

10 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN

CHOOSING A PEO PARTNER



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FOOTHOLD AMERICA

EMPOWERING YOUR
GROWTH



NOTE FROM THE HEAD OF BUSINESS SERVICES




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Get it right, and your PEO becomes the partner that accelerates your American growth. Get it wrong, and you have signed up for months of administrative headaches and unnecessary compliance risk.

For international companies, the stakes are even higher. You are not just looking for a payroll processor. You need a partner who understands cross-border complexity, American employment norms, and the unique challenges of running US operations from overseas.

Choosing a PEO partner is one of the most strategic decisions you will make in your US expansion. This relationship touches every employee you hire, every payroll you run, and every compliance requirement you need to meet.



**The
cheapest PEO is
rarely the best
value. And the
best value rarely
has the cheapest
price tag.**



CAN A NON-US COMPANY REGISTER A US ENTITY?

There are around 523 PEOs operating in the United States, and they vary dramatically in depth of expertise, quality of service, and ability to support companies expanding from overseas. A PEO that works beautifully for a domestic US startup may leave an international company stranded without the cross-border guidance it actually needs.

DISCLAIMER

Always evaluate a PEO against your specific business requirements, your employee locations, and your growth plans. If you would like an honest assessment of whether a PEO fits your US expansion, contact Foothold America directly.

CHALLENGES OF CHOOSING A PEO FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES

The US PEO market is large, fragmented, and inconsistent. Providers vary in expertise, service quality, pricing transparency, and their ability to support international clients. What looks like a simple vendor decision often turns into a complex evaluation with real consequences for your employees and your compliance posture.

COMMON CHALLENGES:

* RESEARCH

Hundreds of PEOs all claim to do the same thing, making it hard to separate genuine expertise from marketing gloss.

* AFFORDABILITY

Pricing models vary widely. Headline rates often hide setup fees, termination penalties, and benefit markups that inflate your true cost.

* ADMINISTRATION

Poor technology and generic ticket-based support create daily friction that your US team will feel at every pay cycle.

* COMPLIANCE

Federal, state, and local employment laws change frequently. Missing one requirement can cost you thousands in penalties.

* CULTURAL FIT

Generic domestic PEOs rarely understand the time-zone pressures and cultural nuances international companies manage every day.

* SCALABILITY

The PEO that fits you at five US employees may not serve you well at fifty. Few providers plan for your growth path.

NAVIGATING PEO SELECTION FOR YOUR AMERICAN WORKFORCE



1. Expertise: Generalist vs Specialist
2. Service Model: Dedicated vs Ticketed
3. Technology Platform
4. Compliance Track Record
5. Benefits and Carrier Relationships

10 FACTORS TO CONSIDER



6. Pricing Structure and Total Cost
7. Experience with International Companies
8. Growth Capacity and Scalability
9. References and Reputation
10. Cultural Fit and Partnership Philosophy

**RECOMMENDED SOLUTION:
FOOTHOLD AMERICA'S PEO+
CROSS-BORDER SUPPORT™**



EXPERTISE & COMPLIANCE

Not all PEOs know the US market the way international companies need them to. Some spread attention across dozens of countries. Others specialise in American employment law, state regulations, and cross-border complexity.

LOOK FOR :

Specialist Expertise:

Detailed knowledge of state-specific rules, like California meal breaks or Colorado salary transparency laws. Confident answers backed by real client experience.

Compliance Track Record:

Years of experience supporting international companies through US expansion, with a proven record of keeping clients in good standing. References from companies that can vouch for them.

WATCH OUT FOR:

Generic Answers:

Vague responses and generalist pitches. Generic answers signal generic service.

Reactive Compliance:

Missing certifications, or an inability to explain how they monitor compliance across every state you hire in.



SERVICE MODEL & TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

Your daily experience with a PEO is shaped by how they support you and the technology they give you. For international companies running US operations from overseas, both need to work across time zones.

LOOK FOR:

Dedicated Support:

A named account manager who knows your business, picks up the phone, and takes personal accountability for your success. Response times measured in hours, not days.

Intuitive Technology:

Easy employee self-service, real-time reporting, and an active product roadmap that shows the provider is still investing.

WATCH OUT FOR:

Ticket Queues:

Rotating support staff, 48+ hour response windows, and the feeling that you are ticket number 47,829.

Legacy Systems:

Clunky interfaces, outdated design, and maintenance windows that always hit during your working hours.

Slow Sales Process:

Sluggish or generic responses before you sign. If they treat you this way while competing for your business, it only gets worse once you are a client.



