

*Sylwia Przytuła* \*

## ATTRACTING MANAGERS TO INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES BASED IN POLAND

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This article presents survey results concerning the recruitment of managers for the international companies operating in Poland. Taking into account the triad model, the article shows the forms of recruitment, selection techniques and placement methods of managers to companies which come from Asian, American and European sphere of culture.

The author presents the meaning of cultural factors in staffing for the key positions in surveyed firms.

**Keywords:** managers, expatriates, international company, recruitment, selection, placement

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The research, conducted by the author in the field of managers' staffing, aimed at evaluating the current state of recruitment, selection and placement processes with reference to managers and international companies included in the research.

One of the reasons which influenced the author to undertake the research concerning the subject, was the fact that international companies increased their interest in investing in Poland<sup>1</sup>. The country became a potential beneficiary of all possible economic advantages connected with the investment process. However, the people responsible for the best use of such advantages are the people from the management sector. The scarcity of managers possessing experience in an international setting appears to be a barrier to achieve success in competing in a global market. Further integration of the European market, which seems to be more and more important, makes the problem even more significant (Sculion, Brewster, 2001, p. 346). The above situation is reflected in the different operational programmes of the European Union, addressed to public institutions and business entities<sup>2</sup>.

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\* Wrocław University of Economics, Department of Personnel Management

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.paiiz.pl>

The structure of human resource area under study was related to research questions asked when carrying out the project entitled: *Managing the managerial staff at international organizations in Poland*<sup>3</sup>:

- Which forms of internal and external recruitment processes are most frequently used with respect to managerial staff?
- Which selection criteria and techniques are applied?
- Which forms of the placement process of new managers appear in the case of companies tested?

In the research, the method using a **triangulation** rule was applied (Listwan, 2006). The rule makes use of different techniques and sources of acquiring information at the same time. The aim is to obtain as thorough and multilevel information as possible. The employed research tools include: survey (in both language versions – Polish and English), structuralized interview, factual data analysis obtained from the companies and participant observation.

### 1.1. The scope of research

The international dimension of the personnel function, finding opportunities and recognizing threats following from the international environment is a special kind of challenge for managers. Staffing managers who can “*think globally and act locally*” is therefore the most important and also the most difficult area of the personnel function.

Many research findings prove that most dysfunctions and failures concerning managing human resources in international firms follow from incorrect recruitment and selection procedures for managerial positions (Przytuła, 2005, p. 125). This is about well qualified executives with their

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<sup>2</sup> For example, *Sectoral Operational Programme - Human Resource Development (SOP HRD)* is one of the six Sectoral Operation Programmes which aims to carry out the National Development Plan (NDP). The goals described in NDP for the above programme reflect priorities and actions of European Employment Strategy, i.e. supporting enterprise and human resources development in modern economy, supporting [<http://efs.gov.pl>]

<sup>3</sup> The research project carried out by the team of researchers from the Department of Human Resources Management at the Academy of Economics in Wrocław and registered under the number: 1H02D 03527. The project is financed by the Ministry of Science and Informatization.

aptitude and knowledge that decide about the specificity of HRM in international context.

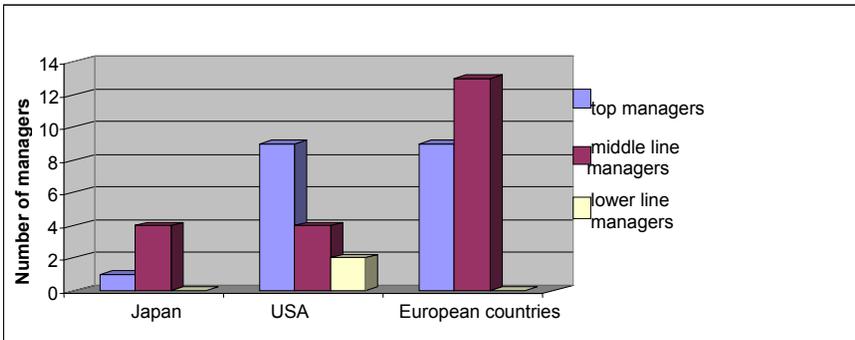
Culturally determined managerial values and behaviours differ between US, Japanese and European nations and this might affect staffing. Numerous researches (Brewster, 2003, Harzing, 1995) present the cultural specificity in the process of recruiting managers.

