

The Globalisation of Early Talent Programmes

Sophie Meaney: September 2015

GLOBALISATION

Technology has shrunk the world. We can phone or video-call any country we like without thinking twice about it and we can all travel long distances for comparatively little money. Our friends are no longer just the people who live down the road from us, but are also people we connect with virtually and therefore, could be based anywhere at all. Individuals no longer look for qualifications and jobs on their doorsteps, but plan lives and careers focused on what best suits their aspirations regardless of geography.

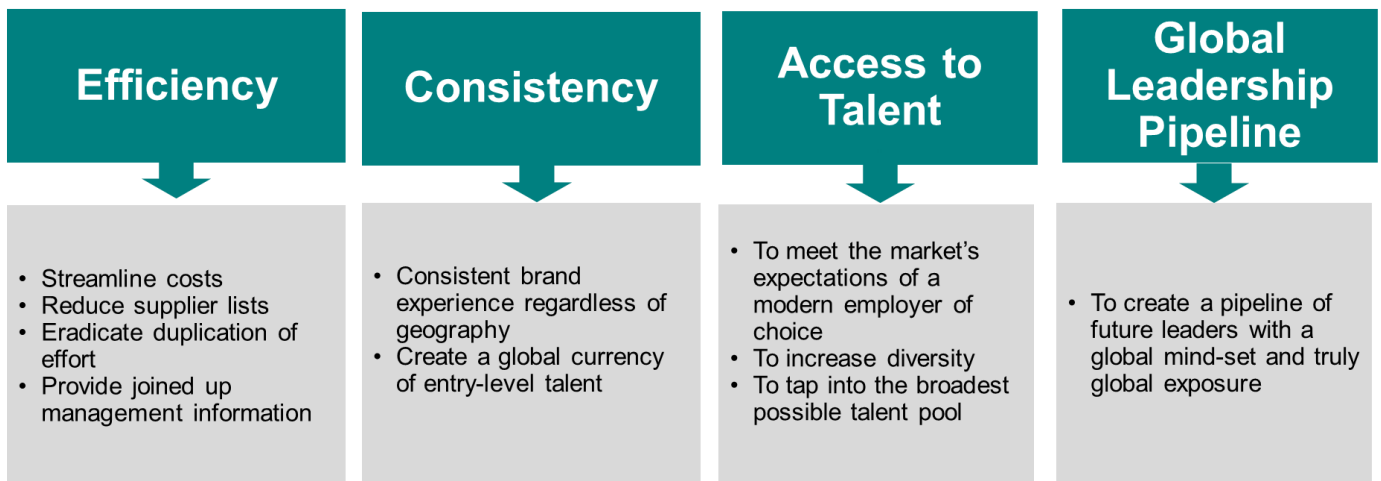
This has created both opportunities and challenges for multinationals. On the one side, mobility of talent means the introduction of fresh ideas, the opportunity to provide career development in a non-linear way, the opening up of new markets. On the flip side, however, it also means that people have different expectations of businesses both from a consumer and employer perspective and meeting those expectations can be pretty difficult.

Over the last decade or so multinationals have done a good job of making themselves appear to operate seamlessly across borders and continents. Often though, it's only convincing marketing and from the inside the reality looks rather different. That isn't to say that businesses don't want to operate globally, it's just that the practical and cultural barriers can be so significant that what appears very simple from a conceptual point of view is virtually impossible in practical terms.

This paper will attempt to analyse globalisation from an early recruitment perspective. It will look at:

- Why globalise early talent programmes?
- Common errors made by those attempting to globalise early talent programmes
- Globalisation imperatives

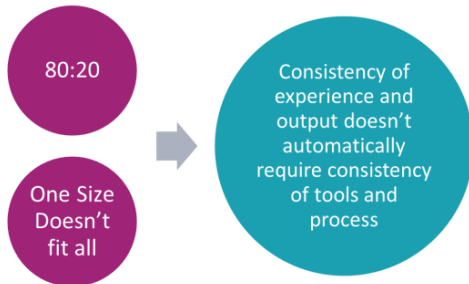
Why globalise early talent programmes?



While the potential rewards are significant, the challenges are also.

Common errors made by those 'globalising' early talent programmes

1. Assuming consistency means uniformity



Things happen very differently in different countries. Whether that's cultural norms - applying with a CV versus an application form, having interviews by phone or on campus - or whether it's structural things like the academic calendar or the different academic qualifications or even if it's as basic as language (programme/program) or symbolism (e.g. green logos don't go down well in China), we are as different as we are the same and a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is almost guaranteed to fail.