BENEFITS OFFERINGS & PRICING STRUCTURE

Benefits determine whether you can attract American talent. Pricing determines your return on investment. The best PEO gets both right, without hidden surprises.

LOOK FOR:

Strong Benefits Package:

Large-group rates through reputable national carriers, with strong provider networks in your employees' states. A full package of health, dental, vision, 401(k), and supplemental benefits.

Transparent Pricing:

Detailed cost scenarios based on your employee count, with clear answers on setup fees, termination clauses, and benefit markups.

WATCH OUT FOR:

Limited State Coverage:

A master health carrier with weak provider coverage in the states where your team is based.

Rock-Bottom Rates:

Pricing that seems too good to be true. Low headline rates usually mean limited service or hidden fees that surface later.

Opaque Pricing:

Providers who cannot give a clear total cost up front. Complex fee structures usually exist to bury setup costs, termination penalties, and benefit markups in the fine print.



AMERICAN EXPERIENCE & SCALABILITY

Standard PEOs built for domestic US companies miss the cultural nuances and time-zone realities that international businesses navigate every day. Many also fail to grow with you.

LOOK FOR:

Cross-Border Expertise:

A strong portfolio of UK, European, Australian, or Asian clients. Team members in or near your time zone. True cross-border guidance, not generic domestic service.

Growth Path:

A clear client size sweet spot that matches where you are and where you are going. Structured progression from EOR to PEO+ to full self-management.

WATCH OUT FOR:

No International Track Record:

Providers who cannot name international clients, have no time-zone coverage, or stumble on expatriate employee questions.

One-Size-Fits-All Models:

Providers you will outgrow, or that will outgrow you, forcing a disruptive switch later.



REFERENCES & CULTURAL FIT

The final two considerations separate vendors from partners. References reveal what marketing materials never will. Cultural fit determines whether the relationship thrives or stalls at the first difficult conversation.

LOOK FOR:

Strong References:

Reference calls with international companies in your industry and growth stage. Honest answers about what the provider does well and where they fall short.

True Partnership Mindset:

A provider who listens first, asks thoughtful questions about your business, and proactively flags issues before they become problems.

WATCH OUT FOR:

Rehearsed References:

Reluctance to share references, or references who sound scripted. Ask how the PEO handles problems, not just successes.

Transactional Behaviour:

One-size-fits-all pitches, pushy sales tactics, and communication that feels off during the sales process. It rarely improves later.

RECOMMENDED

FOOTHOLD AMERICA'S PEO+ CROSS-BORDER SUPPORT™

International companies face unique challenges that domestic PEOs often overlook. Managing American employees from overseas means operating across time zones, navigating cultural differences, and translating US employment norms into context that makes sense for your home country.

Our PEO+ Cross-Border Support™ service was built specifically for international companies expanding to the US.

PROS:

* **COMPREHENSIVE PAYROLL:**

We manage compliant payroll processing, statutory and voluntary benefits withholdings, year-end tax documents, and payroll grid management, so your recurring tasks are handled.

* **BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION:**

We offer large-employer benefits plans through negotiated master agreements for health, dental, vision, and more, so you can offer a competitive package at the right rates.

* **WORKERS' COMP COVERAGE:**

We manage workers' compensation insurance across every state where you hire, including claims handling, compliance requirements, and annual renewals, so your team stays covered as you expand.

* **EXPERT HR GUIDANCE:**

We offer HR guidance on compliance, employee classification, and difficult terminations, so you can move forward with confidence on the tough decisions.

* **CROSS-BORDER EXPERTISE:**

Our team includes dedicated account managers in or near your time zone. We bridge American and international business practices, so US workforce management feels manageable instead of overwhelming.

* **SCALABLE GROWTH PATH:**

Start where you are today and grow with us. As your US operation matures, we move with you from EOR to PEO+ to People Partnership Service, so you never outgrow the partnership.

WHY BUSINESSES CHOOSE FOOTHOLD AMERICA FOR THEIR US PEO NEEDS

✓ SPECIALISED EXPERTISE:

We focus exclusively on US expansion for international companies. That means deep knowledge of American employment law, state regulations, and the cross-border dynamics domestic providers miss.

✓ DEDICATED SUPPORT:

Every client gets a named account manager, not a ticket queue. Our team operates in or near your time zone, so you get answers when you need them.

✓ TRANSPARENT PRICING:

Clear, detailed pricing with no hidden setup fees, termination penalties, or benefit markups. You know exactly what you are paying for from day one.

✓ PROVEN TRACK RECORD:

We have supported hundreds of international companies through US market entry and sustained growth. Our references speak for themselves.



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