So far, based on Harzing's results, it may be concluded that cultural differences within Europe and contextual factors which are manifested at national levels, may affect staffing policies of European firms. Further, Harzing concludes, Europe may not be considered homogeneous with regard to staffing policies, neither with respect to origins of MNCs nor to host markets of their subsidiaries (Torbiorn, 2004, p. 59). According to Morley's research findings "*in evaluating HRM practices in international subsidiaries it is widely argued that the actual practices used will reflect underlying managerial values associated with country of ownership*" (Morley, 2004, p. 273). That is why it is worth looking at staffing process for managerial positions to international companies operating in Poland.

The research was conducted among management staff of different managerial rank from 35 international companies operating in our country. Most of the respondents were Polish managers employed in managerial positions of the highest and middle ranks, whereas expats (the Japanese, the Germans and the Spanish) were employed in senior positions within the structure of the studied international companies. There were 15 managers representing American companies, 5 managers from Japanese subsidiaries and 21 European managers (Chart 1).

Chart 1

Characteristic of managers in relation to cultural background of corporation



Source: own study

The construction of presented material was based on triad division. It might be assumed that the results of the research carried out in Japanese, American and European companies were described. Due to the large number of companies from the European circle the companies were divided into German, Nordic, French and Spanish (Pocztowski, 2003, p. 12).

A set of staffing tools (in such areas as recruitment, selection and placement) constituted a base for carrying out the research. The respondents were supposed to choose tools most often used for managerial staff recruitment in their companies. It should be emphasized that uniqueness of managerial staff recruitment is based on the choice made among the vast array of possible recruitment tools. It needs to be emphasized that because of a small sample of managers, the research findings cannot be generalized and related to the whole population of German, American or Japanese managers.

Different forms are applied depending on the recruitment source, which present the way of getting to potential candidates (Table 1):

Table 1  
Sources and forms of managers' recruitment

<b>Forms of recruitment</b>	<b>Internal sources of recruitment</b>	<b>External sources of recruitment</b>
	Internal advertisement	Head hunters
	Intranet	Internet
	Internal promotion	Advertisement in media and press
	Recommendation	Campus recruiting
	High potential base of candidates	From other companies

Source: Przytuła, S., *Pozyskiwanie menedżerów do przedsiębiorstw międzynarodowych*, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków, 2007, p. 24.

The rich palette of criteria and techniques developed by the author for the purpose of research, gave the possibility of choice from those, which in reference to managerial positions in studied companies, were most frequently used (Table 2).

Table 2

A set of selection criteria and techniques possible to be used in regard to managerial positions

Criteria of selection	Techniques of selection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to cope with cultural shock</li> <li>• command of foreign languages</li> <li>• ability to communicate effectively</li> <li>• higher education</li> <li>• cultural sensitivity</li> <li>• global business knowledge</li> <li>• multicultural team management skill</li> <li>• motivation to go and work abroad</li> <li>• work experience in international corporation</li> <li>• managerial experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Centre</li> <li>• application forms</li> <li>• graphology</li> <li>• references</li> <li>• work samples</li> <li>• medical tests</li> <li>• psychological tests</li> <li>• interview</li> </ul>

Source: Przytuła, S., *Pozyskiwanie menedżerów do przedsiębiorstw międzynarodowych*, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków, 2007, p. 26-27.

The forms of new manager placement process are presented in Table 3:

Table 3

Example forms of new manager placement process into his/her position

Forms of placement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cross-cultural trainings</li> <li>• presentation about the history and position of the corporation in the global market (CD, DVD)</li> <li>• short assignment and training in the future company</li> <li>• Intranet</li> <li>• language courses</li> <li>• managerial training and workshops</li> </ul>

Source: Przytuła, S., *Pozyskiwanie menedżerów do przedsiębiorstw międzynarodowych*, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków, 2007, p. 32.

## 2. RESEARCH RESULTS WITHIN ASIAN COMPANIES

### 2.1. Sources and forms of recruitment

On the basis of research carried out in companies coming from Asian circles (Przytuła, 2008, p. 122), it was established that candidates for managerial positions from **internal human resources** were looked for with the use of internal advertisements, in the framework of internal promotions as well as potential candidates' base, i.e. high potential. The recruitment of senior managers was conducted by headquarters (Table 4).

