

# A Global Platform

An Interview with Fredrick Fuest,  
President, International Division, Active International

**EDITORS' NOTE** Fredrick "Rick" Fuest joined Active in 1995 as Executive Vice President-International, responsible for Active's global business. He became COO of Active in 1998 and was made President-International Division in 2005. Before Active, Fuest spent 25 years at Hoffmann-La Roche in various roles including VP, U.S. Pharmaceutical Operations and CEO of two subsidiary companies. He holds a B.A. in Physics from Drew University and an M.S. in Environmental Science from Rutgers University.



Fredrick Fuest

While having a local office in a market is beneficial, we do not necessarily need an office in a particular market to work with clients there. In many areas, our offices support several countries. For example, from Germany we service Switzerland and Austria, from France we work with clients in Belgium, and from Spain we support Portugal.

We also have representatives in a number of countries and we anticipate that initial market entries will evolve into future Active offices.

**At what stage of development are emerging markets in terms of understanding Active's value?**

It's an education process and it varies, even in developed markets. Our business can

Almost all of the people we employ are from the local markets we participate in. Training is a big investment because most of the people we hire have not previously been in our industry. Their local experience and knowledge, coupled with the training we provide, is critical to our success and ensures that they can deliver the level of service we expect.

**Are the services and offerings consistent from market to market or do they need to be customized?**

The core of our business in all markets is media and the majority of the trade credits we issue around the world are utilized for media placement. However, in many markets, we provide a variety of other services. For example, in Germany, Poland, and Hungary, we have printing operations that account for a large portion of our business. We also provide other products such as travel, freight, retail marketing, cleaning services, and uniform services in several markets.

**How do you maintain an entrepreneurial spirit as this company grows?**

The nature of the business we're in flourishes in an entrepreneurial environment. There is no set rule for how to do corporate trading. It's a creative business and we encourage and support open thinking and new ideas that keep our business relevant.

**Is there an ideal size for a company looking to work with Active?**

Active needs to work with companies where our solution can be relevant. This can apply to mid-sized local companies as well as large multinationals. The key is solving a problem that is significant to the client and their ability to utilize the trade credit within a

reasonable period.

**How do you perceive your role and how difficult is it to balance your time?**

My job is to lead the international division of Active as it continues to grow both geographically and financially. I need to not only provide the vision for the future of our international business, but I need to inspire, coach, and support our entire international team. ●

**How important has the international footprint been for Active and will you give an overview of the business from that standpoint?**

The international footprint we have is very important to our overall growth because it helps support our U.S. and international customers in several different ways.

First, when we deal with a multinational corporation, be it a U.S.-based or international company, they immediately have the ability to use their trade credit anywhere in the world with Active – not only in the markets where we have offices but also in neighboring markets or regions.

Second, when we purchase an inventory from a client, we are able to sell it anywhere in the world. This is because we have a network of buyers in all of the regions where we have operations.

Additionally, Active can address a multinational company's issues from a global perspective. Often we work with corporate headquarters to help manage inventory or asset shifts among multiple markets. The global aspect of Active's business serves our clients well and makes us unique because no other corporate trading company has the international scope that we do.

**Do you need to have physical offices in these markets? Do you anticipate further growth?**

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only be successful in markets that have a fully developed manufacturing sector and a robust media marketplace. We primarily focus on countries, large and small, with highly developed economies. China is a good example of a country that has made such an economic transition over the past few years.

**How critical is it to invest in finding local talent in these markets?**