



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Seattle Playbook

Commissioned by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency

*>> Sustainable. Agricultural. Innovative.
International.*

INSIDE



No wonder that the 1990s grunge
music scene originated in Seattle

MEET THE REBEL: SEATTLE

WHY PLAY IN SEATTLE 📡📡📡

Where big tech meets
small businesses

THE BUSINESS SCENE

Get to know them

SEATTLEITES

Arean van Veelen (OfferUp) explains how he
scaled his business in Seattle

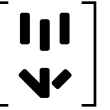
THE BIRTH STORY OF A UNICORN

Plus:
**SEATTLE
VIBES**

Plus:
**RULES OF
DOING
BUSINESS**

Plus:
**MUST SEES IN
SEATTLE**

Plus:
**SEATTLE: A
DIFFERENT
BALL GAME**



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For general information about this publication, please contact us.

Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco
www.NLintheUSA.com/seattle-playbook | SNF-EA@minbuza.nl

Business Models Inc San Francisco
www.businessmodelsinc.com
| Research, content, interviews, design | Myrthe Montijn | myrthe@businessmodelsinc.com | Maaïke Doyer | maaïke@businessmodelsinc.com | Maarten van Lieshout | maarten@businessmodelsinc.com

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You are in charge of your own success!



This is your guidebook for Seattle.



03

A trip to Seattle should be a trip full of inspiration, visits to major (tech) companies and game-changing startups, and many delicious coffees. This magazine captures what you can expect. We invite you to join us on this journey and immerse yourself completely!

This is your guidebook.

Continue

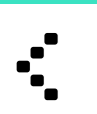




**YOU'RE ABOUT
TO ENTER
SEATTLE**

#seattleites





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Section color coding

**PART 1:
BEFORE
YOUR
TRIP**

HOW TO

Menu



Page number

05

Taste the Seattle vibe before your arrival



**PART 2:
DURING
YOUR
TRIP**

USE THIS

Related Cross References

Fast tracks

Must sees in Seattle



Read the birth story of Seattle's first unicorn



**PART 3
AFTER
YOUR
TRIP**

PLAY BOOK

Chapter Jumps

Practical tips for moving out to Seattle





PART 1: BEFORE YOUR TRIP

Seattle is one of the most bustling technology hubs in the United States of this moment, and therefore a must-visit. Sure, in the winter it is cool and wet, but that doesn't stop **Seattleites** from being warm people. The next few pages will help you to familiarize yourself with what you're about to see. ■

MEET THE REBEL

What's typical Seattle?



GET TO KNOW SEATTLE

The Seattle vibe

Seattle: visually and in numbers

Why you should go to Seattle

5 rules of doing business

Everything about Seattleites



WHAT ELSE TO READ

Silicon Valley Playbook

Los Angeles Playbook



DURING YOUR TRIP

Take me to the next chapter!





MEET THE REBEL: SEATTLE

Seattle visually
and in numbers



4 reasons to go
to Seattle



The first thing most people think about when they hear the name, Seattle is rain...or maybe the famous romantic comedy, *Sleepless in Seattle*, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. However, Seattle is way more than that.

Seattle is a bustling technology hub that is home to some of the largest companies in the world, Amazon, Microsoft, and Boeing to name a few. But, unlike Silicon Valley, that leans more heavily toward tech than it does any specific cultural

elements, Seattle is a rebel, with its own handcrafted culture. In this way, it's also very relaxed. Whether it's the clothes Seattleites wear or the microbrewed beer they drink, Seattle exudes that rebellious confidence and Seattleites pride themselves on not being part of the in-crowd, and being comfortable and relaxed enough to simply do their own thing. It's no wonder that the 1990s grunge music scene originated in Seattle (think Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Sound Garden, Alice in Chains, Temple of the Dog, etc.).

With all of this individuality worn on its sleeve, Seattle is also a great place to launch a startup. Given its close proximity to great schools, huge tech companies, and the investment capital that flows from the millionaires (and billionaires) who work(ed) at or founded these companies, Seattle has all of the right ingredients to create something really unique. Not to mention, the cost of living in and around Seattle is considerably lower than Silicon Valley and San Francisco. Moreover, much like

people in Silicon Valley, Seattleites are always willing to try something new, whether that's a new restaurant, gadget, or app.

Ready to give Seattle a try? Dig into this playbook and we'll show you the way. Just remember...when traveling to Seattle, always bring your flannel shirt and Bumbershoot.