Table 4

Internal and external forms of recruitment in Asian companies

<b>Forms of internal recruitment</b>	<b>data in %</b>	<b>Forms of external recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Internal advertisements	75	Advertisement in local press and media	100
Internal promotion (from HQ or local subsidiary)	75	Campus recruiting	70
Sent by HQ	50	Head hunters	67
High potential base of candidates	50	Students' work experience	33

Source: own study

In the case of all subjects studied coming from the above cultural circle, the recruitment process and its approval for president or senior manager positions was carried out by the management board in Germany and Japan. The respondent underlined that they were mainly corporate people, which might indicate an ethnocentric approach to employing people in the most senior positions in described companies.

The most common method of recruiting managers in the above mentioned companies, when taking external human resources into account, includes job advertisements, head-hunters' services as well as campus recruiting.

It is worth to emphasize that all Asian companies appreciate a lot the cooperation with colleges or universities, from where they recruit future candidates for managerial positions (campus recruiting). They prefer young people, graduates without experience who are not burdened with employment experience in other companies.

## **2.2. Criteria and techniques of selection process**

The most important managers selection criteria in Asian companies include: speaking foreign languages, creativity and initiative, communication ease, higher education and sensitivity to cultural dissimilarities. Multidimensional attitude toward research techniques (surveys, interviews, participant observation) help the researcher to obtain data which established that character, personality and the ability to adapt to new company environment are more thoroughly considered than his/her knowledge or experience.

**Techniques of the selection process** in regard to managing staff are developed by local specialist and adjusted to the Polish environment. The

most frequent include: application analysis, work simulation, interview and medical test as well as references (Table 5).

Table 5

Techniques of selecting managers for Asian companies

Techniques of selection	Data in %
Application forms	100
Work samples and simulations	100
Medical tests	68
Interview	68
References	33

Source: own study

### 2.3. The placement process

It might be stated that in the case of studied companies from Asia, certain forms of managers' placement process are observed, however, they are hardly ever formalized. In one of the Japanese companies, a probation period was observed. During the probation period the usefulness of a new manager is assessed, according to the following quotation: "*approving company's philosophy, moderate views and harmonious character*".

Many of the managers are offered company training courses in Japan inducing them in effective team work and standards of the whole corporation. Japanese companies are the place where they have the possibility to learn the rules of team work, the most important values common for all the corporation, quality principles and work safety rules.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS WITHIN AMERICAN COMPANIES

### 3.1. Sources and forms of recruitment

The most common form of **internal recruitment** in the sample of studied American companies are (Przytuła, 2008, p. 120): internal promotions, the use of data from high potentials base. The information concerning vacancies are also advertised internally. The senior managers for companies' branches are recruited by the headquarters (Table 6).

Table 6

Internal and external recruitment forms in American companies

<b>Forms of internal recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>	<b>Forms of external recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Internal promotion	86	Advertisements in local press and media	73
High potential base of candidates	62	Students' work experience and practice	62
Internal advertisements	29	Head hunters	54
Intranet	29	Campus recruiting	53
Sent by headquarters	24	Internet	20
Recommendations	5	From other companies	19

Source: own study

The most frequently indicated forms of external recruitment within the companies researched are job advertisements, placements for students, head-hunters' services, campus recruiting and the Internet.

### 3.2. Criteria and techniques of the selection process

The respondents' answers to the questions concerning recruitment for key positions in the company, their quantity and formalization degree were as follows: good communication skills, creativity and initiative, higher education, speaking foreign languages as well as managerial work experience. The ability to communicate well was the most emphasized during the interviews in a group of managers. Other important factors included: sensitivity to cultural dissimilarities, professional ambitions, managerial work experience.

Documentation analysis, interview, work simulations and psychological tests, references and AC are the most common techniques of selection process for managerial positions in American companies (Table 7).

Table 7

Techniques of selecting managers for American companies

<b>Techniques of selection</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Application forms	93
Interview	83
Work samples and simulations	59
Psychological tests	59
References	38
Assessment Centre	25
Medical tests	25

Source: own study

### 3.3. The placement process

The placement process of new managers is performed through frequent assessment of their work by other managers. The respondents admit that there is no formalized placement process in their companies, the placement process is called “giving hard task”. This is a rotation process in a range of positions as well as company’s departments. The aim of such practice is getting to know the people and work specification.

The placement process in one of the companies was based on “learning by doing” rule and mentoring.

In the case of all studied companies, the managers-foreigners were attending interactive language courses, however, this form of adaptation was not sufficient. It might be assumed that the last stage of recruitment process which is the placement process of both local managers and expats is not implemented enough and rarely takes a formalized form.

## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS WITHIN GERMAN COMPANIES

### 4.1. Sources and forms of recruitment

According to respondents, the most common method of recruitment among **internal human resources** include: internal promotion, using potential candidates base (high potential), job advertisements inside the company as well as Intranet (Table 8).

Table 8

Internal and external recruitment forms in German companies

<b>Forms of internal recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>	<b>Forms of external recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Internal promotion	94	Advertisement in local press and media	73
High potential base of candidates	63	Head hunters	40
Internal advertisements	56	Students’ work experience and practice	28
Intranet	38	Internet	27
Recommendations	19	From other companies	12
Sent by headquarters	19	Campus recruiting	5

Source: own study

If there is a problem with finding the appropriate candidate inside the company, **external recruitment sources** are used, which include: job advertisements, head-hunters' services, the Internet, recruiting candidates among the people who previously got a placement with a company or even the probation period if, of course, their work was highly assessed (Przytuła, 2008, p. 126).

#### 4.2. Criteria and techniques of the selection process

The indicated selection criteria for managerial positions include: professional experience, speaking foreign languages, creativity and initiative, higher education and good communication skills. The least popular include sensitivity to foreign cultural disparities as well as the ability to adjust to other cultural background.

The most frequently used selection techniques for managerial positions included: documentation analysis, interview, AC, references and psychological tests. The techniques used by German companies serve as the assessment of candidate possible usefulness for the company regardless of his/her specialization, his/her hard skills and education (especially technical) (Table 9).

Table 9

Techniques of selecting managers for German companies

<b>Techniques of selection</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Interview	100
Application forms	90
Psychological tests	29
Assessment Centre	29
References	29
Work samples and simulations	22
Medical tests	12

Source: own study

#### 4.3. The placement process

In the case of many German companies researched, formal (created in the form of document for all company branches) programmes of the placement process were indicated. It was true also for managers. Every new employee is familiarized with the company's mission, organizational structure, strategy

and history. The advantages of cooperation between departments are also discussed. Managerial Development Programme regarding managers-foreigners was mentioned in the case of some researched companies. The programme on corporation level and its aim were to prepare potential managers for key jobs in companies' branches.

## 5. RESEARCH RESULTS WITHIN NORDIC COMPANIES

### 5.1. Sources and forms of recruitment

According to the managers interviewed, the most popular form of **internal recruitment process** include: internal promotions, using the human resources from high potential base as well as internal job advertisements placed on notice boards or company's newsletters (Table 10).

Table 10

Internal and external recruitment forms in Nordic companies

Forms of internal recruitment	Data in %	Forms of external recruitment	Data in %
Internal promotion	100	Head hunters	62
High potential base of candidates	70	Advertisements in local press and media	50
Internal advertisements	30	Students' work experience and practice	12
Intranet	20	From other companies	0
Sent by the headquarters	20	Campus recruiting	0

Source: own study

The most frequent form of **external recruitment process** is the help of head-hunters companies and job advertisements placed in local or national press (Przytuła, 2008, p. 128).

### 5.2. Criteria and techniques of the selection process

Among the most desirable selection criteria for managerial positions in researched Nordic companies the respondents indicated: higher education, speaking foreign languages, creativity and initiative, good communication skills as well as managerial work experience.

Tools used for senior managerial and lower managerial positions recruitment included: documentation analysis, interview with immediate superiors, references and AC (Table 11).

Table 11

Techniques of selecting managers for Nordic companies

<b>Techniques of selection</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Application forms	100
Interview	100
References	35
Assessment Centre	28
Psychological tests	19

Source: own study

### **5.3. The placement process**

On the basis of the respondents' answers it might be assumed that none of the Nordic companies have a normalized placement process program for managers. It is rather a "giving hard task". According to managers there is something like "a protective umbrella" valid within a period of 1-3 months. This gives managers the possibility of learning, getting to know the company and making excusable mistakes.

It is worth emphasizing that according to the research, the placement process of production employees or administrative employees is more formalized and lasts 6 months. During this time, the employee gets to know the company and his/her place of work and takes part in training courses which introduce him/her into organization culture and the type of company activities.

## **6. RESEARCH RESULTS WITHIN FRENCH AND SPANISH COMPANIES**

### **6.1. Sources and forms of recruitment**

As it was presented in Table 12, the most frequent forms of attracting and recruiting managers in French and Spanish companies in the framework of **internal human resources** are: internal promotion, the use of high potentials base, Intranet and internal job advertisements (Przytuła, 2008, p. 130).