Typically successful global programmes will be 80% the same globally and 20% locally customised. Exactly which elements end up being customised depends quite heavily on the organisation but requests to do things differently shouldn't automatically be rejected:

- an interview on campus or by phone can produce the same output;
- application forms have clear benefits but a CV and covering letter can still work;
- different assessment exercises can be used in different countries so long as they have each been validated locally to produce the required ultimate output;
- translating content into local language can be worthwhile (to show respect) even if excellent business English is a core requirement. And so the list goes on....

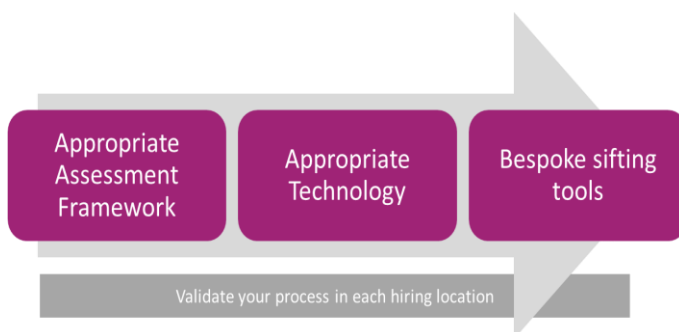
It is also critical to highlight that, just because the hiring profile is the same, it doesn't mean that tools don't need to be adapted for local usage. The same behaviours can be perceived very differently in different cultural settings and can skew assessments. Local job analysis and validation is critical.

2. Lack of Stakeholder Alignment & Prioritisation of Objectives

It is also critical that everyone is clear on the problem the programme is intended to resolve: is it designed to develop future leaders or is it intended to bring in a stream of ready-to-go-talent to fill existing entry-level roles? The profile required for each objective is quite different as is the development that will be required when the individuals join the company. Often the HR function can be trying to create a pipeline of future talent when the business leaders are more interested in people to fill immediate resource needs. A lack of alignment is usually fatal.

It goes without saying that for different companies, different drivers of globalisation will have greater resonance. Whilst all are relevant, prioritisation will lead to a stronger and clearer message as well as a hierarchy for issue resolution.

3. Flawed design



When you are hiring entry-level talent, you are essentially looking for potential. Companies like GradWeb have deep expertise in the assessment of potential and can help you understand what that means for your business. Broader competency frameworks often don't work for Early Talent hiring as some requirements can be a little artificial

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when applied to applicants with little or no work experience. They can also be at risk of being too generic to be meaningful when extrapolated across a variety of cultures, roles or geographies.

As everyone knows, the right technology, used in the right way, is an enormous enabler. With global entry talent programmes it is critical to have an effective ATS (ideally one that has actually been designed to support volume hiring as opposed to a requisition-based system which has been adapted). This will not only give you process efficiencies, enhance the candidate experience and give you excellent management information, but will also be the backbone of your process.

In addition, many organisations with high hiring volumes and global programmes are now embracing video assessment technology to replace face-to-face or telephone interviews and an investigation of the available tools is likely to feature on the to-do list of any new global programme project plan.

Some countries love psychometric tests; others are very suspicious of them. For many years though they have been part of the conversation for most people designing global selection processes. These days, however, organisations with reasonable application volumes are looking at building bespoke sifting tools. At GradWeb we have seen an enormous uptake in the number of clients asking us to design Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) or candidate self-selection tools which essentially sift out high volumes of applicants against company-specific hiring criteria while also giving applicants a realistic job preview.

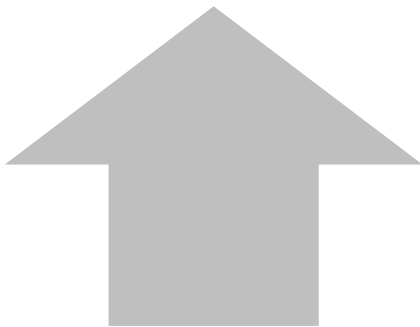
Many organisations spend a lot of time, effort and money designing a selection process that is expected to produce certain results but then don't actually validate whether or not those results have indeed been produced. More often than not a selection process will require fine tuning over a couple of cycles to make it as effective as possible. It is therefore well worth engaging objective specialists to evaluate the results of your processes. Having a very clear understanding of which parts are most predictive of success allows you to optimise automation, maximise the return on your assessment investment and ensure that the process is as efficient as possible.

