

Unlocking Your Global Edge Series - Mid-Market Edge Podcast

Build your global edge.

The barrier to building a global team has never been lower. The failure rate has not changed. This is a practitioner's field guide to installing the system that makes distributed teams actually work.

7

practitioner conversations on the Mid-Market Edge podcast

Drawn from seven practitioner conversations on the Mid-Market Edge podcast.

3

failure patterns that surface again and again

8

readiness dimensions to score yourself against

— INSIDE THIS PLAYBOOK

A cheaper team and a genuine operating capability are two different things.

Drawn from seven practitioner conversations on the Mid-Market Edge podcast - with founders and operators who have built, scaled, and led distributed teams that actually perform.

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01 - WHY GLOBAL TEAMS FAIL

A cheaper team and a genuine operating capability are two different things.

Twenty years ago, building a global team required enterprise-scale infrastructure and deep pockets. Today, collaboration tools, employer-of-record platforms, and a maturing global talent base have made global teams accessible to companies with ten employees. But lower barriers do not mean lower risk. The same human, cultural, and operational patterns that derailed enterprise offshoring still derail mid-market global teams. They have just moved downstream.

1**Cost play: cheaper hours, managed as a vendor**

The team is measured on rate arbitrage. Members sit in a vendor's system, not your org. There is no shared scorecard, no ritual, no career path. It lowers cost for a while, then leaks quality, ownership, and your best people.

2**Capability play: one team, one operating system**

Global members are fully integrated: your email, your rituals, your scorecard, a real career path. Work moves across time zones on clean handoffs. It compounds into durable capacity, higher retention, and an advantage competitors cannot copy by writing a cheaper check.

"The barrier isn't talent anymore. The decision is: are you going to install the system and let it run?"

- Kevin Bonfield, Concentre

02 - CHALLENGE PATTERNS

Where global teams break down.

Across seven practitioner conversations, the same failure patterns surface again and again. Naming them early is the first advantage.

1**Treated as a vendor, not a team**

Members live in a vendor's system with no company email, no org-chart presence, and cost-per-hour as the only metric. No identity means no belonging, which means no retention. The integration never actually started. Ask: are they on our org chart, or someone else's?

2**No operating rhythm or handoffs**

No weekly ritual that includes distributed voices, and no documented SOPs for follow-the-sun handoffs. Remote members default to invisible, and every shift change becomes a rework and quality risk. Ask: do global members have a real seat in the weekly rhythm?

3**No path, no presence, no trust**

No defined career path, and leaders who have never visited in-country. Your best people leave for someone who invests in their future, and virtual-only presence never builds the trust that retains them. Ask: have our leaders ever met this team in person?

03 - THE BUILD ROADMAP

From first hire to durable capability.

A phased approach turns a staffing decision into a genuine operating advantage. These are the moves that make a global team stick.

1**Define the why and the work**

Name a rationale beyond cost, then pick specific, repeatable processes to pilot, with clear inputs, outputs, and metrics. Start where the work is teachable.

2**Integrate identity from day one**

Company email, shared onboarding, same tools, same values. Put global members on the org chart, not in a vendor's system. Belonging is the foundation of retention.

3**Install the operating rhythm**

Run a weekly ritual that includes distributed voices as equals, and document SOPs and handoffs so follow-the-sun work moves cleanly across time zones.

4**Build cultural fluency**

Invest leadership time in the norms, communication styles, and hierarchy expectations of each geography. Visit in-country. Trust is built in person, then sustained remotely.

5**Design careers and mobility**

Give global members levels, advancement criteria, and a visible investment in their future. A defined path is the single biggest signal that keeps your best people.

6**Secure and scale**

Review data access, security, and continuity specific to the global team, then extend the model to new geographies with a partner strategy and follow-the-sun architecture.

04 - VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Seven perspectives on building global teams.

Founders and operators who have built distributed teams that actually perform. Each conversation reframes what a global edge really takes.

"Don't do this just to save money. The cost savings is almost never there. Figure out how it's going to be strategically beneficial, then find partners. Don't try to do this alone."

Mark Blaskovich

Ep. 2 - Managing Director, GuideMark Group

"This is not just a team member. This is your team member. You need to be as invested in their success as the person sitting right next to you."

Chris McKee

Ep. 1 - Former CEO, Venturity

"I've figured out a thousand ways to break a contract. I've never figured out how to break a handshake."

