

INTERVIEW WITH DENNIS TAN FROM DASHMOTE – 22 October 2019**What is the core business of Dashmote?**

D: We want to help business professionals, for example working as product owners or in sales/marketing, who want to work with data, but don't have all necessary resources to do so. Whereas they can choose to set up an internal data analysis team or go to a consulting company, these solutions might not be the way to go for many. We want to be the alternative, which is why we created Dashmote - a platform that gives the end users more control and helps them to get the most out of their data.

**How did you end up in the US?**

We started our company in The Netherlands in 2014 and grew quite quickly working for a client who asked us to help them on the European level, which then led us to do business with them in the American and Asian markets. Our first expansion was in Europe, opening an office in Vienna, after which we expanded to the U.S. We've also been active in China for about a year and half.

Is there a major difference between what you can do with the data between the U.S. and Europe?

The main difference is that in Europe the rules are more clear. It's a much thinner line between rights and wrongs with data usage in the U.S. Also, the perception of data in America is different; there is a lot more usage and more scrutiny.

Pitfalls and tips and tricks for entering the US market?

People tend to underestimate the U.S. market; they might do a better preparation to enter Asian markets, as there is less familiarity with the culture, language and so on. Nevertheless, there are huge differences between Europe and the U.S. too, such as the processes in admin, sales, recruitment and other areas. I also believe you should always have a partner when trying to enter the American market. It's more obvious you need partners when expanding to China, but the necessity of having the same when entering the U.S. should not be underestimated.

Moreover, the great amount of companies created in America gives out the false perception that entering and sustaining a business in the U.S. market can be done with a little understanding of the local needs and lack of potential clients – one of the biggest mistakes an entrepreneur should avoid. Another tip is not to underestimate the upfront costs associated with moving to the U.S. – you don't want to run out of money!

Recruitment is an important focus area of expansion. When you are serious about setting up a new office, the process should start with the people. Not only the people you will bring with you, but the people you will hire and expand culturally. To increase your chances of success, make sure at least one of the co-founders can stay present during the first stage.

Other key points of consideration are deciding on which location suits your needs; how to attract the people you want to work with, and the amount of people you will need. In our case, we have a target of hiring 50 people in the next two years, so we are figuring out everything we need to do before we grow to that number.

Are you focusing your team growth in a specific location or will it be more a regional spread?

Our initial point of entry was New York, but we want to be present at both ends of the time zones, not necessarily being in every city or state, but creating hubs like New York in the East Coast. Before entering the U.S. market, we did quite a lot of research and focused on building our network and finding key partners locally. We also identified which geographical areas made more sense for us to enter. We are now also looking into opening a new office on the West Coast.

What are the positive things you can mention about being in the U.S. market?

The major plus of the U.S. market is its size and openness. It has slightly changed during this administration in terms of being more in favor of American companies and products, but if you have something good the market is still very receptive, especially in tech-related fields. People are also more willing to give you a chance here, if you ask for help, they will come upfront and assist you. This also reflects on how easily meetings can be set up in the U.S.

In Europe, investors tend to take fewer risks and are more conservative with their money. In America, investors risk more but also expect a higher percentage from your company. The hard-working culture is also very present here; you push yourself and get more inspired because everyone is doing it. If you want to build a good business, you have to surround yourself with the best examples out there and the U.S. has plenty of those!
