

CEO Handbook

A GUIDE FOR FRENCH NEWCOMERS



LA
FRENCH TECH
BOSTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

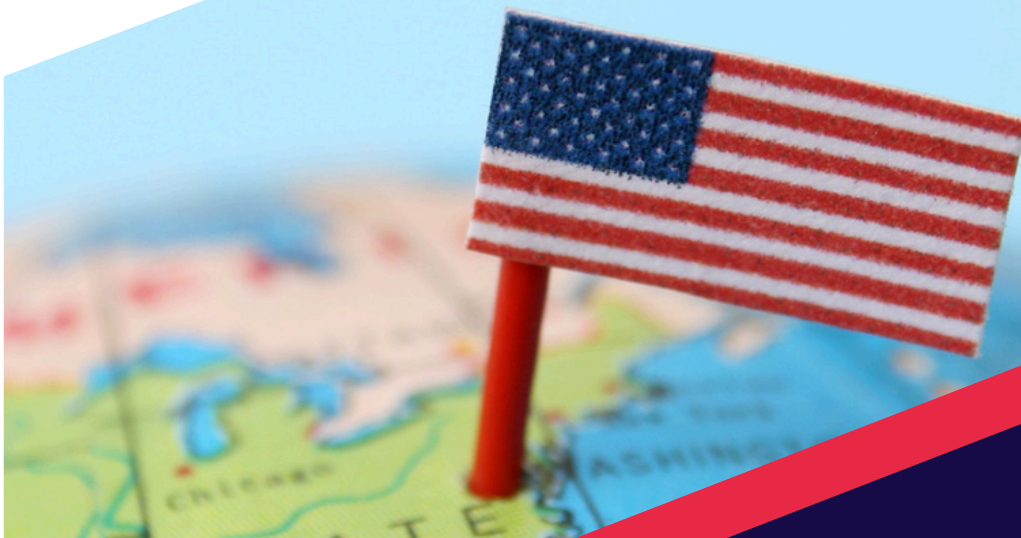
- 01** US or not US
- 02** Why Boston?
- 03** People Setup
- 04** Establishing Your Business Entity
- 05** Your First US Team Member
- 06** Your Sales & Marketing Machine
- 07** Personal Setup
- 08** Schooling & Education System
- 09** How does Boston City Work?
- 10** How Do I Build My Network Quickly?

US or not US?

We believe that international expansion is key to a company's growth, be it a start-up or a scale-up. Yet it can be lengthy, complicated and expensive process.

Here are some business considerations prior to a decision to come to the US:

- 📍 Size of market: One of the largest economies in the world, if not the largest
- 📍 Go to market velocity and hurdles: faster and easier timelines? (Depending on industry)
- 📍 ROI analysis - Sunk cost (incl. taxes if the HQ is in France) vs. market opportunity and fundraising?
- 📍 Access to funding
- 📍 Access to talent: recruitment and retention
- 📍 A different business culture



01



Where?

The United States hosts the **largest French Tech network outside France**, with 11 “French Tech communities” as of 2024 across the country aimed at promoting and facilitating connections between French startups and local tech ecosystems.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2023, more than **60** French Tech Next40/120 companies have a footprint in the US, where they employ nearly 2,000 people. 15 out of 29 French unicorns have a presence in the United States, leveraging on the investment at scale, world-class R&D and market opportunities.



 Choose your US headquarters according to:

- Your desired ecosystem
- Your existing/potential customers
- Your pool of hires (university, talents, competitors)

Why Boston?

- Large French community with over 11,000 individuals in New England, along with major French companies, including Schneider, Dassault, Sanofi, and others
- A network of more than 100 French startups
- The most “European city” in the US, it feels like “une grande ville de province”
- Boston Logan International Airport is a domestic hub with over 1,500 flights per day, only 10 minutes away from the city center and 30 min from the suburbs
- Some of the most prestigious colleges in the U.S, with over 64 universities, including Harvard and MIT
- Unique industrial clusters, mainly healthcare but also tech and finance
- One of the wealthiest cities in the US, with old money, endowments, and a large venture capital community
- Healthcare quality
- Low crime rate
- Low pollution



MASSACHUSETTS & FRANCE
A deep and mutually beneficial relationship



French firms account for **11.3%** of jobs created by foreign companies

25,800 jobs created by French Companies

#3 France's rank for job creation

+40% growth over 10 years

People Setup



Visa

Do the process early as it takes 4-9 months with support from an immigration attorney. Many facts will determine what type of visa is required under U.S. immigration law - Check the [Directory of Visa Categories](#)