Charlie Alsmiller

Ep. 4 - Founder, API Works

"I learned early on that I couldn't mandate people to come into the office. I needed to inspire them. Shared physical space is just one ingredient. We've got so many others."

Tim Hamilton

Ep. 3 - Founder & CEO, Praxent

"Define what it means to be a high-performing team. Having a really talented jerk is not acceptable. We're in this together."

Derek Sharp

Ep. 5 - Chief Client Officer, Denison Consulting

"By working remotely, we give them 40 days back - 40 days they can spend with their families. They're no longer strangers to their children."

Edward Lim

Ep. 6 - Founder & President, Doxa 7 Solutions

"Global teams are not an add-on to what you're doing. They're an advantage - as long as you treat it as one operating system, with the same rituals, scorecard, and culture."

Kevin Bonfield

Ep. 7 - Concentre

05 - RISK RADAR: 8 EARLY SIGNALS

The warning signs that a global team is drifting.

A gap is Tier 1 when it causes other failures, and Tier 2 when it is a symptom or amplifier of them. Review monthly, and fix Tier 1 before spending effort downstream.

TIER 1 - FOUNDATIONAL (FIX FIRST)

- ☐ No rationale beyond cost - every decision defaults to price
- ☐ No repeatable process to pilot - ambiguous work, no definition of done
- ☐ Team sits outside your org - no identity, so retention fails
- ☐ Access and continuity unreviewed - one incident ends the model

TIER 2 - SYMPTOMS (MONITOR)

- ☐ No rhythm that includes them - distributed members default to invisible
- ☐ Leaders lack cultural context - signals misread in both directions
- ☐ No path, so your best leave - you train them, someone else keeps them
- ☐ Handoffs create rework - follow-the-sun makes cycle time worse

— 06 - READINESS TEST

The Global Team Readiness Check.

Eight dimensions that separate global teams that thrive from those that quietly fail. Each maps to a signal on the Risk Radar. Answer honestly, tally your total, and read your band.

YES = 2 PTS PARTLY = 1 PT NO = 0 PTS

	YES	PART	NO
Strategic Foundation - we have a clear rationale for our global team beyond cost, including talent access and capability.	☐	☐	☐
Starting Point - we have identified specific, repeatable processes to pilot, with clear inputs, outputs, and metrics.	☐	☐	☐
Integration & Identity - global members are fully in our org: company email, shared onboarding, same tools and rituals.	☐	☐	☐
Operating Rhythm - we run a weekly ritual (huddle, standup, L10) that includes global members as equal participants.	☐	☐	☐
Cultural Fluency - our leaders understand the cultural norms, communication styles, and hierarchy expectations at play.	☐	☐	☐
Career & Mobility - we have a defined career path for global members with levels and advancement criteria.	☐	☐	☐
Process & Handoff Design - we have documented SOPs and clean handoffs so work moves across time zones without rework.	☐	☐	☐
Security & Continuity - we have reviewed data access, security, and continuity plans specific to our global team.	☐	☐	☐

YOUR TOTAL / 16

14-16

Strong - Your global team infrastructure is well-built. Focus on continuous cultural investment, career-path depth, and scaling what already works.

12-13

Moderate - Good foundations with specific gaps. Address your lowest-scoring dimensions before they compound into Tier 1 risk signals.

8-11

At Risk - Meaningful vulnerabilities are present. Prioritize integration and identity, operating rhythm, and career-path design now, before you scale further.

0-7

Critical - Foundational gaps threaten global team success. Without intervention these cascade into attrition, quality failures, and retreat.

Install the system that makes global teams work.

We work with mid-market leadership teams to turn a distributed workforce into a genuine operating capability, not just cheaper hours. The goal is a global team that compounds advantage.

1 Global Team Diagnostic

A 2-3 week assessment covering both sides: where the biggest opportunities are to move work offshore, and how your existing global team performs against the 10 warning signals. Root causes, not just symptoms, with a prioritized action plan.

2 Build & Launch Support

Hands-on support through the first 90 days, turning the diagnostic's priorities into a working system: operating playbook, scorecard, rituals, onboarding, and cultural integration.

3 Scale & Expand

Once the foundation holds, we help you expand it: partner selection, geography strategy, career-path design, and follow-the-sun workflow architecture for year two and beyond.

Book your Global Team Diagnostic

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