

Cross-Border Marketing Challenges

By: Liz Wahl | 1,290 Reads

When we bring our North American-based franchise to a new country, our understanding of the local culture shapes how we market our concept to both customers and potential franchisees. Having a solid understanding of the cultural differences at play is especially important for child-based concepts focused on enrichment and education, like us at Young Rembrandts.

In a given international target market, we need to know: Is education a priority? Do parents and families invest significantly in children's or grandchildren's education? Can those cultural differences shape our franchise model to become more attractive to potential franchisees internationally?

For example, in South Korea the expectation is often for children to go to school all day and then go to a learning center afterward. So although in the U.S. our franchisees typically teach in host sites such as schools or community centers, our master franchisee in South Korea opened a learning center for children to come to for lessons.

Similarly, we need to adapt based on the educational and learning environments in international markets. While school districts in the U.S. are often very independent and can vary broadly even in neighboring districts, in Canada national boards oversee schools in their country. So the way Canadian franchisees interface with the national board is slightly different than how our franchisees in the U.S. secure new business.

Most important, we like to focus on *commonalities* between consumers, regardless of culture or country. The strengths in our franchise concept come from the fundamental appeal of drawing and the universality of art, which transcends cultures and languages. For our concept, our niche is our proprietary, copyrighted curriculum and the longevity of what we provide. Many international

consumers often seek out Western products and services with a longer history of success.

When it comes to parents and children, especially in terms of education, parents are always looking to give children an academic advantage, and the fundamentals of drawing are rarely taught, so parents are attracted to models that are unique like ours, wherever they live.

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