Exemple: E2 Investor Visa is for Founder and Key Employees:

- Wife + Kids on E2 Dependant Visas.
- Timelines: 3 months for Spouse to get work permit once on US soil. L1 visa otherwise

Cost 10k excl. family

Prove that in the next 5 years the company will have recruited Americans and generated revenue to the American economy

Check <http://www.ssa.gov> to find the closest office near you

French Tech Visa

The French Tech Visa is a dedicated procedure for obtaining a Talents Passport residence permit in the 3 categories that concern Tech talents:

- [International startup founders](#), selected by partner incubators and gas pedals
- [International talent recruited by hyper-growth companies](#) selected on the basis of beneficiaries of the Pass French Tech program
- [International investors](#) setting up in France

Why this French Tech Visa procedure?

The **simplicity**, **speed** and **clarity** of the administrative procedures for obtaining a residence permit are important criteria for applicants and for our country's international reputation

French entrepreneurs need to recruit the best talents for their teams, wherever they come from. That's why they're keen to do their best in order to attract tech talent from France, to work with them in the future

People Setup



Driver's license

Your local driver's license (if you have one) will only be recognized for a short time after your arrival in the US. If you wish to continue driving, you must obtain a local license by exam or by exchange if an agreement exists between your country of origin and your new state of residence

Anyone staying for more than three months is recommended to obtain an American license. This permit is the ultimate identification document in the United States, which will make your daily activities easier (opening a bank account, entering a bar, buying alcoholic beverages, etc.)

Go to the RMV office with or without an appointment and bring:

- YourGreen Card or passport, Visa and I-94 form
- Payment for the application fee
- Two proofs of address listing your current address (list of valid documents here [RMV website](#))

Information specific to the Massachusetts RMV can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/passenger-class-d-drivers-licenses>



Medical Coverage

Choose between CFE or American coverage

The MassHealth benefits a member is eligible for may depend on the member's citizenship status.

These noncitizen categories are based on a person's immigration status

1.A Lawfully Present Immigrant

- A Qualified Noncitizen (I-551 or "green card")
- A Qualified Noncitizens Barred perm. residency for 5years
- A Nonqualified Individual Lawfully Present B1/B2, J1 or F1

Check [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) for more details about the eligible coverage types, depending your member's citizenship

Establishing Your Business Entity



Entity legal requirements

Creating a legal entity can be done online within minutes and costs ~\$250/500. However, if you want to do it right, choose wisely the legal structure, the state of incorporation, the tax regime and get more than standard (i.e. non existent) paperwork, you must work with a lawyer. The lawyer usually charges you around \$2.5k, including the cost of the incorporation agent

Key vendors to consider:

- Banks: be aware that a bank will need to identify the ultimate business owner, which means anybody that owns more than 10% of the company to open an account. Be prepared to collect passport information of your largest shareholders
- Payroll system: Several payroll systems are available, it is more expensive than in France for small companies. Count \$40-60 per pay period per employee. Make sure to ask for a discount, they will give you 20% if you ask for it
- Benefit brokers: companies that aggregate other small companies to get better rates
- If you have > 4 employees, you can consider going for a professional employer organization (PEO)
- Accountant / CPA: You have different levels of offering for outsourcing the finance fonction, from simple bookkeeping to full administrative operations. A CPA is the equivalent of the expert comptable, filing the company taxes at the end of the year
- Shared offices : multiple options in the greater Boston area (see section 5)

Establishing your business entity in the U.S., including key legal requirements, managing tax considerations, and concurrently setting up a bank account, ensures a strategic foundation for success

Establishing Your Business Entity



Banking Services

- How to open an account?
Select the branch of your choice and remember to bring your:
 - Obtain your Social Security number
 - Secure proof of accommodation
 - Other documents required: passport, visa or green card
- You have the option to open both a free checking and savings account and receive a debit card within one to two days
- Start as soon as possible building your credit history score! Credit history is very important for any American. It is used as a reference for all loans (even simple consumer loans), bank cards or other purchases or rentals involving creditworthiness. For example, if you want to buy a car or lease it, you will be asked for your credit history.
- Once you have reached the first eligibility threshold, you are eligible for an unsecured credit card. Here are some American banks that offer secured credit cards: CapitalOne, US BANK, Wells Fargo, Bank of America
- At the beginning, expect to have the lowest possible credit limit as it will take time to increase these limits
- Choose a credit card with cashback or rewards! Depending on the card, you will earn a certain level of rewards that can be transformed into money

