

## Solving the problem of overseas business payments

International Trade Magazine speaks to Daniel Abrahams, CEO of CurrencyTransfer.com, about how to overcome some of the traditional pitfalls surrounding sending money abroad



### Tell us about CurrencyTransfer.com.

My Co-Founder Stevan and I have helped customers trade over \$1 billion in foreign currency since 2010, approaching the foreign currency industry as the disruptive non-bank aggregators.

Like many other fast growing tech companies, CurrencyTransfer.com tries to solve a deep problem. International business payments are expensive, opaque and utterly confusing. Both of us got heavily ripped off when travelling around Australia and Europe respectively. Due to the unnecessary complexity, we truly didn't know what we were paying.

The vision at CurrencyTransfer.com is to help every business that trades internationally to compare and book a fairer

deal on international business payments. We've built the world's first online marketplace matching companies with the most competitive international payment quotes. Savings versus hidden fees are on average 85% versus banks and brokers.

We're here to get you the right deal, at the right price, backed up with a stellar Currency Concierge team who really get to understand your business. You can almost think of us as an Expedia for Business Foreign Exchange. We're an investment backed business with a distributed team, having offices in London, Tel Aviv and Sofia – three fantastic tech ecosystems.

### How has the currency exchange market changed in recent years in terms of transparency and trust?

In May, trust and confidence in 'the big

banks' was probably at an all time low. We saw the five big banks pay \$5.4 billion for rigging currencies, many admitting guilt following a serious probe and investigation.

However, if we bring it down to retail and SME level, I actually think we have seen a growing wave of transparency and choice in the way customers can now make international payments and exchange currencies. Whilst 85% still transact with their high street bank and pay huge amounts in hidden fees, there are a growing wave of VC backed entrepreneurs out there who want to wage 'war' on hidden fees and poor rates. These companies provide fantastic alternatives to banks and old-school legacy incumbents. It really is the future and representatives of wider theme in Fintech – you simply don't have to use your bank to do core personal and business banking services.

### Who is your target customer?

We work with corporate client CFO's and Owners spanning 12 industries. Most are importing, exporting, paying suppliers or doing inter-company transfers.

Having the right product market fit is important for any technology business. Right now, we're laser focused on onboarding anyone from a Sole Trader, SME or Mid Cap client, as these businesses are making regular transfers and either receiving a raw deal from banks or they're tired ringing up multiple brokers for quotes over the telephone. Customers not only come to us to shop for the best rate, but also the convenience of online only execution, in less than 60 seconds.

### How has the growth of technology affected how the currency exchange market

### operates?

In 2015, you don't have to trust the wide boy currency telephone trade with a broker or your bank's rate which is held just once a day. With new technologies, hidden bank fees and broker honeymoon rates will hopefully be a thing of the past.

With technology, the customer has access, transparency and customer choice. On CurrencyTransfer.com, the customer has access to a choice of rates from different payment providers, the process is 100% transparent as the customer sees the mid-market rate alongside the rates being offered, and the Finance Director or Owner chooses which service to do business with.

### What are the key factors affecting currency rates at present?

Inflation, interest rates, speculation, Government debt.

These are just a few factors. Everyone is watching the Greece situation closely, and the Euro is fluctuating accordingly based on even the smallest of events there. If a deal is struck, investors may buy the Euro. No deal and more chaos, we may see 1.45. However, no one has a crystal ball which is why we say we're the experts in finding you 'the best rate' but trading at 'the right time' is something we can certainly help with via some of our hedging products (forward contracts), but not always guarantee.

### How does your service offer something different to the norm?

Quite simply, we're not a bank nor a broker. We offer 100% independence and impartiality that our customers truly love. Trust is the most important component when dealing with customer funds, so the level of curation we offer needs to be of the highest calibre. We're proudly not whole of market as a marketplace model. We only stream live quotes from FCA authorised payment institutions that need to pass strict vetting criteria to be a payment partner on the CurrencyTransfer.com marketplace

### How will the currency exchange market change in the future?

Here are a couple predictions. Don't hold me to them! Firstly, the archaic remittance bricks and mortar shop will be dead in 20 years time. Secondly, we will see the vast majority of corporate clients using specialist non-bank foreign exchange companies. Thirdly, the SWIFT payment network will need to modernise, keep an eye out for smart companies working with blockchain technology not so much as a 'currency', but partnering with banks to facilitate instant transfers.

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