

MyTomorrows



Ingmar de Gooijer,
Director of Public Policy - MyTomorrows

Industry: Life Sciences and Health, AI/Blockchain/Cybersecurity

Mission statement: "No regular treatment options available? We provide patients with helpful insight into treatments in development across the world."

Headquarters: Amsterdam (Anthony Fokkerweg 61, 1059 CP Amsterdam)

Founded: 2012

MyTomorrows is a digital health platform that provides early access to the latest drug innovations and makes sure that patients and doctors don't miss out on treatment options due to lack of information or administrative barriers. We chatted with Director of Public Policy and Reimbursement, Ingmar de Gooijer, to find out how the organization brought its vision to the U.S.

Key takeaways:

- Working with law and consultancy firms is unavoidable if you're operating in a highly regulated environment
- Make sure your home base is up and running before focusing on expansion in NYC
- (Employee) costs are higher but the market is also much larger and you have the opportunity to grow at an exponential rate
- American culture is very open to new ground-breaking ideas
- In terms of hiring, recruiting new talent goes much faster, work ethic is more intense, and salaries are higher
- Be careful not to tread into political debates, staying neutral is often the best approach

What motivated your company to expand to NYC?

Within the pharma and tech industry, the U.S. is one of the most important markets. Within the U.S. there are multiple regions and cities that are closely linked to our industry. We chose NYC as starting base and will be expanding from there.

When did you start your operations in New York?

We opened our office in NYC about 5 years ago with one person, assisted by consultants and freelancers, to analyze and scope the U.S. market in detail. This year we hired an additional four people.

What were some of the preparations that you took?

We are in the industry of drug development and early access. There is a lot of legislation, regulation and ethical issues surrounding it. We had to be really informed and aware of how the U.S. system works before we launched there. Being completely prepared took quite some time but will definitely pay off.

Where did you go to do this research and get this information about the legislation in the U.S.?

We had one person fulltime based in NYT, he worked with freelancers and law and consultancy firms to gather intelligence and understanding of the U.S. landscape.

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MyTomorrows team

Are your people in the U.S. focusing more on marketing and sales?

They are currently creating awareness, letting the market know that we're fully operational and making sure that physicians and their patients with unmet needs have access to information and drugs in development. We're providing access to multiple patients and need to make sure we can continue to grow whilst being as efficient and effective as we are today.

How long would you say it took to get up and running to where you could start offering your services to these patients?

It took us around four years to be fully operational in the U.S. We could have probably done this a bit faster, but we chose the diligent route, which takes time.

What could have gone faster?

I think it has nothing to do with the U.S. market, but more about how we do business and operate. Our projected growth path in Europe took a bit longer than expected and we wanted to have Europe up and running before entering the U.S. Now that Europe is growing exponentially, we can give our full attention to the U.S.

What are some of the benefits of expanding to the U.S.?

We recently started treating patients there but obviously half of the pharmaceutical global market is in the U.S., so we really need to be there.

There are many benefits. First, you can treat a large number of patients, which is also good for the biotech firms we help in providing access. It is beneficial for us because our investors are pleased to see the traction. And it is great for the overall system of drug development because a new model is coming to fruition which will lead to more affordable prices of drugs.

In NYC, almost everything is more expensive. But then, the higher costs are obviously because the market and potential is bigger.

And culture wise, in the U.S. people are very open to new ground-breaking ideas, which makes it nice to work there.

What differences have you seen in terms of hiring in the U.S. versus in Europe?

The contracts are different, in NYC hiring new people is easier and faster than in Europe. But the salaries are also higher. We currently have 5 employees based in New York.

The overall attitude towards work is a bit different than in Europe. For example, European employees expect 5 weeks of holiday, which is quite a contrast with expectations of people in the U.S. In the NYC area, a more hard-working attitude is prevalent that e.g. in Europe. We are comfortable with that attitude while also appreciating the differences we experience in Europe. And right now, our company is much more of an American company culturally than a European one when looking at the expansion approach we've taken.

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What would be the number one advice that you would give to a Dutch entrepreneur looking to expand to New York City?

I think it's pretty standard but hire people who have experience with a clear and strong drive. People connected with the culture and the purpose of your own company is of paramount importance. And don't be afraid to spend quite a bit of money.

Also, in our industry it's important to be aware that you tread wisely when it comes to republican or democratic points of view. We're an inclusive digital platform that aims to bring the various players together, so we want to remain neutral.