



going global

What It Takes to Become an Event Powerhouse

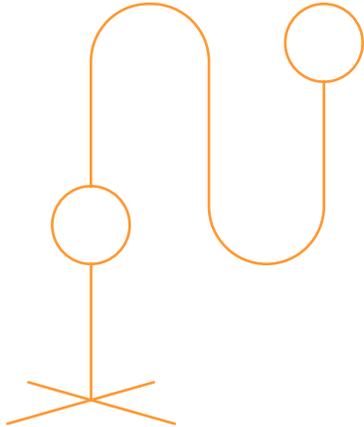


thriving in a global marketplace

Not only does the world seem to be shrinking as we become increasingly connected, but the pace of change — and the need for innovation — is accelerating. For many organizations, the impact of these phenomena is apparent: there's an immediate need for organizations to think about and operate in more international markets, and support the business by taking a much more global approach.

Yet, translating this imperative into a strategy is no simple task. As professionals from all over the globe seek out events to upgrade their skills and expertise, and network with other professionals, the market for worldwide meetings and events has reached \$565 billion.¹ To capitalize on this opportunity, event organizers need a clear plan for expanding their organization's event footprint.

¹ DoubleDutch, "A Practical Guide to Measuring Event Success," June 4, 2015



Geocloning — the practice of packaging a brand's event for export — provides a way to expand an event footprint, yet customize it to match cultural values, audience needs, exhibitor and sponsor requirements, tax and regulatory environments, and infrastructure and technology frameworks of an event and its attendees in a given location.

To be sure, Italy is not Argentina, and Dubai is not Paris. Even within a country, two cities may introduce significantly different factors and criteria. Unfortunately, as many event organizers discover — sometimes the hard way — success is not guaranteed when replicating an event in another location. It's no longer an option to assume you can “build it and they will come.” It's critical to understand the market and culture of a particular country or place and design an event that delivers value to everyone through customization and personalization, while at the same time delivering consistency in the brand image, and the attendee and exhibitor experience.

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geocloning: considerations for expanding locally



A best-practice approach to event planning starts with a basic yet complex proposition: an understanding of the various factors that directly impact the scope, nature, and value of the experience. No factor is more important than understanding why you're targeting a particular country and a specific city. This leads to several vital questions:

- 1 *How does this market align with our brand and business objectives?*
- 2 *How does it impact sponsorships, exhibitor revenue, media support, and audience attendance?*
- 3 *How does it translate into attracting the right segments and demographics?*

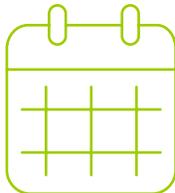
Ideally, an organization identifies these business opportunities through data, as well as an organic understanding of geographies and markets, often gleaned from local partners. By using both industry and company data to understand where attendees come from, what interests and needs they have, their buying power, competitive events, and myriad other factors, it's possible to understand whether a particular location and approach make sense — and whether they can pull in the desired attendance and revenue. For instance, Barcelona or Dubai may attract attendees from all over the world, while Rome or Abu Dhabi may attract regional business executives. With this knowledge, which centers on connecting to the right segments and demographics in the right way, it's possible to build a solid foundation and strong framework for an event.

When geocloning, consider the following factors:



Local Regulations

A country's laws, regulations, tax structure, and business practices are essential considerations. Data privacy requirements, and attendees' willingness to share data, are fundamental considerations for how you're able to structure an event. In addition, labor requirements — and issues such as unions and labor availability — may differ significantly from, for example, France to the United States, or from Mexico to South Korea. This, in turn, may impact costs and profit margins.



Cultural and Religious Factors

Similarly, cultural and religious factors may impact an event and affect how it is structured. In certain places, it's critical to consider whether certain days are holy or if an event must follow, or include, prescribed cultural practices or religious requirements. There may also be a need for special food or accommodations to support these needs.



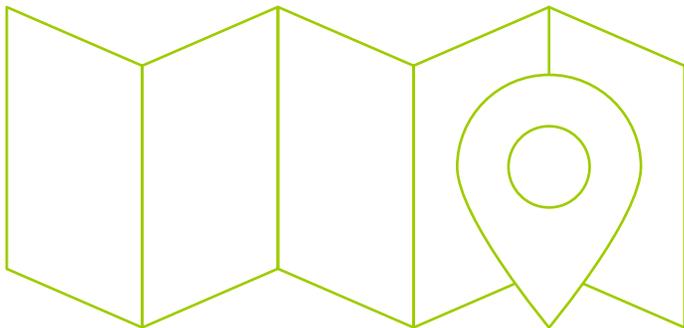
Facilities and Infrastructure

Equally important is ensuring that the facilities and infrastructure match the event requirements — and the preferences of attendees. This can span everything from satellite and Internet connectivity critical for teleconferencing to Wi-Fi availability and recharging stations for mobile phones. These considerations also extend outside the event. For example, throngs of regional attendees who commute to an expo affect hotel planning, including the willingness of event hotels to provide discounts.

There also are significant differences across regions in scheduling the arrival and departure of an event and its attendees. These logistical issues include transportation and the proximity of amenities, such as dining and entertainment options.