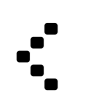
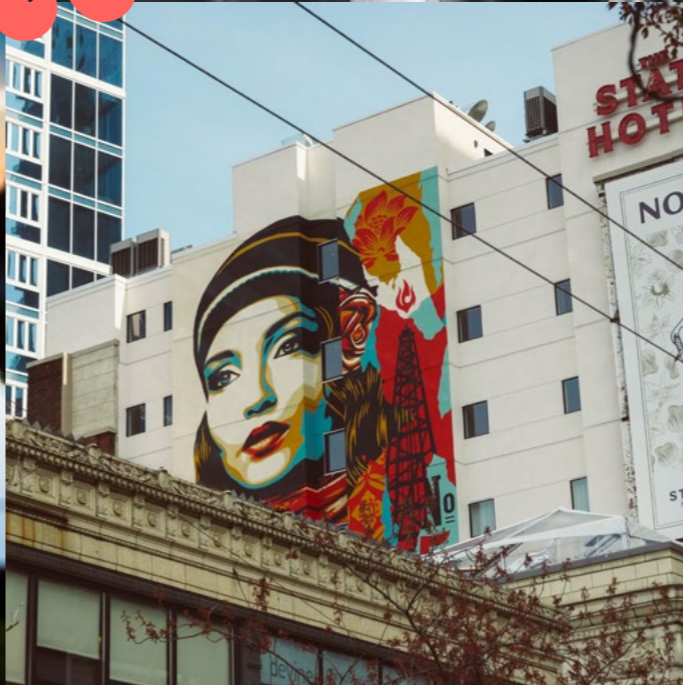
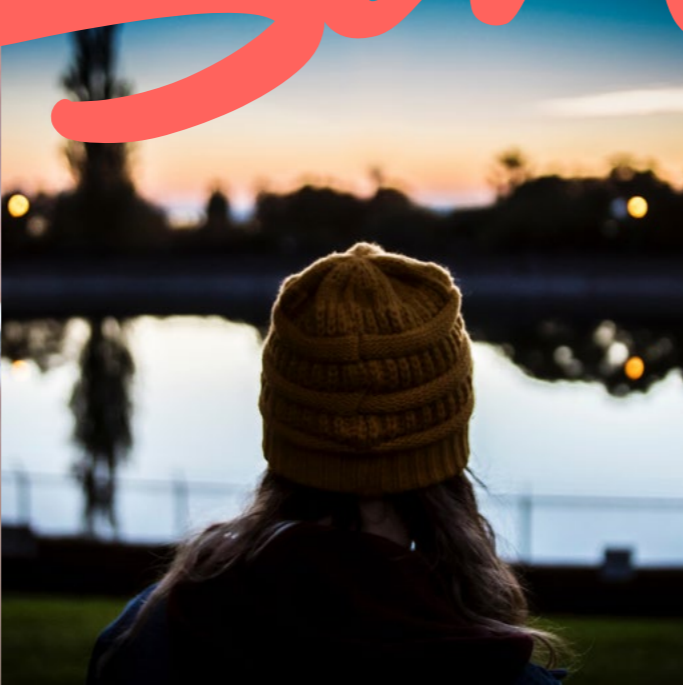


Seattle vibes





Seattle Vibes



Seattle



#visually

#numbers

730,400

population of Seattle

10,759

jobs supported in Washington State by investments and import of Dutch companies

5TH

highest employment growth in the country with

+2,6% in 2018

15.63%

growth of Washington's economy





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SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

4 REASONS YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS TO BE IN SEATTLE

01 Ranks the best tech hub in the US outside Silicon Valley

02 Has a strong ecosystem of companies that can support you in engineering, marketing, and product development.

03 One of the cleanest metropolitan areas in America works to continually improve environmental regulations.

04 Affordable standard of living, it beats Silicon Valley.





5 rules of doing business





5 RULES OF DOING BUSINESS

More tips of entrepreneurs 

Seattle's business scene 



Focus on building long-lasting friendships both professional and personal.



Unlike Silicon Valley, you have the opportunity to fail with your first pitch in Seattle. That does mean keep practicing!



The 1st contact you make is very important. Try to get meetings with all parts of the regions relevant to your business.



Be okay with being turned down but continue to improve your product, business structure, or plan until you succeed.



Once you make the introduction, businesses assume the due diligence is done. You have done your research & are committed to the plan.



012

E-COMMERCE

Amazon, BlueNile, Zulily

AGRICULTURE

Apples, wheat, milk and potatoes. 70% of all US apple production comes from this state.

AEROSPACE

Boeing, Alaska Airlines, Blue Origin, Stratolaunch

RESEARCH & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

University of Washington, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, PATH, World Vision US, Fred Hutch, Allen Institute for AI

RETAIL

REI, Starbucks, Eddie Bauer, Nordstrom, Costco

B2B SOFTWARE

Microsoft, Smartsheet, Concur, Payscale

CLOUD

Amazon AWS, Microsoft Azure, Oracle (Cloud HQ), Chef, Puppet

How to switch from big to small



SEATTLE'S BUSINESS SCENE: WHERE BIG TECH MEETS SMALL BUSINESSES

Seattle's business scene represents a wide range of industries, with some of the greatest companies setting the scene. Before going to Seattle, make sure to familiarize

yourself with the industries and companies located here. Leveraging the local expertise and talent network is essential to growing your startup fast! ■

GAMES

Bungie (Halo), Niantec (Pokemon Go), Microsoft (Xbox), Nintendo (US HQ), Big Fish Games, DoubleDown Interactive, PopCap (Bejeweled), Real Networks (Gamehouse), Valve (Steam platform)

Get to know Seattleites





01 BUSINESS-FOCUSED

Seattleites are more focused on work-life integration rather than work-life balance.

02 THOUGHTFUL

If you have a meeting with them but they can't make it, they will apologize and send someone with the same authority to meet you instead.

03 CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

As a city in the state of Washington, Seattleites care for their environment. A lot.

04 OUTDOORSY TYPES

Seattleites love the nature! The area offers a variety of outdoor activities for all. They also dress very casually as if they are ready to go on a hike at any moment.

05 SEATTLE FREEZE

Small talk is easy with Seattleites but don't feel uncomfortable when you experience the 'freeze' at some point.

06 FOODIES

Seattleites are real foodies. And, you'll likely need a Seattleite to point out the best spots.

07 UNFLASHY

Seattleites like to be understated, so you'll have a better chance of connecting with them if you are too.

08 VERY KIND

Seattleites are very kind! They can be slightly passive aggressive but they are not as artificial as Angelinos.

