

Executive Search Consultants Met in Istanbul - Companies Are Searching For Global Talents

Original interview with Patrick Westerburger, President of the IRC Executive Board, was published at the Hürriyet newspaper on September 28 2014.

60 Executive Search consultants from 40 countries came together in Istanbul for IRC Global Executive Search Partners' annual meeting. Patrick Westerburger, President of the IRC Executive Board, answered our questions before the meeting: "Globally, there is a serious increase in mobility. There is a trend especially in the age of 30 plus. The question is not "Can I find the talent in my own country?" Recently, the question has shifted to, "Can I find the right talent globally?"

IRC Global Executive Search Partners, one of the biggest executive search alliances in the world, held its annual meeting on 24-26 September in Istanbul, gathering more than 60 Managing Partners of its member executive search teams from 40 countries. The IRC executive search consultants discussed strategies in the war for talent, support of women leaders, finding talents in emerging markets – particularly in the Middle East – and perfecting service quality during the meeting hosted by HumanGroup, IRC's Turkey representative.

How do you describe today's expat market?



There is a serious increase in the global mobility of talent. In the EMEA region, mobility is on a high level and people are free to move and work, especially across the EU countries. There is no need for a license or paperwork to support these moves. Lots of talents from younger generations prefer to take new job challenges abroad. But also on a global

scale, we can see an increase in mobility. Recent global studies have shown that there is an increase in global mobility especially for professionals ages 30 and over. Companies are also searching more and more for talent on a global scale. The question is no longer "Can I find the talent in my own country?" Now the question has become, "Can I find the right talent globally?" People are more willing to consider the

best jobs on a global scale, so companies have a chance to fill key positions with the best candidates from a diverse, global pool of talent. For instance, we recently conducted a search in our Amsterdam office looking for suitable candidates at a VP (vice president) level for an established Swedish company, a publicly-traded corporation headquartered in Amsterdam. The final candidates were from South Africa, Mexico, Belgium and Switzerland. This is nowadays the worldwide trend.

What is the current salary level of expats worldwide?

Due to a difficult economic situation, in general, for the past several years, wage increases have been modest. The prolonged economic downswing in Europe played a big role. We have recognized when hunting for talents that it is relatively easy to make a suitable offer to fill an important management position. But companies are becoming more aware of the competitive pressure to increase expat compensation and are investing more in retention to keep the right talent on board. Companies are making bigger investments in employee recognition programs. Another important factor is work-life balance. For example some global companies have introduced mid-day fitness or health programs for employees. Some law firms that used to have standards for their employees' availability 7 days week and 24 hours per day have recently limited this requirement during weekends.

Which countries are more attractive for international managers and expats?

London is still number one, New York is number two and Geneva is number three. We can call this a traditional 'Top Three' because London and New York have been world financial centers for many years. And also the language in these countries plays a big role. While searching for global mobility, we see that people do not only look for the job opportunity but they are also considering the quality of life and social activities that would be available to them in a new work environment. Istanbul has become a top-ranking city for global talents. This trend is pretty clear as expats can enjoy an environment for experiencing cultural life in Istanbul. Usually, they are not spending their whole life there, but, for example, staying for a typical assignment of three years in Istanbul.

What is your advice for expats, how can they develop themselves?

My first bit of advice is to be curious because there will be a lot of changes in the global workforce due to technology. Some jobs will be disappearing in ten years and also some jobs have become more important in recent years. So being curious about technical developments and also about innovation helps to create opportunities for people to go abroad. My suggestion is to get to know different management styles, for

example, by working for an international company. For example, working at an American company or a French company can be a very different experience. By learning this, they can create an opportunity to discover the best fit for their personality. And my suggestion for undergraduate students is to make sure they spend a part of their university life abroad with an exchange program.

Do you have any advice for future leaders?

A good leader understands the difference in generations, and knows how to engage people and engage talents. Besides leading a team, a good leader should also know how to stimulate people to discover their creative talent. Creativity is very important. Without creativity there won't be innovation and improvement. It is very important to support creative sides of teams for a leader. Being curious and being aware of different cultures, and taking the time to understand different generations and different management styles, they can become better leaders in the future.

What is your opinion about Turkish expats?

I actually know Turkish expats working in Holland and see that their skills for multicultural management are on a very high level. I think Turkey's multicultural environment helps a lot. One of the most remarkable features of Turkish people is their interest in being entrepreneurs. I think this feature is related to the intellectual and cultural curiosity of Turkish professionals and all of the global business ideas and influences they have seen and experienced right here in Turkey. Now many Turkish professionals want to make their mark on global business, and I'm confident many of them will do just that.

About Patrick Westerburger



Patrick earned a Master's degree in Management from Boston University and a Bachelor's in Hotel Management at the Maastricht School of Management in The Netherlands. For 20 years, he has fulfilled positions on director level, in both profit and non-profit organizations. He has travelled professionally to over 40 countries and speaks 6 different languages. Patrick has led international Sales and Marketing teams in the food business and worked as a Director of Marketing, Communication & Business Development for a global nongovernmental organization. In 2004, he became a senior partner and co-owner of IRC Netherlands (Hagoort & Partners), one of the leading Executive search firms based in

The Netherlands. His client base includes multinationals in manufacturing, food, pharma, agriculture and professional services.

About IRC Global Executive Search Partners

IRC Global Executive Search Partners is a global professional alliance of executive search firms, united in their commitment to providing the highest possible standards in management recruitment services. With a growing roster of leading executive search firms across Europe, Middle East, the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia, IRC Global Executive Search Partners has more than 300 accomplished executive search professionals in 75+ offices across 6 continents. Our clients range from large multinationals to middle market companies, and we have a track record of more than 30,000 completed assignments for 2,000+ clients in almost every conceivable industry segment and function. Ranked among the world's 10th largest retained search firms, IRC Global Executive Search Partners is an alliance that embodies the best of both worlds – Globally Connected and Locally Committed.

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