

International manager

Since the 1980s there has been a trend for large companies to think globally: producing goods or delivering services and selling them, all over the world. And when companies operate at international level they need international managers. What is an international manager and is such a person easy to find?

Soft skills

According to a recent survey, the top characteristics of an international manager include many soft skills, such as the ability to work in international teams, adaptability to new situations, sensitivity to different cultures (and awareness of own cultural background), and relational skills. The manager should be self-reliant and have an open, non-judgemental personality.

Another important characteristic is strategic awareness: the manager should have a global view of his or her contribution at work. In other words, the manager should think "world" and not see work responsibilities and needs only from the perspective of his or her own national background. An international manager must become quickly involved in matters affecting several countries. For example, he or she must be sensitive to, and aware of, the market requirements of a wide range of countries right from the start.

The current position

A recent survey of EU companies reported that the proportion of managers with international experience ranges from about 1% in some UK companies to 80% in one Swiss company. In many firms, only 5-10% of managers are likely to have international experience.

Companies are beginning to recognise that they do not have enough high-quality people for their international activities. They often have problems releasing experienced people from existing operations in order to lead new international ventures. Indeed, there are signs that a shortage of internationally-skilled people may be an important constraint on firms' global ambitions.



Ex. 1 What collocations can you form out of these words:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| 1. to become | globally |
| 2. to deliver | goods |
| 3. to produce | in teams |
| 4. to think | involved |
| 5. to work | services |
| | |
| 6. international | ambitions |
| 7. soft | awareness |
| 8. strategic | level |
| 9. wide | range |
| 10. global | skills |

Ex. 2 Match the two columns to find equivalents of these phrases:

1. cecha	• ability
2. zdolność	• adaptability
3. przystosowalność	• awareness
4. wrażliwość	• background
5. świadomość	• characteristic
6. osobowość	• constraint
7. wkład	• contribution
8. odpowiedzialność	• personality
9. tło	• requirement
10. wymóg	• responsibility
11. niedobór	• sensitivity
12. ograniczenie	• shortage

Ex. 3 Translate these sentences using expressions from the previous exercises:

- Świadomość strategiczna i przystosowalność to ważne cechy menedżera.
- Odpowiedni (*right*) kandydat powinien mieć globalne ambicje i myśleć globalnie.
- Nowe pokolenie (*generation*) menedżerów wykazuje (*demonstrate*) niedobór umiejętności miękkich.

I know English idioms!

In this lesson we can read about international managers. In English, however, there are different fixed expressions to name managers:

- line manager - the person who is directly responsible for managing the work of someone else in a company or business, and who is one level above that person (bezpośredni przełożony)
- middle managers - the people within a company who are in charge of departments or groups, but who are below those in charge of the whole company (menadżerowie średniego szczebla)

Phrasals, phrasals...

One of the roles of managers is to employ people. In English the verb "employ" can also be expressed as a phrasal verb "take on" (przyjąć), e.g.

- We have taken on 5 new people this year.

What would it mean then if we say:

- I have taken on too much work recently.

Well, here "take on" means "accept" (wziąć na siebie).

Grammar corner

This lesson's reading text asks and answers these questions:

What is an international manager and is such a person easy to find?

To make a question with the verb "to be" we have to use this pattern:

<i>question word</i>	<i>to be</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>rest of the sentence</i>
<i>Who</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>talking to?</i>
<i>Which</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>your children?</i>	
<i>Where</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>Mike?</i>	
<i>When</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>free?</i>
<i>Why</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>so sad?</i>
<i>etc.</i>			

GLOSSARY	
international	międzynarodowy
globally	globalnie
to deliver	dostarczać
to operate	tu: działać
soft skills	umiejętności miękkie
recent	niedawny
survey	ankieta, badanie
top chracteristics	najlepsze cechy
include	zaliczać, obejmować
ability	zdolność
team	zespół
adaptability	przystosowalność
sensitivity	wrażliwość
awareness	świadomość
cultural background	tło kulturowe
relational	pokrewny
self-reliant	samodzielny
(non-)judgemental	(nie)oceniający
personality	osobowość
global view	globalny ogłąd
contribution	wkład
in other words	innymi słowy
responsibility	odpowiedzialność
to become involved	zaangażować się
matter	sprawa, kwestia
to affect	dotykać, dotyczyć
requirement	wymóg, wymaganie
wide range	szeroki zakres
current	obecny
to report	tu: dowieść, wykazać
to range from ... to ...	wynosić od ... do
to recognise	rozpoznawać
high-quality	wysokiej jakości
to release sb from sth	uwolnić/zwolnić kogoś od czegoś
to lead	przewodzić, prowadzić
venture	przedsięwzięcie
shortage	niedobór
constraint	ograniczenie

ANSWER KEY

Ex.1

1. to become involved
2. to deliver services
3. to produce goods
4. to think globally
5. to work in teams
6. international level
7. soft skills
8. strategic awareness
9. wide range
10. global ambitions

Ex. 2

1. characteristic
2. ability
3. adaptability
4. sensitivity
5. awareness
6. personality
7. contribution
8. responsibility
9. background
10. requirement
11. shortage
12. constraint

Ex. 3

1. Strategic awareness and adaptability are important characteristics of a manager.
2. The right candidate should have global ambitions and think globally.
3. The new generation of managers demonstrate a shortage of soft skills.