Table 12

Internal and external recruitment forms in French/Spanish companies

<b>Forms of internal recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>	<b>Forms of external recruitment</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Internal promotion	91	Advertisements in local press and media	80
High potential base of candidates	64	From other companies	67
Internal advertisements	36	Head hunters	55
Intranet	36	Internet	32
Recommendations	18	Campus recruiting	32
Sent by the headquarters	18	Students' work experience and practice	22

Source: own study

The **external recruitment** forms, indicated by the respondents included: job advertisements in press, the practice of encouraging managers to come from other companies and head-hunters. The use of campus recruiting and the Internet was applied in the same degree.

## 6.2. Criteria and techniques of the selection process

The most important criteria for selecting managers in French and Spanish companies are: speaking foreign languages, good communication skills, higher education, creativity, initiative, business knowledge and managerial work experience.

The respondents indicated also the most frequently used selection techniques: documentation analysis, interview and psychological test, AC, references as well as work simulations (Table 13).

Table 13

Techniques of selecting managers for French/Spanish companies

<b>Techniques of selection</b>	<b>Data in %</b>
Application forms	100
Interview	90
Assessment Centre	38
Psychological tests	35
References	28
Work samples and simulations	28
Medical tests	9

Source: own study

According to other authors' research, graphology is quite a common selection technique in the French companies. However, this was not confirmed by our studies. The graphology technique data seems to be true as a selection technique within French companies based in the country of origin (from sentimental reasons – graphology was invented in France). This tool, however, seems to be expensive with a low productive value. Therefore, it might be assumed that, because of economic reasons, it is not used by the companies researched.

### 6.3. The placement process

The placement process in a researched French company is called "Professional Manager Academy". This is a kind of training course including: basic managerial competences, work organization, time management, delegating tasks, work effectiveness. In the case of other companies, the respondents admitted that the placement process of a new employee was developed within three modules, lasts 3 months but regards only non-managerial positions.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The results presented above convince us that the recruitment, selection and placement processes for key positions in international companies are poorly implemented. Furthermore, the selection techniques were not separately developed for every management level and do not have the systemic character. This means that every branch of a given corporation is allowed to use any kind of tools in the managers' recruitment process.

From an **institutional point of view** of the personnel function it should be underlined that in the case of senior management positions the recruitment procedure was the headquarters' task. The headquarters were supposed to describe the recruitment form and the criteria of selection process. After that they chose the appropriate candidate for managerial position in the Polish branch. Recruiting candidates for average-managerial and lower-managerial positions, the choice of recruitment form as well as criteria and techniques of the selection process were developed by the branch based in Poland. However, in the case of many companies, the headquarters had the right to make the final decision regarding the new manager.

According to research, head-hunters also took part in the process of this sub-function realization. Among the international researched companies coming from Asian, American and European culture, more than a half used search & select services.

Considering the aspect of **centralized human resource decisions** regarding the selection process, it might be stated that the fundamental guidelines were described by headquarters. According to respondents, centralized actions were the reason of: limited freedom in recruitment procedure, the necessity of discussing every kind of change with the headquarters.

The research question regarding individual elements of the recruitment process indicates that the most frequent **form of internal recruitment** was internal promotion, understood also as inner-corporate. Furthermore, the managers were recruited among high potential candidates. Whereas in the case of **external recruitment forms** the most preferable were job advertisements in press and head-hunters' services. Documentation analysis, job interview and references were used in the case of every studied company in regard to **the selection techniques**.

Having analysed a range of placement process forms it might be stated that the companies do not use a wide range of available methods. The placement process to managerial positions is not treated in a professional way and does not have the character of a system.

The most emphasized dysfunctions of the recruitment process included restrictions in the use of recruitment tools providing "appropriate people for the appropriate job" and to fast recruitment process.

The research confirmed rather weak influence of **cultural background differences** on the choice of recruitment tools. So there are no "typical German recruitment forms" or "typical American selection techniques". Regardless of the cultural background of the companies, they employed similar recruitment forms, selections techniques and types of induction processes for senior managerial positions.

To conclude, it might be stated that in the nature of internationalization of international companies, the cultural differences characteristic for the country of origin of a given corporation are not clearly distinguished. Even if some of the cultural aspects are affirmed in the managers' behaviour or style, they do not determine the choice of tools used for recruitment or selection process.

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