter where they are in the world, but also that each of our employees is singing from the same hymn sheet.

Fostering consistency across your markets is crucial when you're growing fast.

Expanding globally involves communication barriers

Communicating crises or challenges when employees are halfway across the world was a major logistical issue that came with expanding globally. This was made harder when the pandemic rules were changing by the day, and different countries had to adhere to the latest government advice.

Launching in the U.S. was one of the most challenging launches as a business, as each State was operating differently, with different lockdown rules. This meant there was no way we could offer a standardised service across the country; we had to make decisions state by state.

There's no other way to overcome this challenge than by making sure you're communicating within employees' working hours, and letting them

know of any challenges or changes in advance wherever possible. When we onboarded staff we also ensured they were aware of what to expect throughout the pandemic, whether that be last-minute changes or delays caused by reduced services. This helped employees trust us as their employer and helped us maintain positive relationships with any new customers.

You'll sometimes struggle to retain the flexibility that helped you as a startup

Being a startup founder is vastly different to leading an established global company. Yet as you scale and grow, you might have to lose some of the fast-paced flexibility that you started out with. This is simply because as you scale, your processes must formalise and you will naturally grow more risk-averse as there's more at stake.

Striking a balance between playing it safe and taking risks is key. For us, this meant delaying launching in some markets when we knew that COVID regulations could hit our business badly. It was better to postpone a launch (and cut our losses) than go ahead and take that risk. Doing the best by your business and your employees, whilst also retaining that drive and ambition unique to start-up culture, is essential when you're scaling fast.

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