

– CASE STUDY – Norphone's Entry into the U.S. Market

Background

Since 1990, the Parisian company RTC Norphone has captured the recycling market in precious metals, such as gold, silver, and palladium, making it one of the European leaders. RTC Norphone collects scrap metal, sweepings, and filings from various businesses to be refined and then used again.

Based in part on its success in Europe, RTC Norphone saw opportunity in the United States and worked in partnership with the following organizations to successfully launch its American operations, through a new soft landing program, Global Access PA:

- The French-American Chamber of Commerce - Philadelphia Chapter (FACC-Philadelphia)
- The Chamber of commerce and industry of the Paris region Ile-de-France (CCI Paris Ile-de-France)
- The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians (Welcoming Center)

Global Access PA began in 2014 as a partnership between FACC-Philadelphia (supporting businesses in Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and Delaware) and Welcoming Center. The program supports foreign researchers, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized businesses to invest and launch their enterprises in the United States. Global Access PA provides mentoring and guidance on how to navigate various hurdles, such as the American business climate, immigration, cross-cultural differences, and capital investment.

FACC is a nationwide network of non-profit organizations supporting economic, commercial, and financial development between the United States and France. FACC is a member of the global French network of Chambers of Commerce and Industries (CCIs). In France, the CCIs are semipublic organizations that represent the interests of businesses, serving as an intermediary between private companies and public authorities. They perform various tasks such as foreign trade promotion, vocational training, and regional economic development.

Welcoming Center's mission is to connect newly arrived individuals and immigrant entrepreneurs from around the world with the economic opportunities that they need to succeed in the region. Since opening its doors in 2003, the organization has assisted more than 13,000 people from over 140 countries.

In early 2014, RTC Norphone sought out the support of CCI Paris Ile-de-France to create an American subsidiary. After extensive research and analysis, The CCI Paris Ile-de-France connected RTC Norphone with FACC-Philadelphia, and in September 2014, RTC Norphone enrolled in the Global Access PA program.

Initial Market Approach

RTC Norphone's Partnership with the CCI Paris Ile-de-France

With the guidance of CCI Paris Ile-de-France, RTC Norphone prepared to enter the U.S. market by taking the following steps:

- Conducted a market study
- Defined sales regions
- Created a U.S. market strategy
- Obtained regional funding and trade credit insurance

After extensive research, the CCI Paris Ile-de-France and RTC Norphone determined that Philadelphia provided the venture with the best possibility for growth, reduced risk and investment while being strategically located along the I-95 corridor between New York City (70 min by train) and Washington D.C. (90 min by train).

U.S. Launch

RTC Norphone's Partnership with the FACC-Philadelphia and Welcoming Center

With the combined support of the Global Access PA program and the determination of RTC Norphone's manager, Ruben Tuil, the company quickly established brand recognition, while developing its network throughout the Philadelphia business community. Over a 12-month period, RTC Norphone accomplishments include:

- Defined short and long-term immigration strategies for the company's French management
- Obtained a B-1 in lieu of E-2 Prospective Investor Visa for 6 months, sufficient time for the French manager to lay the foundation for the business
- Gained a better understanding of American business practices through FACC-Philadelphia mentorship
- Recruited 6 Drexel co-op students for part-time employment
- Received Welcoming Center's logistical and hosting support for a 6-month period
- Launched first U.S. Marketing Campaign
- Executed initial partnership agreements and contracts
- Established independent office space
- Secured a E-2 Investor Visa for the next 5 years for the French Manager
- Hired additional American employees
- Obtained additional E-2 Investor Visas for 5 years for key French management
- Expanded the East Coast presence to Florida and New York City

Results and Impact

After several months of collaboration, NOR Metals Corp., the American subsidiary of RTC Norphone, officially launched creating 6 new jobs in Philadelphia. In addition to its core business activities, NOR Metals Corp. created a social program, *Heart of Gold Project*, which enables local American charities, such as Philadelphia Reads, Tabor Children's Services, and the Wilma Theater, to raise funds by inviting their supporters to donate broken gold jewelry, which is then recycled.

Ruben Tuil, U.S. Officer, commented on the successful launch of NOR Metals Corp.:

"For us, the support from the CCI of Paris Ile-de-France, in combination with the FACC Global Access PA program, was invaluable! I was impressed by the technical skills, dynamism, and unfailing commitment of the staff. By pointing us in the right direction, introducing us to the right people and opening the right doors, they saved us at least two years in the development of our U.S. business."

Thank you to all our partners

