

MarketLink International

David Smith · Senior advisory to growth-stage companies

The practice

I'm David Smith. Boards and CEOs bring me in on the commercial and governance questions where the answer is not obvious and the cost of getting it wrong is significant. MarketLink is my practice: consulting to growth-stage companies on international market entry and expansion; fundraising; corporate development and M&A advisory; and CEO coaching. Every engagement is led personally, no junior team, no associate dilution.

One of the few

Few senior operators have worked all sides of the international trade flow. I've taken 190 technology companies into the US from Ireland and twenty other countries, set up 120 international companies in Ireland, and established legal entities across the EU. Over €200m in resulting client sales, over €125m raised, over \$400m in M&A advisory, across more than four hundred companies in twenty-plus countries.

Service areas

Market entry and international expansion. Buyer and partner networks span the US, Ireland, the UK and the EU. For companies entering the US, I handle positioning, pricing, channel choice, recruitment and the sequencing of the first eighteen months. This is built on eleven years in Silicon Valley with Enterprise Ireland, US Market Access Center and FirstCapital. For international companies entering Ireland, I draw on five years at IDA Ireland securing 120 inward investment projects from Fortune 100 and FTSE 100 companies. For EU expansion, I served as CEO EMEA of a US medical technology company, establishing European legal entities from Dublin and appointing country leads in Germany and Italy.

Fundraising. Preparation, investor positioning, introductions and process management for Series A through later-stage rounds. Cumulative client fundraising to date: in excess of €125m.

Corporate development and M&A advisory. Buyer engagement and deal origination drawing on the FirstCapital years as Managing Director, Head of Origination, and my broader background in corporate development. M&A advisory to date exceeds \$400m, with career exits including acquisitions by Cisco, Expedia, Criteo and Royal Mail.

CEO coaching. One-to-one work with first-time and second-time chief executives at growth-stage companies. Quiet, regular, candid conversations about the things they can't raise with their own board.

Background

Eleven years in Silicon Valley. Twenty-five in Dublin.

Senior Vice President, Enterprise Ireland Silicon Valley: 130 Irish companies supported on US expansion, over €90m in resulting sales, over €30m in funding. A 100% Investment Committee approval record across 130-plus equity cases.

SVP International and Corporate Development Lead, US Market Access Center. Then FirstCapital: Managing Director, Head of US, then Managing Director, Head of Origination. Established the Silicon Valley and Dublin offices.

Currently Senior Consulting Partner, Client Engagement, Partnerships and Ecosystems Development at Huawei's Service Provider Operations Lab in Ireland: \$47m+ in sales across European, African and Asian markets. Recipient of the Huawei President's Consulting Award 2026. Keynotes: the Petronas Oil and Gas Summit in Kuala Lumpur, the Holomedicine Summit in Singapore, GSMA forums.

Credentials

Institute of Directors Ireland: Diploma in Company Direction, with Distinction.
Postgraduate Diploma in Executive Coaching: TU Dublin and Peter Bluckert Coaching.
Stanford Graduate School of Business: Leadership4Growth (audited).

Engagement models

Short diagnostic (four to six weeks). Retained advisor (monthly retainer, typically six to twelve months). Project-based mandate (defined deliverable, fixed fee). Priced against the value of the strategic outcome, not time spent. Direct enquiry is welcome.

Contact

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