09 WEATHER

With all those outdoor activities, the weather plays an important role. Luckily the weather is perfect for outdoor activities. It's very warm and sunny in summer and doesn't rain too much. It may be gray but it's still dry.

10 COMMITMENT

Once they are committed, they are committed!



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SEATTLEITES

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THEM

During your trip





PART 2: DURING YOUR TRIP

When you're coming to Seattle it is important to prepare well for your journey. We talked to several accomplished entrepreneurs, who made their mark in Seattle. They will share their tips and tricks on making the best out of your trip.



BIRTH STORY OF A UNICORN

Interview: Arean van Veelen



WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Interview: Juriana Spierenbug



FROM GIANT TO STARTUP

Interview: Martijn van Tilburg



MUST SEES IN SEATTLE

Best of both: urban & nature



A CO-ADVENTURE

Interview: Julie de Widt-Bakker



SEATTLE: A DIFFERENT BALL GAME

Interview: Emile Kalis



AFTER YOUR TRIP

Take me to the next chapter!





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\$> Arean van Veelen | Co-founder OfferUp

THE BIRTH STORY OF A SEATTLE UNICORN

OfferUp is a local marketplace that is disrupting the peer-to-peer marketplace. With over 20 million monthly active users across the U.S. transacting over \$20 billion a year, OfferUp is now the largest mobile marketplace in the U.S. We spoke with its co-founder Arean van Veelen, today active as angel investor and startup advisor in the Seattle area.

When did you move to Seattle?

AvV: I always had a fascination with the US, so after finishing college in The Netherlands I moved to the US and pursued my master's degree here. My first job was in Silicon Valley, right around the time that Silicon Valley started its internet boom. Later, my colleague founded a startup in Seattle and asked me to join. I started by working remotely, then realized that this wasn't working for me. So I moved to Seattle.

How did you come up with the business idea of OfferUp?

AvV: Before starting OfferUp, I found myself as the first employee of a startup in Seattle, twice. Because of this, I gained a lot of experience in designing new client experiences, developing products, and setting up teams. Furthermore, I learned a lot from the different founders, and also a lot from their mistakes. So, at some point, I wanted to start something by myself. Around that same time we were expecting our first son, and I had a laundry list of baby items to buy. Buying new was easy, but I noticed that many products were

just built good enough to last one child and then had to be thrown away. This kept prices low but fills up landfills. When I looking for used items on Craigslist the experience was awful, no wonder people rather go for new.

I figured that to change this we needed to make buying & selling used as simple as new. Hoping that people wouldn't mind paying for quality knowing they could sell it later, extending the lifecycle and thus reducing waste. Nick and I were discussing this over lunch >>

OfferUp



Continue



and he was intrigued by the rapid growth of smartphone use and the new possibilities. So the idea of OfferUp was born. A mobile first simpler local marketplace.

How did the startup phase go?

AvV: By that time, I was mainly looking for reasons to prove myself wrong. But instead, I only found more confirmation that we were going in the right direction. After many customer interviews, we uncovered the need for speed and safety, needs that were not being fulfilled by existing marketplaces. But of course, as a marketplace, you always have the “Chicken-and-Egg” dilemma. To tackle this, we focused on making it extremely easy to put products on the marketplace.

After hard work, lots of hours, and a bit of luck, the platform took off. We received more and more investments from Silicon Valley (nowadays well-connected with Seattle), and the rest is history.

What are your top 3 lessons learned while living/being an entrepreneur in Seattle?

AvV: It's super important to gather the right people around you. It's as if you marry your co-founder, so it

better should be a good match. This also goes for the team. As a founder, you have to create the right culture, for example, where you can easily talk through problems in difficult times. In a start-up, you usually don't have the luxury to push back problems for later. I also found out that initial power users of your product are a great addition to your team! Additionally, it's very important to set the right priorities as a founder. You are namely the one who decides how to allocate your money, manpower, and assets. You should never start making the end-product. Instead, think of what you need now, for example,

“YOU CAN'T CONTROL EVERYTHING, BUT YOU CAN SET THE PRIORITIES TO ALLOCATE YOUR RESOURCES TO WHAT MATTERS MOST”

