PGT is a U.S. subsidiary of a $ 5 billion European multinational. The company develops and markets process analytical equipment.

One morning, as the Marketing Vice-President arrived at the Office, he noticed that the staff was acting rather strangely, but shrugged off the observation. Later that morning, he found a fax from Europe on his desk advising him that his employment with the company was terminated, effective immediately.

What's the problem(s)?

A Canadian firm decided to go into the USA. The sales manager began making calls and as a result picked up a series of good leads and even a few sales. The manager came to management and asked for a salary increase equal to almost double his present income. He was refused the raise and subsequently quit. In a week he was employed with the Canadian competition, and within a month, they began selling into the USA.

What happened? Why? How could this have been avoided?

A Canadian opened a series of sewing rooms in the Bahamas. According to US Law 701, garments cut in the US but put together offshore can be labeled "Made in the United States". Our young entrepreneur placed an advertisement in a journal directed to manufacturers entitle "Save money, use offshore facilities for your piece goods". He did not get any bites.

Why? What should he have done?

A company out of France has given the rights to their product line for Canada and the United States to a Canadian distributor. He is doing fairly well in Canada and is looking south for a few big orders that would help his tight cash flow.

O.K. so far? Why or why not?

David V. developed a dry cell battery charger that would expand the life of an ordinary dry cell battery by up to 11 times. He secured US distribution and made a lot of money. But the well ran abruptly dry! One out of every 10 products failed!

David went back to the drawing board. Perfected the unit and even cut the price. He went back to the distributor, and offered to replace all old units in the channel with the new and improved unit. His offer was refused. He was sued and is presently in court.

What should he have done? Why?

The son of a large Finnish lumber mill owner came to the USA to attend university. He met a girl and traveled with her to spend Thanksgiving with her parents at their home in Atlanta. He wandered into a Home Depot in Atlanta and did some research. He noted the price for 2X4's and immediately called his Dad. "We can easily beat these prices!"

The Dad took his son's advice and began exporting to the southeast USA. He hired an export manager, who began calling and received a few HUGE orders. Shipped the goods and guess what? The lumber is still held in bond at the harbour on this side of the Atlantic.

What went wrong? What should have been done?

A software developer in Turku, Finland is presently doing great with software that helps teachers present a topic. It creates a PowerPoint presentation, summarizes the notes, e-mails to groups and even prepares for the material for publication. The company is successful in the UK and wants to enter the USA.

The Finnish government has supplied a grant as long as the firm increases employment. The firm decided to send an employee who is fluent in English to open an office on this side of the Atlantic. The USA is looking to develop the southeast and offered a tax free shelter if a foreign company opened an office in the "depressed" region. The company subsequently sent their man packing with instructions to open a place in Atlanta.

Doomed! Why? What should they have done?

A President of a Swedish manufacturer was at a conference in France and met a US expert who was speaking at that symposium. They became friendly and after a few discussions it was suggested that the Swedish company investigate the US market. The Swede went home and immediately ordered the marketing manager to send someone to the next possible trade show in the USA to do some digging around.

Does this approach make sense?