Finally, it's crucial to ensure that the right mix of speakers, press and trade publications, exhibitors and sponsors, and more are in attendance.

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How to Vet and Select the Right Local Partners When Geocloning Your Event

- Look for companies that have local expertise, language skills, and cultural understanding.
- Check that the organization has established connections with local media, industry associations, and production partners.
- Ensure that the company has the necessary staffing and resources to manage the required task.
- Make sure they are eager to work with you, and that they take time to explain their approach and rationale.
- Find out who your supplier has worked for in the past and whether it matches your footprint.
- Ask for specific data about past results.
- Check references thoroughly and verify performance data whenever possible.
- Question or interview others who have used a supplier or service provider to gauge their experience.
- Check that the company has the necessary licenses, bonding, or other requirements.
- Use metrics, KPIs, and analytics to measure results.
- Continue to adjust and adapt suppliers as needs change.

moving from challenge to opportunity



A starting point for developing a geocloning strategy is to pull all this information together and apply it in a tangible way. This requires a broad understanding of attendees, partners, and sponsors that generally cannot come from executives sitting thousands of miles away, unaware of the full implications of a decision. What's more, an overbearing approach can undermine the success and profitability of an event. It may impose one culture or country's imprint on another — and ultimately lead to disinterest or resentment.

It's important to have eyes, ears, and feet on the ground at any location. This means building partnerships with local suppliers and

service providers that truly understand the nuances of language, culture, and service needs — and can build a value proposition for the event organizer as well as others involved in producing the event. You can start your search for these experts by consulting industry-specific associations in your target region.

Vetting them requires due diligence, such as checking references, studying past performance, and speaking to principals about their approach and their qualifications. The objective is to build a network of suppliers and agencies that complement overarching goals but have the expertise to guide an initiative and, ultimately, take it in the right direction.

Yet, affording suppliers and service providers a level of independence — essentially, allowing them to do their job and trusting their expertise — doesn't mean that they shouldn't be held accountable for performance and results. There's a need for metrics, key performance indicators (KPIs), and reporting that revolves around outcomes. While these criteria may vary for different events, or even the same event held in different locations, data can serve as a barometer that makes it possible to fully understand what is working, who is effective, and how to tweak, adjust, or change practices in the future. For an organization looking to broaden its footprint through geocloning, analytics is a valuable tool that can take an initiative to the next level.

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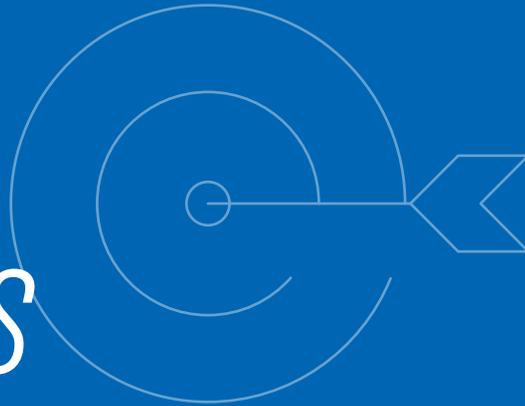


A Best-Practices Checklist

10 Essential Factors for Successful Expansion

- 1 Establish clear business and event objectives.
- 2 Know your market and potential pool of attendees.
- 3 Understand the audience and personas for every event.
- 4 Rely on local expertise to plan and build the event.
- 5 Drive brand consistency, but allow customization from one location to another.
- 6 Be relevant to the audience.
- 7 Build synergy among exhibitors, attendees, speakers, and the press at any given event.
- 8 Use metrics and KPIs.
- 9 Put data to work through analytics and reporting.
- 10 Refine and redesign events as necessary.

meeting objectives



As corporations and associations look to take events global through geocloning, there's a need to understand markets, attendees, and sponsors in new and more in-depth ways. Designing an event for maximum results and revenues requires a deep understanding of a location, and the various constituencies and service providers required to achieve success. It also requires a more data-centric approach that harnesses metrics and KPIs to measure results and refine an event. This is sometimes referred to as going "glocal." Yet, however you want to define and design these processes, a best-practice framework boosts the odds that attendees will view an event in a positive light and ensure that it contributes to your organization's business objectives.

Success Story at a Glance

- **Company:** Producer of an industry-leading trade show serving the automotive sector
- **Headquarters:** Frankfurt, Germany
- **Geoclone locations:** Overall, 15 events in 14 countries, including Shanghai, Dubai, Moscow, Chicago, Madrid, Mexico City, and Johannesburg.
- **Objective:** Build a global brand, but adapt the show as required for different locations.
- **Challenge:** Vastly different audiences, partners, and sponsors from location to location.
- **Strategy:** To expand its events into North America and other English-speaking markets, the company turned to Freeman. The local resources and connections it leveraged through Freeman provided the institutional knowledge, expertise, and guidance to build a network of trusted suppliers and service providers in these key markets.
- **Results:** The company now reaches an extensive group of strategic and profitable markets, adding to its portfolio of highly tailored global exhibitions.

get global results

To find out more on how to use geocloning to expand your events, visit freeman.com.

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