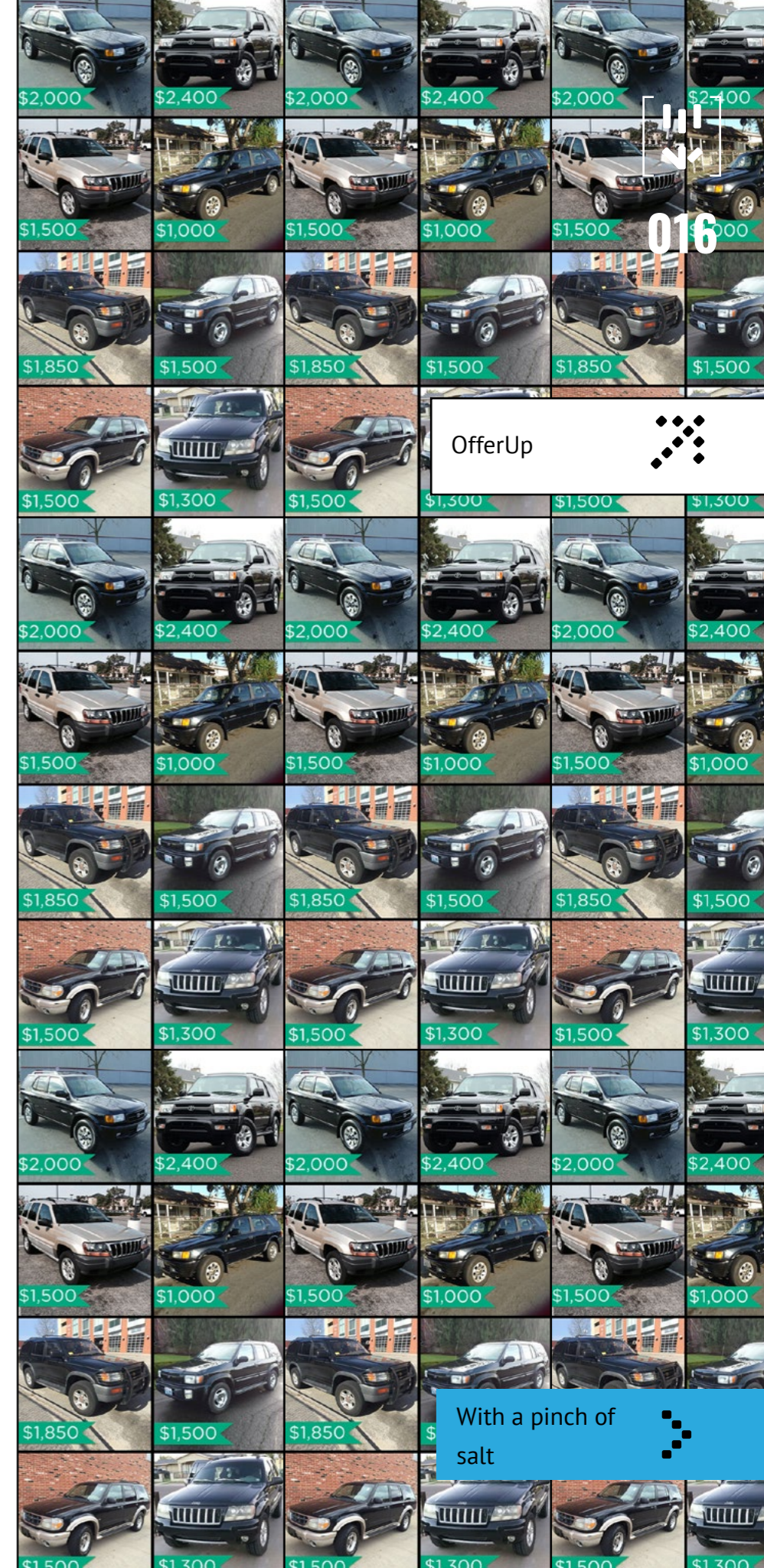
the main functionalities instead of making a beautiful visual design.

Why should entrepreneurs go to Seattle?

AvV: If you are an enterprise-facing startup, it's a no-brainer to go to Seattle since the density of large enterprises in Seattle is sky-high. Additionally, the talent available is amazing, especially in the area of E-commerce & cloud technology. Finally, you'll see that the community of Seattle is very approachable, friendly, and helpful, which you cannot always say about Silicon Valley. Asking for advice is free, and people are usually willing to help you out.

What tips do you want to give to entrepreneurs coming to Seattle?

AvV: Don't forget your raincoat ;). And, start building your network in the Netherlands before going to Seattle by reaching out to everybody you know. Also, ask your initial contacts if they can introduce you to others. This will help to start the ball rolling and will kickstart your experience once you get here. and will kickstart your experience once getting here. ■





CitizenM Seattle, designed by Dutch architecture firm Concrete

WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Juriana Spierenburg has never lived in the Netherlands, however, she has two strong connections with the Dutch -- her father is from Maastricht and she's worked for 4 years for the innovative Dutch hotel chain CitizenM. After working for CitizenM in the buzzing cities of New York and London, Juriana moved to Seattle in February this year to open a new CitizenM. We talked with Juriana about why Seattle is similar to London in the '70s, as well as what tips she would give Americans on how to deal with Dutchies.

What makes Seattle unique?

JS: I really love the energy here. There is a super interesting cultural mix, with strong Asian and Native American influences. You feel the city is at the start of something big, similar to London in the '70s before it became cool. For example, you may think Pike Place Market is a tourist trap, but I truly love the authenticity of this place. The conversations I had with the record shop owner located here, about how he met Janis Joplin in a bar one time, has inspired me so much that I started collecting vinyls.

How would you describe Seattle's culture?

JS: It surprises me that Seattle feels so European. To be more specific, Seattle's culture seems to be similar

to Scandinavian cultures. If you compare Seattle for example with New York, people here are more reserved and calmer, whereas the New Yorkers are very loud and in-your-face. Seattleites are also very unpretentious and practical -- if it rains, you wear a rain jacket. And once you get to know the Seattleites and you have built relationships with them, you can find true trust and really build upon them as long as you put effort into it.

What do you need to know when setting up a business in Seattle?

JS: Seattle is very welcoming and well organized. There are a lot of good networks that you easily can join. I was for example impressed by the proactive approach of >>

Visit CitizenM
in Seattle



Continue



the Hospitality Association in Seattle, that has helped me a lot in setting up the business.

When you have to recruit a team, keep in mind that there are more jobs here than employable people. So, don't expect loads of applicants when posting a vacancy. Start on time and grow your team gradually, instead of hiring a big bunch at once. Also, be mindful of hiring a diverse team. As Seattle's working population is still quite conservative and not as diverse as

“EVERYONE SHARED THEIR OPINIONS BLUNTLY, SENIOR OR NOT, EVEN IF THE CEO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE TOO.”

for example New York, you could end up with less diverse cultures in your team.

