

A black and white photograph of a city skyline, featuring a prominent skyscraper with a unique, twisted design. The city is densely packed with buildings, and a body of water is visible in the background. The image is partially obscured by a red overlay on the left side.

AGENCIES WITHOUT BORDERS

How ERP Helps Global Agencies

More and more ad agencies today have embraced the demand to expand their operations nationally, regionally, and ultimately internationally.

www.zag-hq.com



Introduction

The Joys of Going Global

More and more ad agencies today have embraced the demand to expand their operations nationally, regionally, and ultimately internationally. Some organizations begin by opening up another office in a city within their home country, while others expand to open working bases located in the same region or even on another continent. Such expansions typically mark an important stage in an agency's growth and signal both an expansion in reach and an increase in overall revenue. This can lead to subsequent expansions as well.

Today there are ample reasons to expand globally. One reason to consider is that the entire ad industry is experiencing unprecedented growth. This means that markets in nearly every region are primed for entry from an agency that's in a similar period of growth and expansion. Recently, Warc announced that, with the exception of the Middle East and Africa, this year's expected growth in the ad industry is between 2.6% (Western Europe) and 8.4% (Central and Eastern Europe), and the entire global spending will hit around \$572 billion.[\[1\]](#) This means that the time is ripe for global expansion.

More Global **Advantages**

Other reasons to open offices across borders include the added stability that comes when agencies can distribute the gains (and sometimes losses) between different operating bases. For instance, if an office in Hong Kong does extremely well one quarter while its Berlin-based counterpart underperforms, the stronger performer will help sustain business operations overall. It will, as they say, come out in the wash. This kind of distributed stability can only increase as an agency expands further and covers more territory.

Yet in addition to financial stability, there's also significant knowledge acquisition that comes with global expansion. Indeed, with operations across different nationalities and continents, a global agency can integrate truly transnational learnings. What some team members learn on a project in Shanghai, or what one designer gains from an ambitious client project in Belfast, can be directly integrated into subsequent projects for the Los Angeles team. Since the ad industry is all about creating cultural objects to appeal to consumers, such an increase in cultural awareness and sensitivity can only be a boon for an expanding agency.



Global Challenges

But there are also important challenges that agencies face when gearing up to expand over international waters. Some of these issues arise from differences in currency, tax systems, and languages, while other issues from the need for executives to obtain transparency. How can a truly global agency maintain integrated workflows while also offering executives, for example, the kinds of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) they're accustomed to with on-site Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions? Other challenges come from managing projects with distributed teams located in different time zones. How can agencies adhere to the same level of quality and production while utilizing teams spread across various cultural, linguistic, and national contexts?

In this eBook, we'll take a look at how a global ERP solution can solve these challenges for agencies in the process of expanding across borders. There are many benefits to using an integrated global ERP solution which, for example, apply to currency conversions, tax systems, and translation. We'll begin by looking at some of the advanced features of integrated ERP solutions, such as KPI usage and user profiles, and look at how they can benefit global agencies. We'll then see how an integrated global ERP solution can consolidate many common human-performed tasks such as multiple tax schedules, accounting, legal matters, and metrics. With a global ERP solution, these tasks can be automated and made error-free—thus saving your agency valuable time and leading to more revenue.

A Global ERP Solution

When your agency decides to go global, a number of concrete questions are bound to arise, especially for executives. How can you maintain a consistent level of transparency, productivity, coherence, and operations insight as you've previously expected from a single outlet? Agency executives and project managers have come to rely upon ERP functionality once considered standard only with on-site installations. Specifically, many advanced users will want to view KPIs across a number of operation areas, or log in with special privileges and access types. Thankfully, with an effective cloud-based global ERP solution like [PIVOT](#), all of these features will be accessible. And the best part is that they can cull data from each of your overseas operations and display it all together.



User Roles

One of the important features of a truly global ERP solution is the ability to create clearly defined and separated user roles. Oracle's NetSuite ERP solution in partnership with [ZAG](#), for instance, allows users with different profiles to log in and receive different treatment. [2] For instance, one user can enter as a project manager view a dashboard with resource management, issue tracking, task management, budgets, and the statuses of different team members. Another user can enter the system as an executive and receive full access to KPIs, employee data, transaction logs, and so on. As another option, a resource manager can access resource allocation, timesheets, and financial data.

