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ManpowerGroup: Asian Companies Must Prioritize Leadership Development

Lack of Leaders Threatens Region's Economic Progress as Talent Supply Lags Demand

DALIAN, China, Sept. 11, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- [ManpowerGroup](#) (NYSE: MAN), the world leader in innovative workforce solutions and World Economic Forum (WEF) strategic partner, warns that businesses in Asia must prioritize developing high-potential leadership talent that can grow their organizations on a global scale and keep pace with the region's rapid economic progress.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110330/CG73938LOGO-a>)

Nowhere in the world is the shortage of leaders more pronounced than in Asia; ManpowerGroup's 2013 Talent Shortage Survey found that management and executives are fourth in the list of the region's Top 10 Hardest Jobs to Fill, and a separate survey conducted by Right Management — the global leader in talent and career management within ManpowerGroup — and the Conference Board found that 45% of Asian HR executives said that their leaders are either not prepared or only marginally prepared to address business challenges over the next one to two years.

"Experienced, sophisticated and globally-minded leaders that organizations require to achieve business growth are in short supply right across the region. Yet, nurturing high-potential talent is a business imperative," said Darryl Green, ManpowerGroup President. "By putting in place holistic, experiential and broad-based leadership development programs, Asian companies can grow their pipeline of senior leaders who will drive better financial results, superior operational value and increase competitive advantage, ultimately allowing them to win in the global marketplace."

As demand for local leaders has grown, the supply of available talent has remained low. Demographic shifts have contributed to this problem in countries such as China and Japan, where working populations are shrinking. In India, while there are large numbers of available candidates entering the employment market, too few of them have the skills and experience that companies are seeking.

Talent development programs which strike the right combination of experience, exposure and education are most likely to produce successful results in a desired timeframe. Cross-functional job rotations provide high-potential employees with valuable exposure to different business functions. This can include what ManpowerGroup has termed as the "Reverse Expat" strategy — rotating a leader who is at the helm of a company's emerging market operation to one or more of the company's more mature and established operations, allowing them to absorb effective protocols, processes and practices, considering how to quickly adopt in their market upon return for immediate and lasting impact. Executed effectively, the Reverse Expat approach results in reduced time to value for the newly-established operation, and creates a more sustainable operation.

High-potential employees gain additional experience through stretch assignments whereby they are assigned roles and responsibilities much broader than their current scope. Senior management uses stretch assignments to observe high-potentials and gauge how they respond to and cope with challenges and uncertainties. These are accurate estimates of high-potentials' fit for roles with broader responsibilities.

On-the-job learning through coaching and mentoring is considered much more effective than formal classroom training because senior leaders provide unique and authentic insights and guidance that neither textbooks nor formal training curricula can replicate. Additionally, executives, who know the high-potentials, are more willing to take more risks on them, give them stretch assignments and help them grow. In fact, supportive executives are the primary drivers of high-potentials' development. According to Right Management, executive sponsors' commitment to and involvement in high-potential development programs is critical to their success.

The Right Management and Conference Board report "Accelerating the Leader Development of High Potentials in Asia" can be downloaded from: https://dtwcm.manpower.com/wps/wcm/connect/manpowergroup-en/home/thought-leadership/research-insights/?WCM_Page.ResetAll=TRUE

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