How is it to work with the Dutch culture?

JS: Although my father is Dutch and I know the Dutch culture through my family, I was still very amazed about how the Dutch function on the work floor. I still remember one of my first meetings at CitizenM -- everyone shared their opinions bluntly, senior or not, even if the CEO was sitting around the table

too. The liberal and democratic mindset is very evident in the Dutch way of working!

What tips would you give Americans that have to work with the Dutch?

JS: Keep in mind that the Dutch are very honest and outspoken, sometimes too honest and too direct. I learned that they do have good intentions despite their directness, you just have to take them with a pinch of salt. ■

From giant to startup



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Pike Market Place is one of the oldest public farmers' markets in the United States





Martijn van Tilburg is the CEO and founder of 10,000ft, a software company building simple and beautiful resource management tools.

FROM GIANT TO STARTUP

When and why did you come to Seattle?

MvT: Back in the day, after graduating from Industrial Design Engineering, I was looking for a job in software. The software industry was not yet a thing in the Netherlands, so I applied in the US and started as a product designer at Microsoft in '97. I was not the only Dutch designer at Microsoft, there were multiple industrial design engineers working there at that time. You don't realize how much software of Microsoft is designed by Dutchies!

How did you start 10,000ft?

MvT: After a few years at Microsoft, I joined the design agency Artefact started by two friends, designing consumer products for Amazon and Samsung. As Design Director,

I was continuously exploring how to redesign our business, and in 2012 we started building our own resource management software. This was the start of 10,000ft. After just one year we were completely profitable, and in 2019 we sold the business to Smartsheet.

What are your lessons learned after setting up multiple businesses in Seattle?

MvT: We started 10,000ft without any external funding, completely bootstrapped. We initially built the product leveraging developers working at the design agency. This made the startup phase very open and honest, without any secrets and bulsh*t stories for investors, and I very much appreciated this.

Additionally, we differentiated

ourselves by continuously approaching our challenges as true designers, whether it was designing products or designing the organization.

Why should a startup move to Seattle?

MvT: Seattle is a big company town. The big companies provide a bunch of talent with a lot of technical experience. Seattle is a great choice, if you want to partner with the giants or if you have an enterprise-facing value proposition. Additionally, Seattleites are very practical and down-to-earth, which feels close to home and is very convenient to work with. Unfortunately, it's also an expensive city, similar to most parts of the US.

What is your tip to entrepreneurs that want to come over to Seattle?

MvT: At Microsoft, I gained a lot of experience in design and developing software. These experiences have been very valuable in starting my own business. This route is a common way of doing things in Seattle and could be an alternative route for incoming entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, make sure you make use of the Dutch community if you are coming to Seattle! The Netherlands is small, and certain valuable experiences (like universities or extracurricular experiences) are not recognized in the US. The Dutch community helped me a lot to enter the US, and we will also help others! ■

10,000ft at
Smartsheet



Must sees in
Seattle



MUST SEES IN SEATTLE

Seattle is a city that nature-lovers and urbanites both can appreciate. With the ocean on one side and magnificent mountains on the other, there is no shortage of fun things to do.

Tips from
the local
Dutchies

Ray's boothouse

6049 Seaview Ave NW – A must go in the summer!

Leo van Dorp - Honorary Consul of the Netherlands in Seattle

Monsoon Seattle

615 19th Ave E – Delicious fusion Asian food for a reasonable price.

Emile Kalis - Identity Games

The Harvest Vine

2701 E Madison St - Bustling Basque eatery serving small plates & Spanish wine.

Martijn van Tilburg - 10,000ft

For the
nature
lovers

Preserve and Gather

358 NW 85th St – No WiFi, this gorgeous greenwood shop allows you to enjoy the moment.

Slate Coffee

1309 NE 45th St – Be patient and you'll be rewarded with the very best coffee.

Top Pot Doughnuts

2124 5th Ave – The one thing hipsters, techies and boomers in Seattle all agree on. Great coffee too.

Elm Coffee Roasters

240 2nd Ave S – A trendy place, with beautiful blonde wood and broad windows.

Rattlesnake Ledge

A relative easy day hike for 4 miles. A gently-sloping trail through old-growth forest, a view over Snoqualmie Pass and the Southern Cascades. Only 40 min east of Seattle.

Mt Pilchuck

For a one-day summit hike from Seattle it doesn't get any better than this hike. It offers big-time scenery quickly.

Wallace falls

An ideal place for hikers of all different levels.