The benefits of this kind of role-based ERP functionality are clear, but how does it benefit agencies that are expanding globally? As a role-based platform, here the ERP defines the limits of which actions a user can take within the system. Such a system includes a range of pre-defined permissions and levels of access. Although not the existing user profile sets do not account for every possibility, the profiles can be fully customized to fit the needs of any user. When transitioning across multiple time zones, then, a user can view consistent data regardless of where they log in. This ensures consistency and legibility not only from one user type to another, but also across geographical separations as well.

Global KPIs

An effective global ERP solution also integrates important data points across an agencies international outposts. This includes a full suite of metrics, analytics, and KPIs that provide a host of valuable insights which are particularly informative for managers and executives. Want to compare how the revenue in your Hong Kong location compares to that of your agency location in Berlin? How about costs or a utilization summary, which shows hours tracked to billable services against project actuals? Just login with an executive role login and select the corresponding KPI. You can then display this data as a graph displayed over a preselected amount of time. Changes in performance, here indicating revenue, will be shown for that duration.

This kind of transparency is critical for agencies looking to expand overseas. Indeed, in addition to such graph views, user can also look at the composition of such figures represented by KPIs and other data points. Looking at an income statement, an executive can toggle between time periods, comparing the results between yearly revenue statements. Using the same view, the user obtain further transparency by drilling down into multiple data points to reveal, for instance, client information and other data that pertains to the geographical location in particular. Such data points are important, again, for agencies in the process of growing their overseas operations.

Global Transparency

A global ERP solution works by providing critical insight and transparency across international borders. Many of these operations would be impossible to execute using a non-cloud-based system. But with a global cloud-based ERP solution, a range of KPIs, metrics, and analytics are available to provide important visibility across all of the geographical locations of an agency. With the use of multiple users, this power only multiplies. The best advice we can offer here: don't waste time and money duplicating data across borders. Use a consolidated cloud-based ERP system that's truly global.^[3]

Mastering Global Matters

A number of further issues exist for agencies planning to go global. Of these issues, dealing with multiple taxation and legal systems and managing teams across different time zones are perhaps the important challenges to consider.



Tax and Legal

Global agencies must stay constantly informed about the legal and financial regulations not only in a single country but across different national cultures which may have very different standards and ways of doing business. Even various unspoken rules (what one can get away with), can be very different from one place to another. Taxation and finances are especially important. As *Oracle* has recently noted, "Taxation, reporting, and other financial regulatory requirements are in a constant state of flux, and small changes in one location can have unforeseen impacts on business conducted with partners and customers in other locations."^[4]

This is where a global ERP system reduces a significant amount of work for internationally distributed agencies. When using a comprehensive cloud-based ERP solution, an agency can keep track of the myriad changes in taxation and financial regulations that often change without significant notice, and especially from country to country. Such a solution gives accounting managers and executives the peace of mind that the specifics of each country's regulations are being followed to a T. Best of all, these processes can be automated, removing uncertain and error-prone human processes and replacing them with dependable algorithms.

Managing Teams **Across Time Zones**

A global ERP solution comes in handy when working with distributed teams, especially across different time zones. Project managers will want to leverage such solutions to track the different time zones of the full team on a particular project. There are of course a number of separate tools that can help with managing teams across borders. Every Time Zone, for instance, visualizes and helps with scheduling across time zones, and Google Calendar has some helpful functionality. Yet, nothing compares to the kind of integration project managers get in a truly global ERP solution.

For globally distributed agencies, communication with remote colleagues becomes all the more important to get right. Meetings add some valuable face-time to what can otherwise amount to text-only relationships. Distributed teams, as it's regularly reported, often lack a certain ability to empathize with other team members' emotions. Meetings help to alleviate this by providing outlets to openly voice concerns that may be difficult to express via text. Using the scheduling functionality of a global ERP solution can help to facilitate such critical forms of team interaction.

Conclusion: Going Global

We've seen, then, some of the ways that a global ERP solution can solve the various challenges that arise for agencies that are in the process of expanding across borders. Such an ERP solution facilitates tighter global operations by automatically accounting for changes in tax and legal systems. Other features include the ability to create user roles and specify important metrics to compare progress across borders.

Global agencies also benefit from a range of integrated ERP solutions. The use of KPIs, especially as a way to track new international outposts, can be especially helpful during the process of going global. We've also seen how an integrated global ERP solution not consolidates various human-performed tasks, especially as they relate to tax and financial regulations. A global ERP not only provides enhanced stability and integration, but also helps your agency when it decides to truly go global.



Thank You

If you have any questions about any section in this book, please email us at lucas@zag-hq.com

Know more about [ZAG](#)