Globalisation Imperatives

1. Be very clear about what your programme's key objectives and commercial drivers are from the start
2. Rank your objectives in order of priority
3. From your key objectives derive your key principles e.g. the objective might be to have global consistency in the profile of your early hires so the principle is that all hiring activity should result in the same profile of hire (even if the means of assessing the fit with the hiring profile varies)
4. Never compromise on your key principles but be open to compromise in all other areas
5. Make sure that you have identified stakeholders at all levels and within all geographies impacted and ensure that you have a detailed communication and reporting plan that is actually operationalised
6. Get the foundations right – do sweat the big stuff – getting your ATS, assessment framework, team structure and budget/funding structure right is critical; don't shy away from those conversations because they're the hard ones, if you don't address them up-front you'll be dealing with the consequences for the lifetime of the programme.
7. Manage the roll out as a formal change journey; take people from: I know – awareness/communication to: I care – understanding/education to: I can – commitment/training to: I do – sustainment/support. Consider incentivising adoption using the principles of gamification: Staging/ Collaboration & Communal Discovery/ Status & Influence/ Achievement recognition

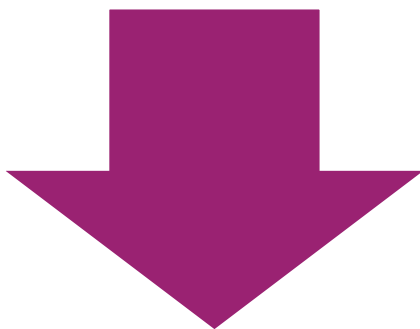
8. Think strategically about the allocation of tasks; outsourcing/insourcing transactional tasks can be a good option to free up your in-house resource to focus on the tasks they're uniquely qualified to perform, like engaging stakeholders and pre-qualified candidates or marketing the organisation.
9. Spread out your team to maximise your geographic coverage; don't opt for geographic centralisation – it's much easier to engage your team remotely than it is to engage stakeholder remotely; ensure that you have your strongest team members in the locations with the trickiest roles/stakeholders/challenges
10. Don't be afraid of challenge - being an expert means not needing to be defensive. If criticism is justified it leads to improvement and, if it isn't, it goes away on its own. Break criticism down to understand what is really driving it, beyond what is actually being said and address the root causes. Often when you are dealing with global programmes and the consequent cultural gaps, the issue is really one of communication and misunderstanding so facing up to criticism creates an opportunity for engagement and relationship building.
11. Consider designing company-specific selection tools which are validated across the different geographies
12. Consider using video assessment technology to overcome geographic challenges
13. Choose an ATS that is designed for managing volume hiring, supports both today and tomorrow's possible integrations at no extra cost, allows you to manage your reporting and crucially, supports localisations at little or no cost
14. Don't stop with the end of the recruitment process – think about how you will capture performance data to re-inform and refine

Summary



DO:

- Have clarity & alignment on objectives
- Deviate from a common point
- Fight the big battles/get the foundations right
- Validate all tools and frameworks locally (and on an ongoing basis)
- Spend time and effort on the big ticket items
- Learn from others
- Leverage technology



DON'T

- Get caught in the middle between leaders & hiring managers
- Get hung up on uniformity
- Fight battles when compromise doesn't impact your strategic objectives
- Assume that a common hiring profile supports shared tools
- Forget that you're on a change journey - formally engage all stakeholders

About the Author

Sophie Meaney has been involved in the design and delivery of early talent programmes for over 12 years, working within organisations that include Towers Watson and Ernst & Young.

For the last 8 years she has focused on the globalisation of those programmes and, having worked in Asia Pacific as well as Europe and, having spent a considerable amount of time working closely with teams in the US, she has had significant personal exposure to the cultural and practical considerations critical to the success of global programmes.

Since joining GradWeb, she has been responsible for working closely with key clients in order to support their broader talent strategies. This has often involved discussions about their global programmes and the challenges and benefits associated with them.

About GradWeb

At GradWeb, we do things differently. We do what's right for our clients, and for their candidates. We don't know any other way, and that suits us – and our clients – just fine. Our solutions are completely flexible, precisely reflecting the evolving priorities of the organisations we work with. This is how we develop our partnerships: by doing what's right, and putting long-term relationships above short-term gain.

Relevant GradWeb Solutions:

Consulting services	ATS	Intelligent Attraction	Assessment Framework Design (including High-Potential & Strengths)
Assessment Process Design	SJTs/Situational Strengths tests/ Values-fit tests – Text/ Video/ Animated	Candidate Self-Selection Tools	Assessment Centre/ Interview design
Video Assessment Platform	Recruitment Process Outsourcing (multi-lingual assessors, different pricing models, sector leading QA)	On-boarding	Development Programme Design & Delivery

And we don't just work in the entry-level space. We work across all areas of volume recruitment; as well as graduate, apprentice, intern, MBA, PhD, programmes we also support volume campaigns for experienced hires. So, whatever your needs, when it comes to volume hiring GradWeb can apply a tried and trusted process model, and of course our extensive knowledge and experience, to help ensure you achieve your recruitment objectives as efficiently as possible.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this white paper or GradWeb's services in further detail please feel free to contact the author directly: Sophie.Meaney@gradweb.co.uk +44 (0)7826 916106