Best
coffees in
town

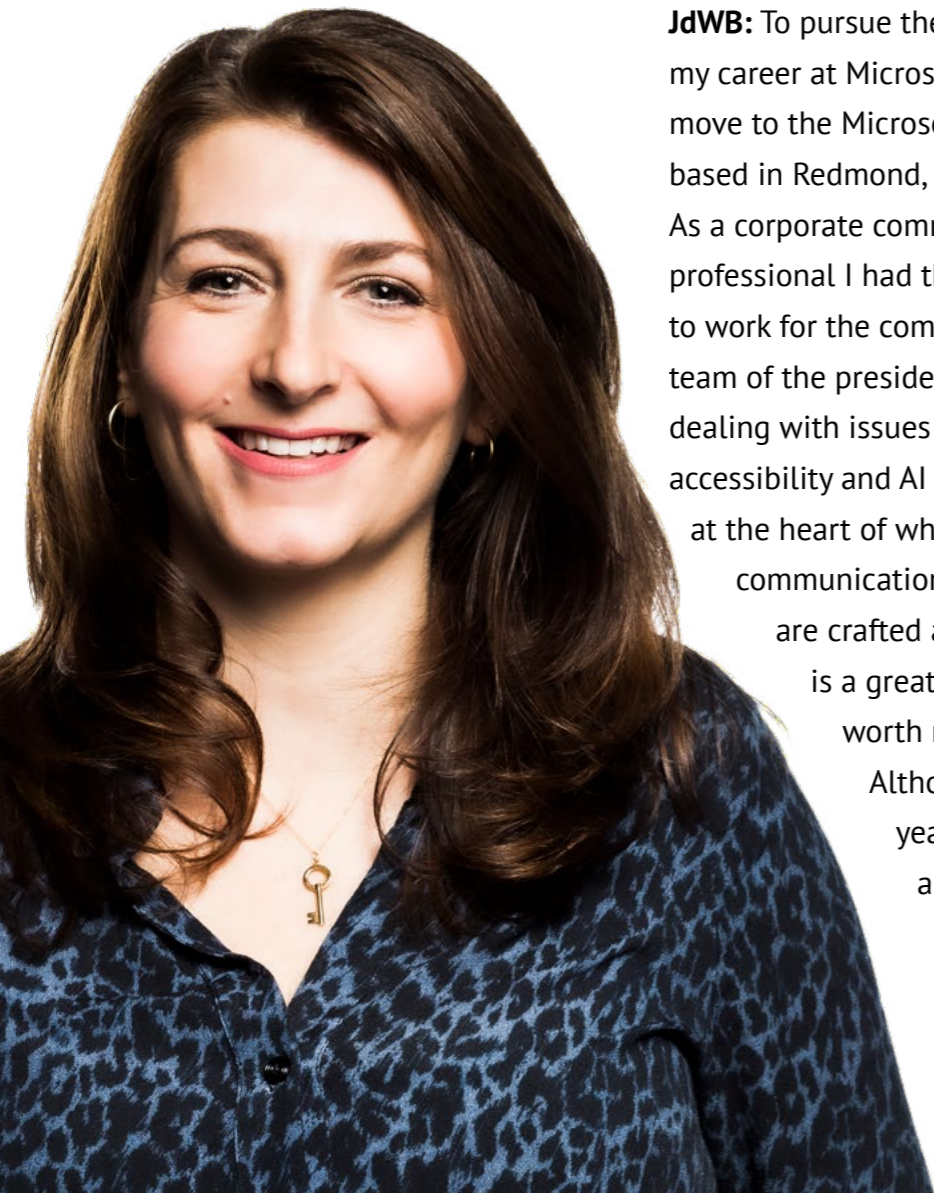
020

Moving to
Seattle

A co-adventure

A CO-ADVENTURE

We spoke with Julie de Widt-Bakker, who has worked at Microsoft for nine years. Two and half years ago, with her husband and three daughters in tow, Julie moved from the Netherlands to a Seattle suburb close to Microsoft's headquarters.



Why did you move to Seattle?

JdWB: To pursue the next step in my career at Microsoft, I decided to move to the Microsoft headquarters based in Redmond, close to Seattle. As a corporate communications professional I had the opportunity to work for the communication team of the president of Microsoft, dealing with issues such as accessibility and AI for Good. Being at the heart of where global communications strategies are crafted and launched is a great challenge and worth moving for. Although the first year was hard, we are happy with the decision made.

What are your biggest lessons learned while working in the US?

JdWB: Trying new things is scary, but worth the jump into the deep end. Once you find your grounding in Seattle, it is truly a magnificent place to live. Americans move around their own country so easily that they understand some of the emotions and issues you might have in adjusting.

What is the biggest misconception about Seattle?

JdWB: The biggest misconception is that it is always raining in Seattle. Indeed, nothing will prepare you for the 2-3 months of non-stop rain in Seattle during the winter, even when you come from the Netherlands and are used to rain. But, once that is cleared, we have the most beautiful springs and 30+ Celsius summers.

What makes working in Seattle different than the Netherlands?

JdWB: The best way to explain the difference with the Dutch culture is by asking the question: "What do you do?" Here in Seattle, the expected answer is not to explain your line of business or your job title, but to tell about your hobbies outside of work. Which in the Pacific

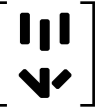
North West almost always includes hiking mountains, skiing, spending time on the lakes or biking.

How does Microsoft contribute to Seattle's startup scene?

JdWB: Around Microsoft, there is a vibrant ecosystem of start-ups and small businesses that thrive on the products and services we offer. With around 50,000 employees in and around Redmond, there is an even larger community that builds their business on our infrastructure and our innovation. So there are great opportunities to build your business here.

What is your advice to people moving to Seattle?

JdWB: Before considering moving to Seattle, I would specifically pay attention to your family and partner traveling with you. It is not easy to find a job as a partner or land in a new school system as kids. And although many say the Seattle Freeze is non-existent, it can be hard to connect with the somewhat introverted people living here. Your adventure needs to be a joint adventure with your partner and family, so realize that they should be just as prepared as you are. ■



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Read more about Julie on her blog



A different balgame



SEATTLE: A DIFFERENT BALL GAME

27 years ago, Emile Kalis co-started his company Identity Games in Rotterdam. The creative company designs and sells all kinds of award-winning board games, as well as custom-made games for marketing purposes. After growing his company in Rotterdam, Emile moved to Seattle in 2014 to start the US office.

Why did you move to Seattle?

