

IIC Partners Industry Insights

A global perspective of current trends in executive recruitment

IIC Partners interviewed four highly experienced executive search consultants from around the world to get their perspective and insight into trends in recruitment in the human resource sector.



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Mark Keech
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de Jager Executive Search
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New York, United States

Trends with Global Human Resource Executives

Do you think there will be strong demand for senior HR roles in 2014? Why do you think this?

The consultants interviewed for this series anticipated that there will be an increase in demand in most regions of the world for senior HR roles this year. As the global economy bounces back from the recession, Anne McCall, Director at The Curzon Partnership, explained that the sector will experience job mobility. “People will move who have sat tight in their jobs. Some roles were cut in the recession and may be reinstated” McCall said.

Barbara Stahley, Principal at Chadick Ellig, agreed that these market forces are coming into play, and also commented, “Organizations are restructuring...and Boards are inclined to change the dynamic of their leadership teams now that the market is stronger.” Sally Stetson, Co-Founder & Principal at Salveson Stetson Group, agrees stating “There will be a strong demand for HR executives who are savvy business partners and who serve as a trusted advisor to the CEO.”

In contrast, Mark Keech, Director at de Jager Executive Search in Australia, has not yet seen evidence of an increase in demand for senior HR roles.

Have you experienced an increased demand in hiring for any specialty functions in human resources?

According to both Barbara Stahley and Sally Stetson, one of the biggest increases in demand in the human resources sector is from the talent management function, which is becoming more important to organizations.

Ms. Stahley noted, “As clients reorganize their businesses/operating models, how they think about attracting, recruiting, onboarding, developing and retaining talent has been an ongoing conversation, resulting in evolving talent management functions. We have counseled clients on how to structure their talent management teams, utilizing their existing people resources and complementing them with fresh talent from the outside market.”



How has the role of the HR executive changed over the last few years? How do you think it will continue to evolve?

The role of the HR executive is a complex and critical one. According to Anne McCall, the focus in recent years has been on managing redundancies, restructuring the business and ensuring that valued employees are retained. Barbara Stahley believes that the HR executive is now “expected to be a broad business partner who can help the CEO shape the strategy for business and for functions outside of HR, such as finance or supply chain.”

Sally Stetson commented that “The HR executive has focused a great deal of time on change management initiatives over the last number of years. They are juggling multiple priorities with fewer resources and at the same time have to be connected with their business colleagues to ensure they are focused on the right issues.” Ms. Stetson believes that this trend will continue. “Many HR executives will have to figure out how to work efficiently and work ‘smarter’ to ensure they are able to meet the many demands put in front of them” Stetson said.

What specific experiences are your clients seeking when they are hiring a CHRO?

Mark Keech believes that his clients are looking for high level business executives who are focused and savvy and who have strategic HR capabilities. Sally Stetson expanded on Mr. Keech’s thoughts stating “Clients are looking for a well-rounded HR generalist but with specific experience in talent management, organizational development, change management and executive compensation expertise. They need to have had Board experience as well.” In addition, to these experiences, Ms. Stetson believes that “The CEO and Board seeks someone who has extraordinary leadership skills, emotional intelligence and the ability to relate to all levels in the organization.”

Anne McCall affirms that her clients are looking for someone who has evidence of effective budget management and of being an effective member of the senior team. “All around HR experience is important as well as good leadership” McCall added. Barbara Stahley agreed with these comments, “Having a ‘global portfolio’ is also an important experience to factor in when evaluating CHRO candidates.”

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