**BRIDGING THE TALENT GAP-TURKEY: GATEWAY TO THE EAST**

**A recent poll carried out by Msearch INAC among 70 top-level executives of multinational companies operating in Turkey has found that** 75.7 percent of the executives preffered hiring local people with multinational work experience, a major factor that the company heads cited behind success both in Turkish and surrounding markets.

Msearch INAC released the results of a poll titled “ Talent Migration: Turkey, the Gateway to the East” conducted between April 26 and May 9 on Monday at a pres conference in İstanbul. The poll looks to define the core trends among executives in meeting the growing demand for a qualified labor force.

Companies polled covered a range of sectors from construction to finance and consulting to farming firms and most of them provide services to the surrounding region from their Turkey headquarters. The poll encourages executives to discuss Turkey’s role as a leading provider of quality labor force to the markets of Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Asked about which employee profile they tend to recruit, 75,7 percent of the responders said they preffered hiring local people with multinational work experience. Of the 70 executives, 15,7 percent said they do not look for work experience abroad but are fine with only hiring local employees, while the remaining 8.6 percent said they would rather hire expats with relevant market experience. About 70 percent of the respondents said they would prefer to recruit either local talents or the existing executive from central headquarters for their expansion projects into new markets. Asked whether they have a specific market preference to be relocated, 42,9 percent responded in the affirmative and chose Eastern Europe. An overwhelming majority, 74,3 percent, said the basic factor that would motivate them to move to a new place for work was career advancement. Among the managers 54.3 percent said they would prefer to manage a larger and established organization in case of relocation.

The Panel moderated by Msearch INAC’s Founding Partner Ali Midillili consisted of Onno Kervers, Dutch Consul General; Selim Siper, CEO Ipragaz SHV; Norbert Klein, BSH CEO; Mustafa Gurtin, Board Member Finansbank; and Nolwenn Allano, Gras Savoy Willis CEO.

Speaking at the conference, BSH Home Appliances Turkey head Norbert Klein said they placed focus on hiring Turkish employees for operations in Turkey.”We need local people if we want to grow in a market that we have limited knowledge of…. What we are trying to do is to keep the business local,” he said,adding Turkish employees could be more flexible and efficient when compared to expats who would experience problems in reorienting to CIS markets. He said that sourcing executives to relocate to difficult geographies was becoming harder in Turkey, compared to 10 years ago.

Netherlands Consul General in Istanbul Onno Kervers said well-experienced and highly educated Turks living in Netherlands—Who he identifies as Dutch/Turks—would help Dutch ompanies operating in Turkey to run their business better. “Because they can understand each other relatively beter… and these Dutch/Turks would serve in major positions for Dutch firms” operations in the region,” he added. He also added that the investemnt flows from the Netherlands to new or existing geographies, is in accord with the migration of these executives from the Netherlands. “Netherlands is a net exporter of executives to Turkey and to the East”.

Ipragaz SHV CEO Selim Siper warned the audience on the growing cultural and social gap between the 30 year old 50 year old generations and concluded that the 20 year old generation today will have a different set of communication skills and cultural/social approach to conducting business in 20 years time. He said that there will be a need for “business culture translators or transformers” to adjust and align the misfits in communication and social skills. Also Selim Siper added that today, Turkish executives are by far ready to take uncertain political and economic risks in new or different geographies, with a greater deal of success, than their counterparts in the EU.

Finansbank’s Board Member Mustafa Gurtin, shared his own multicultural experience and the problems he faced at the Black Sea Trade & Development Bank, where he acted as the CEO for 4 years. Gelling different cultures together to create harmony and speed up the decision making process, he recommended hybrid solutions to overcome each issue as it emerges, rather than wait and not act on these issues as they surface. If an organisation does not have a binding implicit culture, as is the case with the newly established organisations, executives with different business cultures and with different set of social skills, will create continuous friction and conflict of interest.

Nolwenn Allano CEO of Gras Savoye Willis, stated that the true multinational companies must have true multinational representation. Otherwisw, it becomes hard for that multinational to do fluent business in new or different geographies compared to Europe. Speaking for himself, Nolwenn Allano said that; adaptability, both from a business and a culture point of view, was essential for executive success.

The Panel was concluded by Remy Rodenhuis, INAC Board President and the Managing Partner of Nassau Consultants based in the Hague. He stated that the search for global talent will become an important issue in the next decade, indicating that both “headhunters” and companies will have to think globally and act locally when recruiting and also choosing a “head hunting” firm. As over 60% of the executives preferred to use a local “headhunting” firm with a strong international network, to recruit at the top level, Remy Rodenhuis added that the challange for the “headhunters” was to search for this global talent who is willing to migrate from one geography to another. “The cultural transformation challange is there and is waiting for us to overcome it in the next decade.”

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