Establishing Your Business Entity



Taxes

- Information about taxes in the US and the IRS can be found here: <https://www.irs.gov/>
- Each year on April 15th you will have to file taxes. For your income tax filing, you'll need a W-2 form from your employer which you will likely receive at some point in January. Form W-2 is an Internal Revenue Service tax form used in the United States to report wages paid to employees and the taxes withheld from them. Employers must complete a Form W-2 for each employee to whom they pay a salary, wage, or other compensation as part of the employment relationship
- You pay taxes to the state where you live, as well as the Federal Government. If you work in a different state than you live, you will also pay taxes to the state where you work, which will be credited to the state where you live
- When you start at TWUS or when the tax filing period has begun, you'll receive all the necessary documents to file your taxes by mail
 - ➔ **W-4 Form:** This form is used to determine the monthly withholding time that will be applied to your paycheck. You can choose to have more or less withheld from your paycheck via this form. Tip: Depending on your financial status, it is often better to withhold more than less. You will likely receive a larger tax refund after you file
- Tax return process can be complex with forms to fill out and many exceptions and particularities. It is therefore common to hire an accountant to file your tax return (which is costly). A cheaper online alternative, check Turbo Tax

04 Tax Guide from Entry to Exit



General tax considerations for French Companies as they enter in the U.S.

- Choice of entity and initial tax structure considerations.
 - Net basis taxation or gross basis withholding tax considerations.
 - Fiscal transparency versus corporate/blocker structure.
- Capital structuring alternatives and financing considerations
- French / U.S. tax treaty considerations: treaty benefits, permanent establishment, withholding tax, treaty return position.
- Budgeting for global cash flow/tax profile analysis and considerations, including U.S.
- Outsource versus internal U.S. tax personnel and staffing considerations.
- Federal and state income tax compliance including estimated payments and wage withholding.
- Importance of record keeping and documentation.



General tax themes & considerations as French companies grow in the U.S.

- Understand the general U.S. cross border landscape, including France and other countries for e.g. potential CAMT, BEAT, GILTI, FDII, PFIC, foreign tax considerations, as well as other foreign tax issues.
- Continued analysis of cash flow and capital in the U.S.
 - U.S. earnings profile, branch profits taxes, and repatriation of cash versus reinvestment in the U.S. or beyond the U.S.
 - Tax treaty withholding considerations.
- U.S. tax treaty network.
- Related party considerations; including, transfer pricing.
- U.S. real property interest tax considerations.
- State income tax nexus, ensuring compliance in relevant states.
- Sales and use tax considerations.
- Pillar Two considerations and impact of US presence with implementation of Pillar Two for an applicable French MNE group.



General tax themes & considerations as French Companies consider an exit in the U.S.

- Pre-sale planning considerations for operating entity and owners.
- Structuring in anticipation of a deal, rather than after initial discussions.
- Tax due diligence and exit alternatives including asset versus stock deal.
 - Tax modeling of exit alternatives (asset versus stock/partnership interest sale and impact on seller).
 - Exit readiness as it relates to choice of entity considerations.
- Quality of Earnings and other transaction readiness.
- State and local exit analysis depending on choice of entity.
- Final income tax return and compliance needs.

Your first US team member

Building Bridges: The **Right Team** for US Market Entry

Every business is unique, but an overwhelming majority of founders agree on the following guidelines:



Who you should send First?

Founder
CEO
C-level



Who you should NOT send?

VIE
A consultant

Why these recommendations?

The US is a very attractive market for many different reasons, but it is also a very hard market to crack as it is hyper-competitive. Because of this, cracking the US market will likely be tough and long. People who are not fully invested in the venture are likely to abandon mid-way.

You will most probably have to rethink your positioning, your product/solution, your target... Make sure to listen and adapt to your market needs. Make the needed changes, test and learn to scale quickly.

Hiring My First Employee?

Get started

- Quickly recruit a local to help you understand your customers and adapt quickly to the new market
- Ideally a senior sales individual, well connected, who can help you navigate the ecosystem and bridge your product/solution to the US market
- For prospection hire BDR
- Add AE as soon as you get qualified opportunities

Priority

- Meet your potential customers
- Adapt to your market as quickly as you can
- Test & Learn



You don't build a business, you build people, then people build the business

Zig Ziglar
American author



Costs

1.5 to 2x compared to salary in FR (incl € to \$)

- 80 + 50 for BDR*
- 100 + 70 for junior sales/AE*
- 140 +125 for senior AE
- 70+20 for marketing manager (average 2 years experience)

Where to find?

