



INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

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Higher education is challenged to replace educational models focused on discipline-based programming with holistic, interdisciplinary educational experiences that parallel the complexities of modern international business. This project addressed the urgent need for teaching materials that encompass dimensions of international small business performance. An outcome objective was that teaching materials be appropriate for use in several departments.

A six-member faculty team from Textiles and Clothing, Management, and Anthropology developed three comprehensive case studies and accompanying videos that consider international small business entrepreneurship across disciplinary boundaries. Team members traveled to Guatemala, Malaysia, and Ghana for in-country data collection. Each case features a firm ripe for trade with the U.S. Companies vary in product lines, centralization of production, technological innovation, target markets, and promotional strategies. Case studio/video packages feature Noor Arfa Batek, a Malaysian company recognized for their hand-drawn silk batik scarves and yardage; Al Pie del Volcan, a Guatemalan firm which retails to tourists within Guatemala and exports woven jackets to several U.S. clients; and Aid to Artisans Ghana, a federation of artisan businesses involved in large-scale exporting to major U.S. craft retailers.

Videos document local patterns of work, levels of technology, and cultural expectations related to religious practices, family responsibilities, and indigenous marketing. The cases improve on previous case studies in several ways. Cultural issues are integrated, rather than isolated in an introductory scenario. Each case emphasizes the importance of strong grounding in business fundamentals coupled with application of product-specific knowledge. Finally, the cases mirror the integration of cultural, business, and product foci demanded on a daily basis among managers in international business.