EK: With Identify Games, we always wanted to go to the United States. Statistics show that the United States is the country that plays the most games in the world, together with Germany. In 2014, we had an opportunity to buy a company called Find-it, which was located in Seattle. That was the reason I came to Seattle, and I never left since then.

What do you like the most about Seattle?

EK: It's a great place to live and to grow your business. I used to live in Rotterdam, and Seattle is quite similar to Rotterdam both in architecture as in size. So I felt at home quickly. Both cities also have a big port in the city, via which a lot of cargo enters the country. We produce everything in China, so logistic wise Seattle is a very attractive place to be. Additionally, compared to other parts of the US, Seattle has a slightly more direct and, in that sense, more European business culture which I like. But

most importantly, Seattle has a great soccer station (just like Rotterdam), so I'm a happy man.

What was your biggest highlight during the past last 6 years?

EK: It's an extremely competitive landscape here. However, we succeeded twice in making a game that went viral in the entertainment business. These two times, we had a tsunami of calls from shops asking us if they could buy our product. This showed us that we can dream big, sales can jump sky high if you find the right trigger. This is a big difference from the Netherlands, where doing business is less hectic and more incremental.

What has been challenging?

EK: The flip side of growing your business in the US is that there is also a lot of competition. After putting effort into developing a 'new' game, we frequently find out that it already has been invented years before us. If you think you created something new and unique and on your way to the US, make sure you have done your research to be sure it's really unique!

Furthermore, the United States has a very price-driven culture. If

your competitor is cheaper, the Americans will leave you and your company out of the deal. So, although it sounds obvious, success is not guaranteed in the United States.

What do you wish someone would have told you in the beginning?

EK: Two important differences with the Netherlands to keep in mind is that we Dutch are (still) far more direct and expect that attitude in return. American buyers for example simply intend to stop responding if they don't like a proposal rather than telling you that. Second, processes can take way longer than you would expect. Vendor setups, bureaucracy and internal team decisions can take a very long time, be prepared! But you'll see, whatever advice you get before going to the US, you have to experience it yourself to fully understand it.



022

Identity Games



After your trip





PART 3: AFTER YOUR TRIP

You've been to Seattle a couple of times and are expanding your local network; there are clear business opportunities. It's time to move! Read in the following chapter all the practical tips you need to know.



MOVING TO SEATTLE

Practical tips



LAST WORDS BY THE CONSUL

Take me to the last chapter!





MOVING OUT TO SEATTLE

Moving to another country is not easy. You will run into a lot of bureaucracy and things you are completely unfamiliar with. Seattle is no exception.

COST OF LIVING


Because of the growth Seattle went through, the cost of living also increased. Seattle is an expensive area. The cost of living is about one and a half times that of the Netherlands.

The cost of a one-bedroom in Seattle starts at about \$2000 per month

VISA

There are many different types of business visas. An overview of the most common visas is listed by the U.S. Department of State.


It is pretty complicated, so don't try to do this on your own and hire an immigration **LAWYER**. Be aware the process generally takes between 3 and 6 months.

 [Visa information U.S Department of State](#)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Get your Social Security Number (SSN) ASAP. This number is crucial within the US. Everything is connected to your SSN. It is hard to even get a simple subscription without it.

You can apply for your SSN while applying for your visa, or you can visit a Social Security Office nearby.

 [Official site for the Social Security Office](#)

US LEGAL ENTITY

Setting up a US legal entity for your business is vital to make business easier. There are different types of legal entities to consider. All are easy to set up online, for example through Rocket Lawyer.

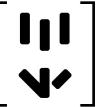
Don't hesitate to contact a **LAWYER** who can help you make the right decision about what type of entity is best for you.

BANKING

Banking in the US is still more focused on building a personal relationship in a branch instead of the convenience of online banking.

There are only a few banks that will allow you to open an account without having a SSN. People still use checks in some cases, and businesses pay invoices by paper checks in the mail.


Transferring money locally easily takes a week unless you are willing to pay a \$40 wire fee. If you still do business with Europe, make sure you select an international bank, to save you a lot of headaches. In short, be patient. Luckily there's more and more fintech that's slowly changing the banking system. >>



HOUSING

One-bedroom apartments in Seattle start around \$2000. There is a huge demand and the market moves fast. Typically, a new listing is gone in just a couple of weeks. It is not as organized as you have seen in the Netherlands.

Rental platforms such as Craigslist are the go-to resource for housing. Narrow down your options of cities or neighborhoods first.


 Housing (and lots more) can be found on Craigslist

CREDIT CARDS

In the US it is all about your personal 'credit score'. It tells banks how credit-worthy you are. This has nothing to do with your bank balance and everything with how well you deal with credit. Getting a credit card without having a credit history is almost impossible. The catch is, you won't have one. Ask


your bank for a 'secured' credit card. They will probably give you a credit card with a limit of \$500 to \$1,000. Start using it and within about 6 months you will be able to apply for a regular credit card. If you don't use it, your credit score will be bad.

If you have been using American Express in The Netherlands, you can apply for an American Express card here as well. Call them and tell them they have to take your history into account. That will give you more flexibility.

 Find out how the credit rating system works


INSURANCE

Health Insurance in the US will cost on average \$500 per month. For most, it will be covered by your employer. There are a few insurance companies that specialize in providing insurance to Dutch people who move abroad, Oom Insurance is one of them. They also offer all other types of insurance.

 Oom Insurance specializes in insurance for Dutch expats

DRIVERS LICENSE

By law, after you move to Washington (WA) you have 30 days to get your WA driver license. Also, you'll need your driver license before you can register any vehicles.