- LinkedIn Ads
- Local sites like builtinboston.com
- Personal Hunt on LinkedIn
- Headhunters

Benefit (Nearly mandatory to attract talents)

- Medical coverage:
 - \$700 for a single person
 - \$1500 for a couple
 - \$2000-\$2500 for a family
 - Dental (\$70-\$120) and vision (\$25) are to be added on top
- **401 K** (Equivalent of "caisse de retraite")
 - Money allocated to a pension fund
 - To be attractive for talents you can match employees allocation up to 4% max of salary
 - \$6K per year maintenance fee

Your Sales & Marketing Machine

The US can be seen as not just one market, but rather several distinct regional markets, all speaking the same language. Think of it as a deep market with lots of opportunities, but it is also hyper competitive. The rule is “be the best or leave the game”. Whatever you have been doing so far in other markets is not good enough to succeed in the US.

Marketing

Be US-centric

- One size does not fit all! Don't just think about the articulation of your value proposition, also think about how you will break through the noise to get your message out there
- Conduct market research to understand US consumer behavior and preferences in your space to craft a compelling brand story ensuring language and messaging are culturally relevant and resonate with the target demographic
- You may have to completely rebrand your marketing material for the US
- Whether you are addressing an existing market or building new market will impact drastically your lead generation strategy
- Focus - The US market is deep, but focus on WHERE you can have your quickest wins

Sales

Selling to my 1st customer

- Events with 1:1 guaranteed meetings are an efficient way to secure some leads with the right stakeholders. Cost per meeting will typically range between \$500 and \$5k depending on how qualified they are.
- Go after anything that moves, don't be too difficult. You want to seize all opportunities to interact with the market and improve your value prop by iteration.
- Time is money As a Sales meeting will typically last 30mn, you have to compress your existing process to be more efficient and straight to the point.

Customer Success

It is not just about signing customers, it's also about delivering and keeping them!
Key customer facing resources should be in US!



Personal Setup

- Living with a family can become very expensive (add ~\$40k/y/child on your salary)
- You cannot rely on public transport, nor on riding a bicycle only (weather concerns), you will have to own at least one car. Online search on [cargurus.com](https://www.cargurus.com)
- Every activity / leisure is 2 to 3x more expensive than Europe
- Relocation package from 10 to 50k advised
- Purchase of furniture easily online on Wayfair, Overstock, IKEA
- Add 1 family return ticket in your compensation
- Significant other work permit depends on visa. Usually needs an EAD which takes 4/6 months to get (pure admin procedure)
- English language lessons for your significant other (children will have special languages classes to help them integrate quickly)

Monthly costs	Low	High
Housing	\$3 500	\$10 000
Car + gas	\$200	\$1 000
Insurance	\$100	\$500
Utilities	\$150	\$350
Food	\$500	\$1 200
Phone / Internet	\$200	\$400
School / Preschool / Kindergarten	\$0	\$4 500
After school	\$600	\$2 000
Health insurance	\$0	\$300
Kids / Activities / Leisure (per activity)	\$150	\$600
Commute	\$0	\$100
Total/month	\$5 400	\$20,950

Source: <https://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Massachusetts-Boston>

Schooling & Education System

The American education system offers a rich field of choices for international students. There is such an array of schools, programs and locations that the choices may overwhelm students, even those from the U.S. As you begin your school search, it's important to familiarize yourself with the American education system. Understanding the system will help you narrow your choices and develop your education plan.

- Around age six, U.S. children begin primary school, which is most commonly called “elementary school.” They attend five or six years and then go onto secondary school
- Secondary school consists of two programs: the first is “middle school” or “junior high school” and the second program is “high school.” A diploma or certificate is awarded upon graduation from high school
- After graduating high school (12th grade), U.S. students may go on to college or university. College or university study is known as “higher education”



Please refer to this website for information related to the American education system from Primary to Graduate School: <https://www.studyusa.com/en/a/58/understanding-the-american-education-system>

How does Boston City Work?

