

## **The Challenges of Managing Talent Internationally**

### **Insight from the HopkinsLongworth & Innecto Reward seminar, October 2014**

At our recent event on managing talent internationally it became clear that globalisation creates major HR opportunities and challenges. An impressive speaker panel shared their expertise as we debated how the latest mega trend has been a catalyst for accelerating the Battlefield for Talent.

So whilst globalisation makes it much easier for each of us to become an international traveller as Coca-Cola is understood in every language and if you wish you can buy a Big Mac in more than 32,000 locations around the world..... The HR implications are many, varied and significant.

We hear continuously that the War for Talent or 'Battlefield' is becoming tougher as HR professionals are being tasked with securing the best available talent in an increasingly mobile market, beset with skills shortages and then ensuring they are retained within their companies.

Globalisation is the latest mega trend which Magnus Lindkvist, the Swedish author, trend spotter and self-confessed 'futurologist' confirms will touch all of us. He does not fill one with confidence when he states 'Everything we Know is Wrong'! (...he warms to his theme in his entertaining book of this title.)

When hearing him speak recently he re-enforced the need to admit that, whilst we don't know all the answers, we should keep a curious nature to discover 'secrets' which can create 'magic'.

Translating this to managing talent internationally I took to mean we can never pretend to know all about the different geographies and cultures. Although one thing for sure is that we need to be prepared to focus our skills and ability on attracting and managing talent in a diverse and international arena.

We debated this topic at our seminar and the overwhelming agreement was that managing talent internationally is going to have the biggest impact for HR. To be successful, globalisation relies on an integrated and consistent HR strategy across the business which can be tailored and moulded to the local market requirements. This requires trust, insight, and expertise particularly in the emerging markets where market entry is often via joint ventures.

To be successful it is essential to combine local with global – success depends on cultural immersion and cultural understanding to ensure market integration and development. Layer on the complexities and complications of language, legislation and time zones it can be overwhelming!

However it is clear that, as Deloitte have recently revealed in their Global Human Capital Trends 2014 Survey, there are key trends and messages which we can all learn from. From a talent acquisition perspective, the key message from the 2,532 businesses across 94 countries surveyed, was that this area is going through a significant disruption as a result of globalization, technology, social media and changing workforce expectations. Recruitment is evolving into a strategic function focused on marketing, branding, and new tools and technologies. For me the key messages coming out of our seminar underpinned the extent to which companies in a wide range of sectors looking to recruit and acquire talent are now competing on this new battlefield – a battlefield shaped by new global talent networks and social media, and defined by employment brands and changing views and expectations of careers.

So the challenge to all businesses is high and when considering recruitment we all need to blend talent and marketing strategies to cope with the demands of front end recruitment, with the need to re-recruit our employees, managers and leaders every day.

In addition those organisations whose remits are UK focused cannot escape the impact of globalisation either; whether it is the Battlefield for Talent being played out on an increasingly global playing field or the impact that cheaper products and services from overseas will have on business models and organisation structures.

We agreed that it is imperative that, as HR professionals, we need to embrace the spirit of open communication and share our experiences in how best to attract, retain, develop, reward and manage the increasingly international workforce.

So no easy answers but when considering ‘facilitated talent mobility’ and the development of a global workforce there are already HR role models who have embraced the opportunities of globalisation to develop themselves, their careers and provide real commercial business benefits.

In summary

- Globalisation is a megatrend which is here to stay
- Embracing new media and communication tools ensures we can proactively manage & support the international talent agenda

- We must not shy away from the major challenges and opportunities this trend is creating for the people agenda
- In particular as the battlefield for talent plays out, globalisation is impacting on the recruitment, retention and development of managers and the leaders of tomorrow
- Our ability to embrace this trend and appreciate its reach will ensure we are able to act positively
- An inquisitive approach to new markets and the ability to act with agility respecting the local cultures and markets is most important
- Clear communication is critical to share learnings, celebrate success and use role models to help promote the global talent agenda

We will cover off these summary points in more detail but wanted to share an overview on this vast issue which is facing us all.

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