 Visit the DOL (WA Department of Licensing)

TAXES


There is no such thing as VAT in the US. There is a sales tax. But that is only charged to goods sold to the end-user. Corporate tax and Income tax can be pretty complicated and there are two systems you need to take into account, Federal and State. While in The Netherlands filing your tax report is pretty simple, in the US you do need an **ACCOUNTANT** to do the filing for you, both for your company and for your personal income taxes.


LAWYERS? ACCOUNTANTS? HELP!

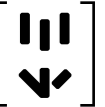
When you go looking for lawyers or accountants to help you out, the Dutch Consulate can connect you to service providers directly.

In the Seattle region itself, Greater Seattle Partners (GSP) is your point of contact for international business, trade, and investment. GSP has developed a very handy Innovation Triangle Relocation Guide, in which useful contacts, tips and tricks are stated in order to get you started.

Otherwise, you can always contact the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, a helpful source based in the Netherlands.

 The Innovation Triangle Relocation Guide by GSP

 More info at Netherlands Enterprise Agency



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Contact the Dutch Consulate



Prepare your next trip



HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE RIDE!



026



**ALSO
PLANNING
TO GO TO LOS
ANGELES
OR SILICON
VALLEY?**

Check out the LA
Playbook



Check out the SV
Playbook



End
your trip





027



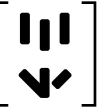
you are here



Welcome back home!



Home in rebellious Seattle



028

From “Sleepless in Seattle” and Nirvana to Microsoft and Starbucks,, it’s not easy to characterize Seattle. The truth is, Seattle can be anything you want it to be. Because in easy-going and rebellious Seattle, many feel at home and so could you and your business!

Yet not many Dutch companies think about Seattle, hidden in the far northwest of the US. But in the last couple of years, Seattle has developed into a major startup and tech hub, with an economic growth of over 10 percent per year, and too many vacancies to fill. No wonder it has become an attractive alternative for the expensive and over-competitive Silicon Valley.

In this fast-growing city, where companies like Amazon and Boeing call the shots, your company can profit from the expertise and projects that come from the many multi-billion dollar corporations that are headquartered here. Just ask Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos.

With a laid-back vibe, outdoor lifestyle, and great coffee, Seattle feels like Europe. But doing business here does require some adaptation. The stories of successful Dutchies in Seattle show you how business in Seattle works, and why this city might be a better fit than LA or San Francisco. So take a chance, bring your hiking boots, and discover the opportunities that the Emerald City brings. The consulate general is here to help.

I’m happy to bring Seattle to your attention. And believe me, you’ll feel at home too.

Dirk Janssen,
Consul General of the Netherlands in San Francisco

Ask me your
questions about
doing business in
Seattle:

WhatsApp:
+1 310-261-4003

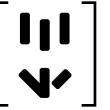
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Continue





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The Consulate General of the Netherlands on the US West Coast

Linking the Netherlands and the United States

More than 130,000 jobs on the US West Coast are the result of the strong economic relations between the Netherlands and the United States. The Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco connects the Netherlands and the 13 western states of the United States, including Washington, where Seattle is located. We link American businesses and organizations to Dutch expertise and innovation and help Dutch businesses and organizations find partners or a soft landing in the US. A special startup liaison connects Dutch startups to the US ecosystem.

What the Consulate does

- The economic team promotes trade relations between our
- two countries and helps Dutch companies have a soft landing on the US West Coast – for example, via economic missions, market scans, public-private cooperation, and matchmaking.
- The Holland in the Valley network, an initiative by the consulate, connects West Coast innovation with Dutch companies and talent. Successful Dutch entrepreneurs support Dutch startups that expand to the US by mentoring them and developing tailor-made programs. The startup liaison coordinates this effort. Dutch students gain work experience through the Internships in the Valley platform.
- The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency (NFIA)

assists American businesses to establish or expand operations in the Netherlands.

- The Holland Innovation Network (HIN) stimulates international cooperation between companies, knowledge institutes, and governments in the fields of innovation, technology, and science.

The Consulate General in San Francisco is supported by an honorary consul in Seattle, and by other honorary consuls in Anchorage, Denver, Honolulu, Phoenix, Portland, San Diego, and Los Angeles.

How the consulate can help you

The consulate can help to open doors for Dutch entrepreneurs

when coming to Seattle. The objective of this Playbook Seattle is to be even better prepared. The more specific your needs are, the better we can support you. The consulate can also help you with consular affairs.

Where to find more information and how to get in touch

For more information about business in the USA please check www.nlintheusa.com or www.rvo.nl.

Please contact us if you have any further questions or when you want to meet up.

SFN-EA@minbuza.nl
Twitter/LinkedIn: @NLinSF
Facebook: NLintheUSA

Visit the website of the Consulate





STATE
HOTEL

NOW

THE
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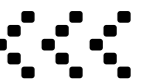


BEFORE ➤
YOUR
TRIP

DURING ➤
YOUR
TRIP

AFTER ➤
YOUR
TRIP

Back
to the start





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Consulate General of the Netherlands in San Francisco

www.nlintheusa.com | SFN-EA@minbuza.nl | Twitter/LinkedIn: @NLinSF | Facebook: NLintheUSA

This is a publication of
Netherlands Enterprise Agency
Prinses Beatrixlaan 2
PO Box 93144 | 2509 AC The Hague
T +31 (0) 88 042 42 42
E klantcontact@rvo.nl
www.rvo.nl

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Netherlands Enterprise Agency is part of the ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.