Office space

- CIC Cambridge
- WeWork
- Workbar
- Lab Central/BioLabs/SmartLabs (shared laboratory space)
- Greentown labs (for green tech companies)

Transport

- Car/Uber/Lift - US life is very much organized around the car; if you live far from public transportation and you have a partner, consider owning 2 cars
- Subway - 4 lines across Boston
- Train - Efficient to travel in Greater Boston
- Bike - Possibility to opt for bikeshare with Bluebikes (equivalent of “Velib”)



General note about Boston:

Most people live in suburbs (i.e. outside Boston city center)

Advice:

Rent first on a short-term basis, then decide. Choose based on schools and your personal commute, considering both the office and your residence.

International School of Boston (ISB)

Harvard

Airport

Kendall - Biotech district

MIT

École Française Greater Boston (EFGB)

How do I build my network quickly?

To swiftly build your network, leverage Team France 🇫🇷 professional networking events, join industry-specific groups, and utilize online platforms to connect with professionals, fostering relationships and gaining valuable insights



- FrenchTech Boston and its monthly events
- French Consulate in Boston
- Business France North America
- French Foreign Trade Advisors Network
- French American Chamber of Commerce New England



- Boston Accueil
- BPI: French development bank
- Embassy of France in the United States (Washington)

- Startupbos.org: Startup Boston/Startup Week
- Masschallenge.org
- Innovationlabs.harvard.edu
- Newenglandvc.org/members
- Entrepreneurship.mit.edu
- Boston.gov/startups

Women network:

- Boston BoostHER
- Women in Bio
- Women in the Enterprise of Science and Technology

How do I build my network quickly?

Get Started with your Consular registration

Simple and free of charge, the consular registration is primarily intended to enable the consulate to know that you are established in the region, which, if necessary, will make it easier for it to assist you, particularly in the event of an emergency or crisis. Registration is valid for 5 years, renewable

French nationals who settle in a foreign country for more than 6 consecutive months. It offers the following advantages

- Reduce the cost of certain administrative documents (notarized deeds, legalized signatures, etc.)
- Prove your residence abroad to the French authorities
- Benefit from tax exemption on your purchases in France, where applicable

How do I register?

You will need the following documents:

- A copy of both sides of your passport or national identity card
- A proof of current address (telephone or electricity bill, etc.)
- A passport photo, front view, bareheaded
- A self-addressed, stamped envelope

Where do I register?

Registration is now paperless. You can register, modify your personal data, print out your consular card or registration certificate, and check your electoral situation by registering on the service-public.fr website.

If you are unable to register online, you can send, to the French Consulate, the form that you will find [here](#)

Registration to vote in French elections

French nationals registered in the register of French nationals living outside France in the consular district are entered on the consular electoral roll for their consular district.

For French nationals who are not registered, registration is carried out at the embassy or consulate located in the consular district where they have their residence

Elections concerned :

- Election of the President of the Republic
- Referendum
- Legislative & European elections
- Consular councillor election

Sponsorship Spotlight

Together we go further!



EY

Building a better
working world

We want to hear from you!

We are a community for support & advocacy

Our mission is to foster a vibrant French entrepreneur community in Boston. In reality, finding invaluable support from peers in similar professional circumstances, all eager to see each other succeed, is a rare and remarkable opportunity. Do not hesitate to reach out!

Useful links

To join us & become a member, click [here](#).

To receive our quarterly newsletter, click [here](#).



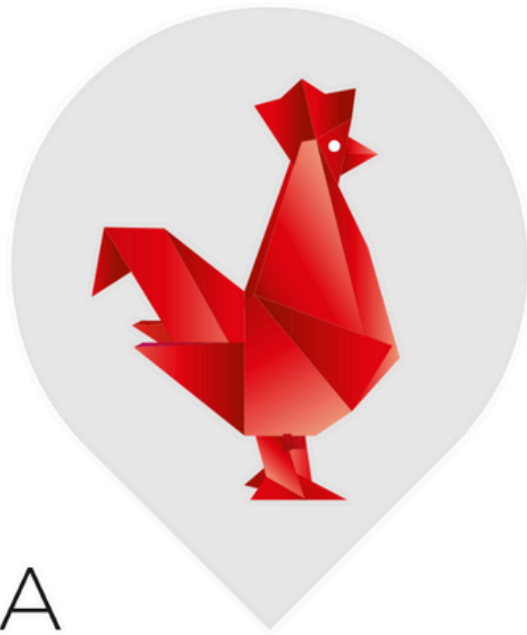
frenchtechboston@gmail.com



[linkedin.com/company/french-tech-boston](https://www.linkedin.com/company/french-tech-boston)



www.frenchtechboston.com



LA
FRENCH TECH
BOSTON

