

HUBSPOT: LOCAL DEMAND BRINGS US SOFTWARE FIRM TO AUSTRALIA

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Australia's strong economic growth, proximity to Asia and, above all, appetite for smart technology convinced American software company HubSpot to set up an office in the country.

'We were getting plenty of traffic and interest from Australia,' says David Shepherd, HubSpot's Australia & New Zealand Sales Director. 'There were just a lot of people who were wanting to talk to us.'

HubSpot is a marketing, sales and services software company headquartered in Boston.

'We started with this thing called the inbound methodology,' explains Shepherd. 'Inbound helps businesses go to market in a way that matches the way humans want to be marketed to, sold to, and served in the modern era.'

'It's a method of attracting, engaging and delighting people to grow a business that genuinely provides value and builds trust. As technology shifts, inbound guides a company to do business in a human and helpful way.'

HubSpot started by building marketing software that helped businesses attract more visitors to their website using content, and turn them into leads and customers. Today, the company is a full front-office growth suite, comprising Marketing Hub, Sales Hub, Service Hub, and a free customer relationship management solution.

The platform has resonated globally, with the company registering 48,000 customers in more than 100 countries. HubSpot had a turnover of US\$375.6 million in 2017 and a growing list of customers and partners, including Randstad, First National Real Estate, Australian Institute of Fitness and Sendlle.



HubSpot's Sydney office.

'We have found that our Australian team has strong intellectual curiosity, the empathy to solve problems for the customer, and a commitment to winning. They want to learn and perform at the highest levels.'

David Shepherd, Australia & New Zealand Sales Director, HubSpot

Australian market success

HubSpot began servicing the Australian market via a sole US-based person who stayed up all night to speak to customers in the region.

Increasing demand, however, prompted the company to open a local office in Sydney in July 2014.

'This market was pulling us in,' says Shepherd. 'There's just so much demand for both our software, and the inbound methodology here.'

'We thought we'd probably have seven or so sales reps in Sydney and it would be a satellite to the office we were going to set up in Singapore the next year, which would function as our APAC headquarters.'



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission



Instead, Australia surpassed expectation, notching up rapid-fire employee growth and market success.

‘Austrade was very helpful in getting us started,’ says Shepherd. Austrade provided services such as introductions to specialists such as industry experts, federal, state and local governments, and regulatory agencies. Austrade also provided an overview of the Australian ICT and digital sector including major players and the availability of local talent, as well as information on Australian tax, labour and salary regulations and laws.

Finding the right fit in Australia

‘There is a lot of opportunity in Australia,’ says Shepherd. ‘Similar culture, language and buying styles make it a great place for American companies.’

‘I think the way Australians do business is very conducive to American companies. Australians tend to tell you the facts, they don’t tend to beat around the bush. They try to figure out how to work together even though it’s a customer and vendor relationship. It’s not a win-at-all-costs culture.’

‘High GDP per capita really helps make Australia an interesting investment because companies and consumers have money to spend on new products,’ he adds.

Rapid growth meant the company had to quickly upsize from its first home in a small community-like workspace in the centre of the city, a ‘hole in the wall’ as Shepherd describes it.

Salespeople were in hot demand. To ensure they got the right candidates, Shepherd and his recruiting team worked closely with locals and sped up their selection process, honing it from 30–45 days down to 14.

Local innovations, global impacts

Shepherd attributes the company’s success in Australia first and foremost to the HubSpot culture, which he describes as very customer- and employee-driven.

For the first few years, the company flew in crew from other offices for six-month periods to support the Sydney staff and ensure a successful knowledge and HubSpot culture transfer.

‘We have built a world-class team that is performing exceptionally well. We have found that our Australian team has strong intellectual curiosity, the empathy to solve problems for the customer, and a commitment to winning. They want to learn and perform at the highest levels,’ says Shepherd.

‘The Australian team has produced a number of innovations that have had a global impact. We have developed new marketing channels here that have since been rolled out globally.’

‘The team here also led a project that resulted in HubSpot acquiring chatbot builder, Motion.ai, so that we could build the functionality into our own software and bring it to our customers. The fact such an impactful initiative began in Australia is really testament to the talented team we’ve been able to hire here.’

‘We’ve also had a number of innovative practices that started in Sydney that have improved our ability to service customers and better develop leaders.’

Shepherd says Australia remains a key growth market for HubSpot.

‘We apply the same investment strategy here as we do in the most attractive markets worldwide. We’re growing exceptionally fast and will continue to do so in the coming years.’

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