

How to Successfully Sell Innovative Technologies into Latin America

An Introductory Guide with 10 Do's and Don'ts

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.



Born in Atlanta, GA, Alan Colmenares has studied the impact of digital technology and its application to solving business challenges for more than 20 years. A BSEE graduate of Lehigh University with an MBA from the INALDE University in Colombia, he has worked for some of the premier high tech companies both in the US and Latin America. These include Intel Capital, Oracle, SCO, SAS Institute and others in Silicon Valley and Latin America providing a strong bicultural and global perspective to his observations. Currently, he is a columnist for Dinero.com in Colombia and has written and edited articles for InfoWorld Magazine. He has spoken on eMarketing and Digital trends at events Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico City in Mexico; San Jose, Costa Rica; Caracas, Venezuela and Cali, Medellin and Bogota in Colombia. His opinions and articles have also appeared in VARBusiness and the Colombian newspaper, La Republica. He is a professional consultant and principle editor of the blog: TropicalGringo.com

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INTRODUCTION.

After 15 years working within Latin American subsidiaries of US technology companies such as Intel, Oracle and SAS Institute, I decided to sit down and create this eBook to summarize some of the pitfalls and opportunities of selling technology in the region. With a few exceptions, hi-tech leaders have managed to develop a profitable business in Latin America.

Some companies such as HP, Oracle, Autodesk, Kingston, Intel, Microsoft, Symantec and Cisco have been immensely successful with their regional subsidiaries setting sales growth and profitability records throughout their organizations. Others, such as Dell, IBM, Sybase and others have had some hiccups along the way. Still others such as 3Com have been able to redefine what their regional operations should look like in order to rediscover success in the region.

While these established players have developed successful operations in the region, there is room for smaller innovative technology companies who wish to develop a profitable business in the region. Nevertheless, there are some Dos and Don'ts to heed along the way.

01

BEWARE THE "PRESTIGE TAX."

Some companies are in a rush to establish a physical presence in Latin American countries. They correctly understand the importance placed within these markets on face-to-face contact and a local office certainly helps. However, before rushing into establishing such an office, there are some unique factors to take into consideration and one of these is what I call the "Prestige Tax."

In the US, joining a hi-tech firm certainly can come with some prestige, but this is nothing compared to that felt by employees in emerging markets, particularly, Latin America. Though there is a good side to this (e.g., employee pride, etc.) there is down side that needs to be considered. If you will be expecting your newly hired employees to work as a closely-knit team as well as working as equals with business partners, care will need to be taken to ensure that employee pride does not degrade into a holier than though attitude that may create employees successfully developing their powerbroker status at the expense of the company's objectives. Such powerbrokers will levy a hidden personal "prestige tax" on the rest of the organization.